Landas

JOURNAL OF LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Vol. 26, No. 1 (2012)
ISSN: 0116-4856

E-mergence of the Posthuman: Irrelevance of Incarnation?
RANDY J. C. ODCHIGUE

The Deepening Digital Divide and the Concept of Hospitality
DOMINADOR BOMBONGAN, JR.

Cybertechnology and Theology: An Uneasy Relationship
DELFO CORTINA CANCERAN, O.P.

Jesus' Mother at the Foot of the Cross: A Narrative Reading of John 19:25–27
MIRASOL C. NAVIDAD, R.S.C.J.

Vatican II and Women
HELEN R. GRAHAM, M.M.

Local Spaces, Global Audiences: The Role of Local and Global Factors in Shaping the Feminist Movement in Iran
JUHN CHRIS P. ESPIA

Beyond Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs): Challenges to the Reception of Communio Ecclesiology in Asia
NORLAN H. JULIA, S.J.

Twin Tolerations: The Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan Experience
DUKE THOMAS G. DOLORICAL

Landas

Landas

EDITOR
Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J., Ph.D.

EDITORIAL BOARD
Arnel dC. Aquino, S.J., S.T.D.
Enrico C. Eusebio, Jr., S.J., J.C.D.
Manuel V. Francisco, S.J., S.T.D.
Peter O. Pojol, S.J., S.T.D.
Felipe Fruto L. Ramirez, S.J., S.T.D.
Joseph J. Smith, S.J., S.T.D.
Joaquin C. Yap, Jr., S.W., D.Phil.

MANAGING EDITOR
Susan Isorena-Arcega

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Josemaria Roberto V. Reyes

Landas (The Way), Journal of the Loyola School of Theology, is published twice a year by the Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The Landas postal address is: Loyola School of Theology, P.O. Box 240, U.P., 1144 Quezon City, Philippines. Editorial matters are the responsibility of Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J. (jmfrancisco@lst.edu). Circulation and business matters should be addressed to Susan Isorena-Arcega (siouxstar@gmail.com). Domestic subscription rates: one year, 400.00 PhP; single copy, 250.00 PhP. Elsewhere: one year US$ 40.00; single copy US$ 25.00.

The Journal is not responsible for statements and opinions expressed in signed articles and reviews. Such statements and opinions are the author's own, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editors.

© 2012 by the Loyola School of Theology.
All rights reserved. ISSN 0116-4856

Contents

Landas
Vol. 26, No. 1 (2012)

1 *E-mergence of the Posthuman: Irrelevance of Incarnation?*
Randy J. C. Odchigue

17 *The Deepening Digital Divide and the Concept of Hospitality*
Dominador Bombongan, Jr.

37 *Cybertechnology and Theology: An Uneasy Relationship*
Delfo Cortina Canceran, O.P.

49 *Jesus' Mother at the Foot of the Cross: A Narrative Reading of John 19:25–27*
Mirasol C. Navidad, R.S.C.J.

79 *Vatican II and Women*
Helen R. Graham, M.M.

99 *Local Spaces, Global Audiences: The Role of Local and Global Factors in Shaping the Feminist Movement in Iran*
Juhn Chris P. Espia

127 *Beyond Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs): Challenges to the Reception of Communio Ecclesiology in Asia*
Norlan H. Julia, S.J.

139 *Twin Tolerations: The Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan Experience*
Duke Thomas G. Dolorical

EDITOR'S PREFACE

If the scope of the theological enterprise corresponds to the breadth of our vision of life, then this present issue appropriately reflects this scope. The first three essays are updated versions of talks at the Ninth Annual Conference of Dakateo (*Damdaming Katoliko sa Teolohiya*; Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines), held on October 19–21, 2012, which generously gave permission for their publication in this issue. Their authors begin with describing different dimensions of the cyberworld and then proceed to reflect on their interphase with various theological themes. Randy Ochigue asks whether virtual cyberspace relations between individuals undermine the materiality of the body intrinsic to the Incarnation; Dominador Bombongan explores Jacques Derrida's radical concept of hospitality in the face of the digital divide that seems endemic to cyberspace; Delfo Canceran argues that our present understanding of theology must incorporate the nature and ethos of cybertechnology.

The following three essays focus on the status of women in religion. Mirasol Navidad studies the Johannine account of Mary at the foot of the Cross and discusses her discipleship in relation to her status as woman and as the mother of Jesus. Biblical scholar Helen Graham has long been interested in the place of women in Christianity, and in her essay, she provides an overview of their place in the context of the Second Vatican Council. She looks at their involvement in the council, proposes a Roman Catholic theology of womanhood, and offers practical pointers for a Church

commemorating fifty years of the historic council. Juhn Chris Espia's essay on women engages a different religious tradition, Islam, and another cultural context, Iran. It does not only describe how the status of women is linked to religion but also how other global and local forces shape this religion-gender nexus.

The final two essays raise practical ecclesiological issues. Norlan Julia acknowledges the prominence which the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and the late Filipino Bishop Francisco Claver, S.J., accorded to basic ecclesial communities (BECs). However, he also questions the long-term viability and efficacy of BECs in contemporary Asian contexts that are characterized by multi-religious and multicultural realities, and proposes that other forms of *communio* could be explored in the light of emerging networks of communication. Duke Thomas Dolorical draws from his experience in *Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan* (SLB; "Church in the Service of the Nation"), a Church-based organization involved in social and political issues. His essay describes how SLB's enduring, and at times historic, involvement in electoral politics in the Philippine context implicates Church-state relations beyond constitutional and juridical frameworks.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 1–15

E-MERGENCE OF THE POSTHUMAN

Irrelevance of Incarnation?

Randy J. C. Odchigue

I. Introduction

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). After 2000 years, "Word" as signifier/signified in God-talk and as a basic tool in linguistic coding and decoding seems to be taking on another metaphorical association in cyberspace. Word is a program based on algorithmic sequences that encodes texts ready for utilization in computer terminals, shipment over information highways and storage on hard drives and flash disks. With Apple, Inc., one can even say, the Word has escaped matter and dwelt in iCloud. Materiality has given way to virtuality. If corporeal materiality is the fulcrum on which Christianity stands or falls in its truth claim of a redemptive God, then the question of the relevance of the Incarnation in a virtual world comes to the fore. This paper hopes to contribute to cybertalk along this theme.

II. E-mergence of the Posthuman

Fukuyama's unease with the posthuman stems from what he deems two dystopias: the Orwellian "panopticon" of information

technology on the one hand, and the biotechnological alteration of human nature (beyond recognition) on the other.[1] Without conceding to the neo-liberal agenda, we accept that these two technologies are continually shaping the world as we know it today. For this paper, we focus on the first.

Cyberspace

The term "cyberspace" originated in the work of William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984). He describes the term as a "consensual hallucination … a graphic representation of data abstracted from the bank of every computer in the human system."[2] The term was popularized by John Perry Barlow who predicated of it the "emergence of an alternative virtual world, an electronic frontier."[3] This means that information and communications technologies (ICTs) are not simply media but a new domain of public contestation that transcends temporal and spatial limits. Barlow argues that cyberspace is a harbinger of a "new social space, global and antisovereign, within which anybody, anywhere can express to the rest of humanity whatever he or she believes without fear."[4] This space is incorporeal, replacing physical presence in simulated environments of blogs, discussion threads, multi-user chat rooms, and social networking sites.

But while Barlow seems to mystify the utopian promise of cyberspace, there remains a need for critical reflexivity because of its multifarious, ubiquitous and fluid nature. For example, the synergy of the postmodern culture, with the global socio-political tides as mediated by ICTs, ushers questions on the digital divide, dystopic tendencies of hyperreality a la Baudrillard, relevance of nation-states,

---

[1]Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2002).

[2]William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984), 51.

[3]Brian Loader, ed., *Governance of Cyberspace* (London: Routledge, 1997), 3.

[4]John Perry Barlow, "Thinking Locally, Acting Globally," *Cyber Rights Electronic List* (January 15, 1996).

and the hegemony of commodification. Theologically, it would seem vital to ask whether Christianity, as a narrative religion, can still make sense given the alliance of postmodern disenchantment for *grand recits* and the encouragement of internet infrastructure for "the proliferation of stories, local narratives without any totalizing gestures and [which place] senders and addresses in symmetrical relations."[5] The hermeneutical question to me seems to focus on the relationship between the universal and particular, the local and the global. In relation to Christianity, it would then seem urgent to ask how relevant the Incarnation is if it is the event *par excellence* of a particularization of the universal God. On the flipside, if the corporeal materiality of this particularization is necessary in theosis, how is the Incarnation relevant in a context of virtualization of the material as, for example, seen in the case of creating avatars?

Cyborgs

In his novel *Neuromancer*, Gibson's "hero" escapes from his flesh-body and enters cyberspace. This heralds the contemporary theme of "transcendence of and escape from the flesh."[6] A variant of this theme, for example, is seen in the character of Neo in *The Matrix* trilogy where the cyborg-hero needs to be logged into cyberspace in order to effectively carry out his mission of leading the "humans" in the war against the machines. Neo exemplifies the e-mergence of the posthuman. The portmanteau term "e-mergence" signifies the merger between the organic flesh (wetware) and technology (software) for the emergence of a new cybernetic organism (cyborg).[7] Nayar speaks of these in terms of disembodiment and re-embodiment in cyberspace. When Neo, the hero, is wired to the Matrix, he becomes disembodied in that he leaves the actual spatial-temporal domain of materiality but

[5]M. Poster, "Postmodern Virtualities," in *Body and Society* (1995), 92.

[6]Pramod Nayar, *An Introduction to New Media and Cybercultures* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 65.

[7]Nayar, *An Introduction to New Media and Cybercultures*, 67.

is simultaneously re-embodied as the flesh interfaces with the hardware and software of cyberspace.

Donna Haraway contends that to some extent we are all cyborgs: we wear glasses, eat genetically modified food, rely on pacemakers, etc. Haraway talks about networked bodies and hybridized human-machines as having the potential of ending oppression and subverting hierarchical binaries associated with the social-cultural-political baggage of color or gender.[8] From this perspective, the cyborg is an embodiment of a utopian vision that resists fixities associated with identities, cultural and social locations. The hybridization of the corporeal has far reaching implications in reconfiguring the political and the social-cultural.[9] This freedom from fixities implies the possibility for human persons to create their own preferred environments and interact with other users through a constructed identity in the form of an avatar. What might be the implication to body and identity? Rosi Braidotti, a feminist critic, argues that identity in the postmodern context characterized by hybridity is no longer fixed and easily demarcable. With culture playing a major role in generating identity, the body becomes a de-naturalized crossroad as artificial social-cultural codes are inscribed onto it.[10] Braidotti cites Francis Barker's contention that "the disappearance of the body is the apex of the historical process of its de-naturalization."[11] With this, she argues that "it is more adequate to speak of our body in terms of embodiment, that is to say of multiple

[8]See Donna Haraway, "Ein Manifest für Cyborgs," in *Carmen hammer und Immanuel StieB*; also Donna Haraway, *Die Neuerfindung der Natur. Primaten, Cyborgs und Frauen* (Frankfurt/New York: 1995), 33–72; also Veronika Schlor, "Cyborgs: Feminist Approaches to the Cyberworld," in Erik Borgman, Stephan van Erp & Hille Haker, eds., *Cyberspace-Cyberethics-Cybertheology* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 61–67, 62.

[9]Nayar, *An Introduction to New Media and Cybercultures*, 66.

[10]Rosi Braidotti, "Cyberfeminism with a Difference," http://www.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/rosi/cyberfem.htm.

[11]Braidotti, "Cyberfeminism with a Difference." See also Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984).

bodies or sets of embodied positions. Embodiment means that we are situated subjects, capable of performing sets of (inter)actions which are discontinuous in space and time."[12] Schlor makes a good, critical point when she points out that "embodiment" discourse is only a few mouse clicks from reaching a "totally dematerialized symbolized body in cyberspace."[13] If "flesh" disappears entirely, it becomes contentious how to make visible and palpable the realities about oppression of concrete bodies and destruction of concrete undigitized human communities (e.g., indigenous peoples). "Embodiment as cyborg is precisely no incarnation."[14] Indeed, a dematerialized symbolized cyberbody seems to offer a reverse dynamic against incarnation.

III. Reality Bites

The dematerialized cyberworld has its own seductions. The site www.uo.com promises a "world in which you can not only fight, craft, create, explore, and triumph … but a world in which you can live."[15] Aupers and Houtman comment that the site contrasts the boredom of real life and the excitement of the virtual world.[16] Massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) users even venture into giving spiritual significance to a disembodied presence in cyberspace. "You are not at all confined by your body when you are online. You can go places, you can do things you can't do in real life, you can see differently," says one respondent of a survey made by Aupers.[17] Mark

[12]Braidotti, "Cyberfeminism with a Difference."

[13]Schlor, "Cyborgs: Feminist Approaches to the Cyberworld," 64.

[14]Schlor, "Cyborgs: Feminist Approaches to the Cyberworld," 65.

[15]www.uo.com.

[16]Stef Aupers & Dick Houtman, "'Reality Sucks': On Alienation and Cybergnosis," 82.

[17]Stef Aupers, *In de ban van moderneteit: Da sacralisering can het zelf en computertechnologie* (Aksant: Amsterdam, 2004), cited in Aupers & Houtman, "'Reality Sucks': On

Pesce, the developer of Hypertext Mark Up Language (HTML), points out that the decisive difference between the real and virtual world is the god-like position the user assumes in the latter:

> Cyberspace gives the impulse to disengage from the suffering that the world is … people who pop into cyberspace have to create the world, they have to create their belief system, they have to create the rules. There is no other way! When you pop into cyberspace there is nothing there unless you bring it in. You have to be the magical agent, the god, in that environment for anything to happen.[18]

The extreme version of "excarnation" is represented by the Extropians who seem to be fascinated by the spiritual implications of downloading human consciousness into the cyberworld. This vision is given expression in the film *The Lawnmower Man* (1992) where the central character Jobe believes the final stage of the evolution of his consciousness is to become "pure energy" "existing" in the computer mainframe.

Cybergnosis

The spirituality attached to the dematerialized existence in cyberspace coupled with the condescension of the corporeal whether it be the body (as inscribed with gender, socio-economic and racial codes), suffering, melancholia and lack (it seeks to overcome) reminds one of Gnostic philosophy. Aupers and Houtman found it interesting that there are striking resemblances between cybergnosis and classical Gnosticism. "'The goal of Gnostic striving is the release of the 'inner man' from the bonds of this world and his return to his native realm of life.'"[19] The material world-rejecting ethos, the melancholic dissatisfaction and the disaffection with the limiting particularities that characterize the Gnostic mindset seem to be present in the cybergnostic orientation as well. "Whereas classical

---

Alienation and Cybergnosis," 82.

[18]Aupers & Houtman, "'Reality Sucks': On Alienation and Cybergnosis," 83.

[19]Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 44.

Gnosticism seeks salvation from the body and the material world, this discourse of 'cybergnosis' embraces digital technology as promising salvation from real-life suffering and impotence and as enabling one to overcome humanity's state of alienation."[20] The disappearance of the body in cybergnosis seems to fall into the danger of reprising the old body/mind split under a new "avatar." It apparently glosses over the recalcitrant quality of the material as the domicile for personalization. Theologically speaking, it seems to demean the capacity of the material and corporeal to be the locus of the spiritual.

IV. Incarnation as an Hermeneutic Tactic

In a context such as this, Christianity's stance and more specifically the faith option of believing in a salvation not by gnosis but by *Deus Incarnatus* becomes an area of contestation as to its relevance and meaning (upon which Christianity stands or falls). The subtext in this quest for relevance is the question of what critically reflexive resource Christianity has to offer, in a global consumer-driven culture, more than its usual paternalistic pontificating sermons. It might be that the task of the theologian in a cybercontext is to ask the question of how (using its own resources) meanings are created in a "culture that often commodifies religious experience, fetishizes idealized attractive body-images and yet suppresses the substantiality of real bodies as they experience their pleasures and pains, ecstasies and tragedies, lives and deaths."[21]

Here we take incarnation as a hermeneutical tactic, not as a dogmatic statement. In other words, incarnation (and indeed Resurrection) becomes hermeneutically important because, in the context of the cyberage, the issue of corporeality has come to the fore

[20] Aupers & Houtman, "'Reality Sucks': On Alienation and Cybergnosis," 84.

[21] Anthony Godzieba, Lieven Boeve, & Michele Saracino, "Resurrection-Interruption-Transformation: Incarnation as Hermeneutical Strategy," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 777–815, 778.

in theo-social and political debate. In this respect, theology needs to contribute to the discussion insofar as

> the heart of the Christian gospel is that the eternal plan of God is realized in a particular time and place, that the perfect self-expression of God has become flesh and dwelled among us (Jn. 1:14). Any attempt to separate the particular and the universal … misunderstands Catholicism. For the hallmark of Catholicism is its radical incarnationalism.[22]

Here is already a hint of the hermeneutic import of this radically immanent proposal; in the incarnation is inscribed the dynamics of relationship between radical particularity and universality. However, a caveat needs to be made here. There is a general falling out from using the term "presence" nowadays. The Heideggerian critique of onto-theology carried on by the likes of Derrida and Vattimo problematizes the metaphysics of presence which may lead to violence and closing out of narratives. Thus one can only speak about the "traces," "crossing out" and "radical kenoticism" because determinacy is suspect. Applied to religion, one can only speak about disembodied, apophatic descriptions of religious experience.[23]

Among the most important hermeneutic readings of the Incarnation is that it expresses and celebrates the ability of the material and particular to mediate the divine. Against the discourse of cybergnosis, the radical incarnationalism of Christianity contends

---

[22]Michael Himes & Kenneth Himes, *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1993), 130.

[23]Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. & intro. Joan Stambaugh, bilingual ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991); Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978), 79–153; Gianni Vattimo, "History of Salvation, History of Interpretation," in Niels Grønkjaer, ed., *The Return of God: Theological Perspectives in Contemporary Philosophy* (Odense: Odense University, 1998). On this topic, one may also confer Randy Odchigue, "The Radical Kenoticism of Gianni Vattimo and Interreligious Dialogue," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 16:2 (2006): 173–189.

that materiality is graced and that it is made the locus of redemption in the Incarnation (and Resurrection).[24] Here particularity is being given a revelational value: only in the particular human person, Jesus, is revealed the Word. There is something here in that, through the particularity of Jesus, the Incarnation takes on a unique, unrepeatable character in space and time—something cyberspace may never tolerate. What is defended here is the importance of radical historicity and difference: "when the Word became flesh, the Word did not take on an all purpose, generic, one-size-fits-all human nature. Such a view would not take seriously the radical historicity of both human nature and divine revelation."[25] Before answering the question "so what?" in relation to the Incarnation, we might need to tackle the meaning of particularity not only as a historical-cultural-sociological term but also in relation to Christian particularity and in relation to other discourses (religious and secular).

In reflecting about the Christian particularity of the Incarnation (and Resurrection), Boeve points out that there are two fronts that the theologian has to contend with: first, the hermeneutical strategies of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism; second, the meaning and implication of Christianity's radical incarnationalism in relation to other faiths and discourses.[26] In relation to the first front, Boeve distances from pluralistic readings as they impair the constitutive character of God-made-flesh. The debates that lead to the Chalcedonian confession and the apophatic debates that revolve around the unknowability of God tend to undermine the irreplaceable and unique salvific quality of the Incarnation. Boeve contends that in order to come to terms with claims from other discourses and other faiths, "pluralistic theologians

[24]Godzieba, Boeve, & Saracino, "Resurrection-Interruption-Transformation: Incarnation as Hermeneutical Strategy," 788–789.

[25]John Meier, "The Present State of the 'Third Quest' for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain," *Biblica* 80 (1999): 459–487, 486.

[26]Lieven Boeve, "Resurrection: Saving Christian Particularity: Theological-epistemological Considerations of Incarnation and Truth," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 795.

radically relativize the Christian truth claim. At most, Jesus Christ represents God, but he does not incarnate God; Jesus is a human example of God, but not God made flesh."[27] He likewise interrogates the exclusivist approach which embraces a thoroughgoing absolutism that places a limiting norm such that no salvation can be found elsewhere. Inclusivism, on the other hand, allows elements of salvation elsewhere, but its latent sense of superiority may still undermine other discourses of faith. Boeve argues that the three classical approaches come to the issue of the relationship between universalization and pluralization. In the case of inclusivism and exclusivism, the Christian truth claim is deemed to be true for all times and places. Epistemologically speaking, this means other faiths or discourses either are lacking in or share some elements of the fullness of the truth possessed by Christianity.

> The historical-contingent particularity … is immediately positioned within a virtually meta-historical Christian frame of interpretation. Concrete narratives and histories, people, and events are taken up into an all-inclusive vision of history; they stand face to face with *the* truth, *the* salvation, and thereby deprived in principle of their historical accidentality,[28]

Boeve argues. In the case of pluralism, Christian faith is but one perspective that describes only one part of the greater whole. Here the Christian truth-claim is relativized in view of it being an overly historical-particular and contingent event. Boeve argues that "in both instances, 'incarnation' is understood as the absorption of the historical-particular into the universal or the reduction thereof into the universal."[29] Apparently developing his framework along the lines of Lyotard's *differend*,[30] Boeve proposes that the heterogeneity of the

---

[27]Boeve, "Resurrection: Saving Christian Particularity: Theological-epistemological Considerations of Incarnation and Truth," 799.

[28]Boeve, "Resurrection: Saving Christian Particularity: Theological-epistemological Considerations of Incarnation and Truth," 801.

[29]Boeve, "Resurrection: Saving Christian Particularity: Theological-epistemological Considerations of Incarnation and Truth," 801.

[30]Jean François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

Incarnation (and Resurrection) serves as a moment of interruption against any universalizing or relativizing narratives. Boeve reflects,

> … is it not possible to understand Incarnation in an opposite sense, namely, by insisting that, if truth exists, it is to be found in the concrete, historical, and particular? In other words, is this not the ultimate meaning of Incarnation: that the "all-too-human" speaks for God, without diminishing God in the process and without assimilating humanity into God?[31]

The hermeneutic task for Boeve is not about a triumphalist and hegemonic proclamation but a trusting dialogue. Trust is the virtue which allows one to hold on to one's particularity, and bears witness to this faith-claim that rests on the affirmation of the liminal event of the Incarnation. The points raised by Boeve relate to the question of the relevance and irrelevance of the Incarnation (as a hermeneutic strategy) on several fronts.

In relation to the contemporary context, the corporeal materiality of the Incarnation gives the Christian discourse a stake in the debate on meaning-giving in the estheticized cyberculture. The Incarnation

> helps Catholicism to resist being coopted and domesticated by certain cultural trends. For example, it can prevent Catholic belief from being reduced to yet another cultural commodity (e.g., as a pawn in the culture wars, or as a therapeutic self-help remedy) or being branded a quite unfashionable, all-too-inadequate "determinable faith" by postmodern philosophy of religion. The postmodern discussion prefers to label as more authentic or "true" those notions of religion that are formalistic and disembodied, such as "religion without religion" and "the impossible"—ironically, a replication of the Enlightenment search for a universal natural religion by an avowedly anti-Enlightenment philosophical discourse.[32]

---

[31]Boeve, "Resurrection: Saving Christian Particularity: Theological-epistemological Considerations of Incarnation and Truth," 802.

[32]Godzieba, Boeve, & Saracino, "Resurrection-Interruption-Transformation: Incarnation as Hermeneutical Strategy," 791.

The Incarnation narrative seems to provide a critical resource against the homogenizing and commodifying tendencies in cyberspace where concrete bodies disappear or are subjected to the worst kinds of objectification and voyeurism. While there is value in the capability of cyberspace to free the body from denigrating social, cultural and paternalistic categorizations, there is the possibility of the body losing its irreplaceable historicity and the recalcitrant meaning of the palpable body in the face of adjustable avatars, "photoshoppable" images and "croppable" profile pictures. This of course has implications on ecclesiology.[33]

The defense of the Incarnation regarding the goodness of corporeal materiality is also a critical tool against the pre-modern, modern and post-modern cybergnostic, recurring tendency of body and mind dualism. Against the tendency to disparage the body as limiting, and to scoff at reality as boring and ridden with suffering, the Incarnation affirms the elemental affirmative value of materiality and history. In the incarnation discourse, the world becomes a space of grace. This

[33]The local church praxis as lived by Basic Ecclesial Communities might be the first casualty in the onslaught of an abstract cyberchurch. An example of a cyberchurch may be implied in the proposal of the "Liquid Church." The idea of the "liquid church" is contained in the Anglican theologian Pete Ward's book of the same title (Peabody, MA: Paternoster, 2002). Ward is enthused by the work of the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in the latter's intimation of postmodernity as implying the dissolution of the "ossified edifices" of institutions. Ward takes over this metaphor and applies it to ecclesiology. He believes that the church as a theological concept has undergone a process of reification as exhibited in the institutional. Against this, he proposes for a de-institutionalized expression of Christian faith which can be found in existing networks and cyber-connections that work for the church. Ward would seem to believe that gatherings, large and small, informal, ephemeral or commercial-church like phenomena have ecclesial relevance, regardless of their connections with particular congregations or denominations. See Pete Ward, *Liquid Church* (Peabody, MA: Paternoster, 2002); Kees de Groot, "The Church in Liquid Modernity: A Sociological and Theological Exploration of a Liquid Church," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6 (2006): 91–103. On Bauman, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).

not only has implications on traditional discussions on soteriology but also on contemporary sacramental discourse.

> Recent sociological studies of religions as ensembles of meaningful practices have emphasized that bodily metaphors are central to the communication of all types of religious faith. This is because "the body is traditionally always the nearest-to-hand source of metaphors for understanding society," including religious society.[34]

The incarnationalism of Christianity also has a performative implication in relation to ecological praxis.

The particularity of incarnation resonates with the contemporary concern that the political economy of global capitalism unhinges the dialectical bond between empirical referents and the formation of discourse (e.g., women, natives vis-à-vis genderization and racialization).

> Once this dialectical bond is unhinged, advanced capitalism looks like a system that promotes feminism without women, racism without races, natural laws without nature, reproduction without sex, sexuality without genders, multiculturalism without ending racism, economic growth without development, and cash flow without money.[35]

Nowhere is this phenomenon more prevalent than in cyberspace. The cybernetic individualism that seems to focus on quantitative pluralities (and not on qualitative heterogeneities) is a hallmark of the consumerist capitalistic cyberculture.[36] This problematic is what Godzieba mentions as the fetishizing of an idealized image but at the same time the suppressing of the substantiality of real bodies. The

---

[34]Godzieba, Boeve, & Saracino, "Resurrection-Interruption-Transformation: Incarnation as Hermeneutical Strategy," 789. See also Bryan S. Turner & Chris Rojek, *Society and Culture: Principles of Scarcity and Solidarity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 215.

[35]Rosi Braidotti, "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity," http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/braidotti.html.

[36]For example, young people in Manhattan wear Che Guevarra shirts because it is the "in thing" or it is "cool" without really asking about the transformative nature of Che Guevarra's revolution (against capitalistic America!). The flesh and blood Guevarra is unhinged so to say from Guevarra the cool figure in cyberculture.

point: incarnation as a hermeneutic strategy puts us back into the trenches where the real battle is fought—the concrete and historical particularity. For example, "being green" is cool and all in cyberspace but the real battle in preserving ecological balance begins to be fought when one plants a real tree in a watershed and not in Farmville.[37] There is no substitute for the particular and the concrete.

Networked Subjectivity

But we also can no longer return to the age of typewriters and analogue cellular phones. There remains the task of constructing a subjectivity which is simultaneously local-global—particular but networked. There are some resonances here with what Braidotti mentions as Deleuze's idea of the subject:

> Deleuze builds and expands upon Foucault's archaeology of the modern subject of "bio-power" but goes much further conceptually. He replaces the old subject formation with a notion of the subject as a cluster of complex and intensive forces—intensive assemblages which connect and inter-relate with others in a variety of ways.[38]

It is an on-going concern indeed what may constitute the assemblage. It is crucial to realize that, as Haraway mentioned, we are already cyborgs. The body is a place where boundary is negotiated nowadays: "the human body is fully immersed in systems of reception and processing of information, what which emanates from its genetic structures, as much as that which is relayed by satellites and wired circuits throughout the advanced world."[39] This global hybridization however might be just another unhinging or quantitative increase of pluralization. Braidotti's plea is to affirm particular and grounded subjectivities collectively bound in some sort of a pan-humanitarian

[37]Farmville is a farming simulation game put together by Zynga in 2009. The game involves all aspects imaginable (and beyond) of farming: from plowing fields, to planting crops, to harvesting trees, to trading farm produce. It presents an idealized image of a farm without agrarian disputes or questions about fair trade and farmers' exploitation.

[38]Braidotti, "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity."

[39]Braidotti, "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity."

connectivity. That way, the subject becomes grounded "in a materially embedded sense of responsibility and ethical accountability for the environment s/he inhabits."[40]

V. Conclusion

Bodies matter. In the Christian narrative, material corporeality is so important that it is found everywhere in the storyline of what it considers salvation history: Creation, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the sacraments that continue to re-present the story of the Word-made-flesh. In a context of disembodied discourses and disembodying technological advances, incarnation bears witness to the recalcitrant quality of historical and existential materiality. Incarnation is not terrified by hybridity because nothing can be more hybrid than the discourse of the God-human. But there remains the task of the assemblage of subjectivity in cybercontext. Perhaps on this one, we can turn to the transgressive understanding of Jesus as a borderland person. In postcolonial biblical criticism, Jesus is being interpreted as a liminal person whose voyages transform barriers into bridging symbols.[41] "The frontiers of his land project into his soul: indigenous Galilean, culturally mixed, out-caste, transgressive of borders. That is why he can see new things."[42] The narratives about Jesus' marginal boundary crossings exemplify God's hospitality as unbounded by racial and national boundaries.[43] Perhaps this is the relevance of the Incarnation: the Word made flesh, both networked and accountable, challenging us to a connectivity that does not forget humanity.

---

[40]Braidotti, "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity."

[41]Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 17, 42.

[42]Marianne Sawicki, *Crossing Galilie: Architectures of Contact in the Occupied Land of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 94.

[43]Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-biblical World*, Bible & Liberation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 74–81.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 17–36

THE DEEPENING DIGITAL DIVIDE AND THE CONCEPT OF HOSPITALITY

Dominador Bombongan, Jr.

Introduction: Providing the Context

Our present day society has been characterized as information and network based. "The concept of the *information society* is a *substantial* characterization of societies in which information increasingly is the primary means and product of all processes. The concept of network society is a formal characterization emphasizing a particular social (infra)structure and organization of contemporary society."[1] One may say that developed countries possess more of the characteristics of being an information and network society than do developing countries.

The Information Society

An information society relies heavily, for its functioning and survival, on processed information brought about by information and communication technologies (ITC). Information then becomes

[1]Jan A. G. M van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 133.

a primary good.[2] This means that for a person to participate well in society, a certain level of acquisition of information is necessary. The truth, however, is that not all gain the same level of information or knowledge in our society. Furthermore, in this kind of society, information has become leverage for productivity and power. This implies that having greater access to digitalized information results in wielding more power and leads to efficient production processes that effect increased and superior output. On the level of individual appropriation of digitalized information/knowledge, "[s]ome individuals have better mental skills to deal with the processing [of] data than others." Thus, "[d]ifferential skills may lead to rising skill premiums"[3] that cause income inequalities. "Information technology and digital skills may play a role in current income polarization, as they may lead to higher and more valuable skills for some employees and lower and less valuable skills for others."[4] In terms of group appropriation of information/data/knowledge from the new media, some groups have more available social and cultural resources to process information, thereby giving them a significant advantage over others who do not have the same material resources. This is also compounded by the fact that one's social position (membership in a household, business, nation, etc.) will also determine access to information. In other words, while there is an information overload on the Internet, not everyone has access to it. Only those who are in certain advantageous positions of society can avail the most of this crucial information. Hence, this makes digitalized information a positional good. "Existing positions and their information opportunities enable people to gain all kinds of resources and obtain (even) better positions."[5] The key point to

[2]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*. He writes: "Primary goods are goods that are so essential for the survival and self-respect of individuals that they can not be exchanged for goods. Rights, freedoms, life chances, and a particular basic level of income are the most familiar examples of nonmaterial primary goods."

[3]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 143.

[4]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 143.

[5]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 143.

realize when talking about social equality and inequality in relation to the information society is this: one's possession of information/knowledge alone does not per se lead to equality or inequality. Rather, possession of it must be coupled with one's strategic position in society to determine control and power which eventually leads to the binary division of the haves and the have-nots of the digital world.

The Network Society

Social positioning can be assessed by the social network a *netizen* belongs to.

> Certain positions in social and media networks increasingly establish a person's power in society …. In social networks, one finds "stars" or "centers" as well as people who are isolated or hold peripheral positions. In media networks, there are people who design, fill, and control broadcasting, telecommunication, and computer networks and people who, more or less, only use them.[6]

While the concept of the information society deals with the changing substances of activities and processes in contemporary developed societies, the idea of network society relates to the "changing organizational forms and (infra)structures of these societies."[7] Both, however, are related concepts and reinforce one another. In other words, the latter refers to the social and organizational forms and structures that are responsible for the qualitative and quantitative shifts that are responsible for configuring the information society.

Networks have some "equalizing properties." For one, they create and facilitate the cheapest, widest and the most rapid way of connecting people across vast distances of time and space/place. The Internet is the best example of this. For another, its so-called flat structure generates more reciprocity and complementarity among its actors rather than a top-down, bureaucratic and unequal structure as is the case

[6]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 145.

[7]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 146.

with hierarchies and markets, respectively. Networks allow a "wider dispersion of information, contacts, goods, services and resources in general that is beneficial to many."[8]

However, there are also elements of networks that promote social inequality. If the primary aim is "to extend the environment to find new contacts, sources of information, resources, jobs and the like or to extend a particular division of labor …,[9]" then in a network, there are those who are included and/or excluded depending on one's contribution to it. There is, therefore, a lot of selection and screening as to who will be invited to the network. Membership is thus provisional. Weak links are always threatened with being cut off from the network once they become useless.

> This is rather different from traditional social communities and organizations, in which the weak are carried along by the strong in some kind of solidarity … the weak remain visible, and they have their own role to play, even if it is only the role of the village idiot … the network society tends to be a harsh, individualized typed of society, as compared to relatively united traditional and mass societies ….[10]

In addition, "[a]ctors in networks try to vary their contacts, relationships, and information sources to acquire better opportunities of selection for survival."[11] Hence, the degree of one's role varies depending on the benefit one gives. This means that not all actors in the network have the same degree of connection to the center. The weaker ones are merely accessories to potential linkages, while the core or star actors in the network tend to protect their own position and interests.

> The larger and more extended the network becomes, the more positions are spread across central and peripheral spaces and places. They are divided among the hubs (the proverbial "spiders in the net") and the terminal fringes of the network. Consequently, all existing categorical inequalities in our society concerning employers and managers, and

---

[8]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 146.

[9]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 148.

[10]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 149.

[11]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 149.

> executive personnel, males and females, majorities and minorities, citizens and migrants, and others are reproduced in unequal network positions and relations.[12]

This may lead to the formation of a new class of people called the *infocrats in an infocracy*. They are the super techies who are capable of centralizing resources into centers or hubs. As a consequence, this may create an opportunity for hoarding by those who are closest to the information. Since they have crucial information, they have a greater chance to avail of opportunities and services. This is further exacerbated by the fact that access to opportunities also depends on who has the fastest and most powerful means of web connection. Moreover, those who have the most recent computer applications, systems and programs, and the skills to operate them, will also have better opportunities in work, education and social life. So we may say that

> … having a particular position in social and media networks defines one's position in society. Having no access to these networks means absolute exclusion. Obtaining a more or less central position inside networks entails relative exclusion; that is benefitting more or less from resources exchanged and participating more or less in decisions made. The structure of social and media networks has properties that are capable of extending and reducing equality. They support equality through extended connectivity and a relatively flat distribution and control. However, they reduce it through highly selective membership practices and requirements of participation.[13]

The Deepening Digital Divide

What I have presented are some of the findings that Jan A. G. M van Dijk provides in his book *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society*. In effect, all of these observations boil down to his main thesis: "possession and control of resources in society affect the distribution (whether equal or unequal) of access to the new media (computer/internet); corollary to this is the view that one's position

[12]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 151.

[13]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 160.

in society galvanizes one's control and access to the new media." Put differently, those who have the most means of access and resources to avail of the new media will be the socially advantaged class while those who have the least access (e.g., physically, motivationally, skills-wise) will be the most disadvantaged. This social reality produces what he calls social inequality or the so-called Matthew Effect, to use the term coined by the sociologist Robert Merton. The latter implies that to those who have more, more still will be given. Put succinctly, the rich will get richer with the availability of the new media technology. As van Dijk puts it, "those who already have a head start in possessing particular resources benefit more from a new resource than those who are behind and already have some disadvantage."[14] Whether in terms of physical access or skills access, "the social class with high income, high education, high level of occupation, and full employment; the ethnic majority in a country, and the generation with the highest learning potential (the younger generation)—was the first to take advantage of the new technology."[15] For van Dijk, this demonstrates the source of a deepening digital divide that causes social inequality. The idea that a group's control of the means of production or social resources means control of society is not a novel idea. This idea, however, gains more relevance as the new forms of media (digital technology) become decisive in all facets of life. Viewed from this perspective, the digital divide is not only a technological problem (in terms of physical access to it) but a social problem as well. The digital divide, in other words, cannot be remedied by simply providing computers for all. Rather, it entails a certain reorganization of society to make it more socially inclusive. The logical question then to ask is how do we bring about social inclusion, rather than social exclusion, in an information and network society? To this issue we now turn.

Derrida and the Question of Hospitality

In the book titled *Of Hospitality*, Derrida writes:

[14]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 125.

[15]van Dikj, *The Deepening Divide*, 125.

> Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the newcomer … what is your name? Tell me your name, what should I call you, I who am calling on you, I who want to call you by your name? What am I going to call you? … Or else does hospitality begin with the unquestioning welcome, in a double effacement, the effacement of the question and the name?[16]

Quoted above is a key to understanding Derrida's notion of hospitality. Hence, in this short exposition, this key passage will be further elucidated in order to provide a framework for dealing with the question of social inclusion in an information and network society.

Of Hospitality

Jacques Derrida, however, raises a formidable challenge to the logic of hospitality as it is understood and practiced. He brings to a focal point the "performative contradiction" or *aporia* apparent in it.[17] For him, the hospitality conundrum is articulated as follows: "as we offer hospitality (its possibility) its conditions of impossibility [sip] in." As it were, a deconstruction takes place.[18] As hospitability is being defined and practiced in concrete ways, its very existence and essence are brought into question. Succinctly expressed, in the gesture of hospitality, one is always made to ask if such an enthusiastic offer of hospitality is authentic or not. This paradox is what Derrida sought to explain.

---

[16]Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. Rachel Bowldy (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 27–28. Henceforth referred to as *Of Hospitality*.

[17]See Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 65; also Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality," trans. Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 5:3 (December 2000): 4. Henceforth referred to as "Hospitality."

[18]Derrida writes: "Hospitality is a self-contradictory concept and experience which can only self-destruct [put otherwise, produce itself as impossible, only be possible on the condition of its impossibility] or protect itself from itself, auto-immunize itself in some way, which is to say, deconstruct itself—precisely—in being put into practice." See Derrida, "Hospitality," 5.

An Antimony

Derrida then directs our attention to an underlying essential antinomy that makes up the general concept of hospitality. He argues that this antinomy needs to be constantly negotiated, and so he explains the internal dynamics in hospitality in the following way:

> … there would be an antinomy, an insoluble antinomy, a non-dialectizable antinomy between, on the one hand, the law of unlimited hospitality …, and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional …[19]

A sharp distinction is made between the *law* of hospitality and the *laws* of hospitality.[20] The former brings about unconditional and unlimited hospitality. The latter offer conditional and limited forms of hospitality. While the law of hospitality eschews juridical imperatives from its discourse, the laws of hospitality court the language of rights, duties and obligation.

The Hyperbolic Demands of the Law of Hospitality

On the one hand, we discern the daunting requirements for unconditional/absolute hospitality. Derrida stipulates these requirements:

> … absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner …, but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality

[19]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 77. See also 135, 148–149.

[20]Derrida speaks about the two regimes that constitute hospitality, i.e., "the unconditional or hyperbolical on the one hand, and the conditional and juridico-political, even the ethical, on the other." See *Of Hospitality*, 135–137.

> by right, with law or justice as rights. Just hospitality breaks with hospitality by right …[21]

One already senses the "hyperbole" that this kind of hospitality involves.[22] One is even tempted to ask about the viability of this form of hospitality in actual terms.

Hospitality of a "Modest" Kind

On the other hand, we discover more practicable and controllable prerequisites for conditional hospitality. Conditional hospitality involves duties and obligations enshrined in our laws and ethical systems. Derrida locates them in the "Greco-Roman tradition and even the Judeo-Christian one, by all of law and all philosophy of law up to Kant and Hegel in particular, across the family, civil society, and the State."[23] While this kind of hospitality is a welcome development and a necessary step toward hospitality, for Derrida, the "juridicality involved in Kant's discourse" makes Kant's offer still very conditional, conditioned by the host, not constituting a radical break from the regime of rights and obligations.[24]

---

[21]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 25.

[22]Derrida sometimes refers to unconditional or absolute hospitality as hyperbolical hospitality. See *Of Hospitality*, 135.

[23]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 77.

[24]See Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 70–72, where he explains the implications of the Kantian view. He opines: "Does this mean that the Kantian host therefore treats the one who is staying with him as a foreigner? Yes and no. He treats him as a human being, but he sets up his relationship to the one who is in his house as a matter of the law, in the same way as he also does the relationships linking him to murderers, the police, or judges. From the point of view of the law, the guest, even when he is well received, is first of all a foreigner, he must remain a foreigner. Hospitality is due to the foreigner, certainly, but remains, like the law, conditional, and thus conditioned in its dependence on the unconditionality that is the basis of the law."

A Paradoxical Law

When these regimes of hospitality, in a manner of speaking, fuse horizons, the relationship becomes not only problematic and paradoxical but even vicious. He contends that

> [t]he law of hospitality, the express law that governs the general concept of hospitality, appears as a paradoxical law, pervertible or perverting. It seems to dictate that absolute hospitality should break with the law of hospitality as right or duty, with the "pact" of hospitality.[25]

Derrida then seems to drive a wedge between the two regimes, implying a radical separation of one from the other. Put differently, Derrida steers away from a legal or juridical frame of reference on hospitality. Most of the time, however, he insists on a continuous need for negotiation between these interweaving forms of hospitality. This is so that gestures of hospitality are refined and purified to their purest forms or, at least, so that expressions of hospitality appropriate the more ideal or pristine form. For him, they (two regimes of hospitality) are interlaced and constitutive of one another. They make up two faces of one coin or, better still, the relationship may be compared to a double-edged sword reality.

The *law* of hospitality needs to be contextualized for concreteness and relevance, while the *laws* of hospitality have to be constantly open to the horizon of the former in order to be more encompassing and daring. Hence, the paradox lies in the law of hospitality "forced" to don the garb of "rights and obligations" in order to exist and become concrete, but the process endangers and violates its very nature, so what Derrida proposes is a playful balance of this double imperative. Concisely expressed, the "impossible"/unconditional hospitality is marked by a horizon of continuous openness. This safeguards hospitality from being confined to or hijacked by encumbering legal narratives that hamper its potential for pure perfection. Oscillation then, between both poles, allows one to test the degree and depth of responsible hospitality that one can offer to a guest or stranger. Derrida, commenting on this relationship, maintains the following idea:

---

[25]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 25.

> But even while keeping itself above the laws of hospitality, the unconditional law of hospitality needs the laws, it requires them. This demand is constitutive. It wouldn't be effectively unconditional, the law, if it didn't have to become effective, concrete, determined, if that were not its being as having-to-be. It would risk being abstract, utopian, illusory, and so turning over into its opposite. In order to be what it is, the law thus needs the laws, which, however, deny it, or at any rate threaten it, sometimes corrupt or pervert it. And must always be able to do this.[26]

In short, a tug-of-war occurs between these extreme poles to test each other's limits and strength. The relationship is such, for the law of hospitality and the laws of hospitality, that both are irreducible and indissociable from one another. It may be said then that Derrida's concern is not simply the shift from the language of rights and obligation to the language of "excess" and pure gift. For him, it is actually pushing the limits of hospitality that is at issue. More will be said about this later.

Hospitality as a Pure Gift

As pure gift, absolute hospitality requires sheer gratuity on the part of the host. Derrida ascertains this when he said "[f]or to be what it 'must' be, hospitality must not pay a debt, or be governed by a duty: it is gracious …."[27] For if hospitality is done "out of duty" and expects something in return from the visitor, then "it is no longer graciously offered beyond debt and economy."[28] Hence, if it were a question of duty, it would violate the logic of the utter gratuitousness of the gift.

Elsewhere, he similarly reflects on its utter gratuity and broaches the danger of losing it (giftedness) as soon as the host projects, unto his guests, familiarizing legal and judicial categories. He posts the questions as follows:

---

[26]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 79.

[27]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 83.

[28]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 83.

> Does one give hospitality to a subject? To an identifiable subject? To a subject identifiable by name? To a legal subject? Or is hospitality *rendered,* is it *given* to the other before they are identified, even before they are (posited as or supposed to be) a subject, legal subject and subject nameable by their family name, etc.?[29]

Therefore, imposition of expectations and creating a "quid pro quo" situation (something done in exchange for something else or merely returning a favor) with the guest subverts the logic of absolute hospitality. An attitude of "unquestioning welcome" is what is advocated by Derrida.

The Insecure Host

Insecurity causes the host to adopt convenient mental and physical scaffoldings like notions of family, nation, citizenship or language. As mentioned already, this violates the very being of the guest/foreigner because of the non-recognition of his/her distinctiveness and uniqueness. Compelling a guest to speak the language of the host, as a pre-condition for being invited, is accordingly the first violation of hospitality because it assimilates and co-opts the guest to the culture of the host, thus disregarding his/her heritage.[30]

On another level, labels and designations demarcate boundaries and put constraints on hospitality. This "act of naming" not only assures the host that his guest respects the rule of law, and subjects himself or herself to it,[31] but more importantly reassures the host that he is still the "master of the house" and, as such, is the one who is in command and in power (despotic sovereignty and the virile mastery

[29]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 27.

[30]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 15–16.

[31]"In telling me what your name is, responding to this request, you are responding on your own behalf, you are responsible before the law and before your hosts, you are subject in law." See Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 27.

of the master)[32] when he allows the visitor into the comforts of his home. Derrida expounds on this:

> ... that the host, he who offers hospitality, must be the master in his house, he (male in the first instance) must be assured of his sovereignty over the space and goods he offers or opens to the other as stranger. This seems both the law of laws of hospitality and common sense in our culture. It does not seem to me that I am able to open up or offer hospitality, however generous, even in order to be generous, without reaffirming: this is mine, I am at home, you are welcome in my home, without any implication of "make yourself at home" but on condition that you observe the rules of hospitality by respecting the being-at-home of my home, the being-itself of what I am.[33]

As soon as the host perceives encroachment on his sovereignty, he begins to consider the guest a nuisance, a parasite[34] or "an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy.[35]" Here hospitality becomes hostility.[36]

---

[32]Derrida describes the sense of power that reassures the host that he is still in control in the following way: "I want to be master at home *(ipse, potis, potens,* head of house, we have seen all that), to be able to receive whomever I like there. Anyone who encroaches on my 'at home,' on my ipseity, on my power of hos-pitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage." The notion of hostage here is understood as an encroachment on the host's sovereignty and not in a positive sense that will be discussed later in relation to the view of Levinas. See Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 54. See also "Hospitality," 15.

[33]Derrida, "Hospitality," 14.

[34]A guest is considered a parasite when he or she does not have the legal protection accorded to him or her by the State as a foreigner. A parasite is "illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest" by virtue of the fact that he/she does not have the right to hospitality. See Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 59.

[35]Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 53–54.

[36]According to Derrida, the Latin word for *hostis,* which means guest or stranger, can, etymologically, also take the meaning of an enemy. The interplay of usage is significant for Derrida because, in the shift of meaning, he calls our

A "Terrifying" Gift

While a pure gift, absolute hospitality nonetheless is terrifying because of its "unimaginable demands." Derrida argues that "[i]t may be terrible because the newcomer may be a good person, or may be the devil; but if you exclude the possibility that the newcomer is coming to destroy your house—if you want to control this and exclude in advance this possibility—there is no hospitality."[37] When control and calculation set in, these are manifested in strict immigration controls, locked doors or security systems to screen and weed out undesirable aliens or visitors. Unconditional hospitality as a gratuitous gift, for Derrida, requires the host "to accept the risk of the other coming and destroying the place, initiating a revolution, stealing everything, or killing everyone. That is the risk of pure hospitality and pure gift, because a pure gift might be terrible too."[38]

The images of door-less houses and borderless states inform the ethos of unconditional hospitality. These images stand in stark contrast to the images of locked doors, secured keys and protected thresholds accompanying conditional hospitality. Commenting on this, Derrida notes:

> … [t]o take up the figure of the door, for there to be hospitality, there must be a door. But if there is a door, there is no longer hospitality. There is no hospitable house. There is no house without doors and windows. But as soon as there are a door and windows, it means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality. There must be a threshold. But if there is a threshold, there is no longer hospitality.[39]

---

attention to the fact that hospitality can take the form of hostility, meaning a guest (hostis) can be considered a hostile enemy (hotis). See "Hospitality," 15.

[37]Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice …," 71.

[38]Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice …," 71.

[39]Derrida, "Hospitality," 14.

Paralysis or Openness

Because absolute hospitality is terrifying, it may lead to paralysis which immobilizes the host. When paralysis takes hold, protectionist attitudes such as xenophobia, ethnocentrism and the perpetuation of a nationalist agenda gain ground. With absolute hospitality, however, fortified walls of security must come crumbling down. Confronted with a "door-less" and "wall-less" situation, the host feels vulnerable, powerless and anxious. The fear of the unknown and the distressing thought of the imminent danger that lurks in the background cause the host to freeze at the threshold. For Derrida, the antidote to this kind of paralysis is not erecting and constructing more defences but the unconditional embrace and welcome of the stranger. With the doors gone, the host can now, with open arms, let the uninvited visitor enter his unprotected space or turf. We therefore find Derrida pushing the agenda of pure hospitality to the extreme.[40] He argues his case in the following way:

> … I am saying that this apparently aporetic paralysis on the threshold "is" … what must be overcome …. If there is hospitality, the impossible must be done …, this "is" being in order that, beyond hospitality, hospitality may come to pass. Hospitality can only take place beyond hospitality, in deciding to let it come, overcoming the hospitality that paralyzes itself on the threshold which it is.[41]

The Element of Surprise

Absolute hospitality brings pleasant surprises to the host and may even lead to his "conversion" and awakening as he encounters the unexpected visitor. In light of this, Derrida distinguishes the concept of *visitation* from *invitation*. "In visitation there is no door. Anyone can come at any time and can come in without needing a key for the door. There are no customs checks with a visitation. But there are customs

[40]See Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice …," 70.

[41]Derrida, "Hospitality," 14.

and police checks with an invitation."[42] Thus, selection and filtering of invitees occur in invitation.

Likewise, this element of surprise comes out in his concepts of *messianism* and *messianicity*.[43] *Messianism* is like conditional hospitality because it projects certain ideals on the "other" so that they conform to one's expectations of them. "When imagining the coming of the Messiah the host attributes a new kind of origin and centrism to a divine other and assumes the latter suits their imaginative picture."[44] The other's "otherness" then dissipates in the empowering shadow of the host. Unlike *messianism*, *messianicity* lets the other or messiah be. Like unconditional hospitality, one has no *a priori* expectations of the other. It is open to unexpected surprises, brought about by the encounter with the uninvited other, taken from his/her otherness or difference. *Messianicity* is not limited only to the religious context but may "apply to a friend, someone culturally different, a parent, a child; where the issue arises of whether we are capable of recognizing them, of respecting their difference, and of how we may be surprised by them."[45]

---

[42]Derrida, "Hospitality," 14.

[43]In his interview, Derrida expounds on these themes:

> I try to dissociate the concept of this pure hospitality from the concept of "invitation". If you are the guest and I invite you, if I am expecting you and am prepared to meet you, then this implies that there is no surprise, everything is in order. For pure hospitality or a pure gift to occur, however, there must be an absolute surprise. The other, like the Messiah, must arrive whenever he or she wants. She may even not arrive. I would oppose, therefore, the traditional and religious concept of "visitation" to "invitation": visitation implies the arrival of someone who is not expected, who can show up at any time. If I am unconditionally hospitable I should welcome the visitation, not the invited guest, but the visitor. I must be unprepared or prepared to be unprepared, for the unexpected arrival of any other. (See "Hospitality, Justice …," 70)

[44]See Kevin O'Gorman, "Jacques Derrida's Philosophy of Hospitality," *The Hospitality Review* 8:4 (October 2006): 53.

[45]See O'Gorman, "Jacques Derrida's Philosophy of Hospitality," 53.

Being "Hostaged" by the Wholly Other

It is in the visitation and messianicity that the host experiences being "hostaged" by his/her guest in the comfort of his/her home. Hostage here is not understood in a negative sense as being captured (hostage taking) by a criminal or terrorist demanding a ransom. Rather, "being hostaged" in this context pertains to the discourse of Emmanuel Levinas. Accordingly for Levinas, "… the exercise of ethical responsibility begins where I am and must be the hostage of the other, delivered passively to the other before being delivered to myself …."[46]

Hence, in this "hostage" situation, a process of reversal takes place. The host becomes the guest of his own house and the guest becomes the host. It is the guest who makes the host feel at ease and at home. As the host is confronted with the face of the other and allows the guest to be who he is, the host takes on the perspective of the other and is able to respect and speak with the other on equal terms. "[I]t is through the condition of being a hostage …," "that there can be pity, compassion, pardon and proximity in the world …."[47]

The face of the truly *Other* guest, therefore, summons us to transformation and conversion. It is an interruption of the self.[48] The guest teaches us something about our insecurities and finitude as contextual human beings. Thus, it is by looking beyond the self and letting our secured world be disturbed, by the presence of the other, that we salvage ourselves from our bigotry, narrow-mindedness and chauvinism. These life-alterations come about when real hospitality takes place. Derrida thus explains the task that a host must perform in a condition of pure hospitality:

> … the master of this house, the master in his own home, the host, can only accomplish his task as host, that is, hospitality, in becoming

[46]Derrida, "Hospitality," 9.

[47]Derrida, "Hospitality," 9.

[48]See Mark W. Westmoreland, "Interruptions: Derrida and Hospitality," *Kritike* 2:1 (June 2008): 1–10.

> invited by the other into his home, in being welcomed by him whom he welcomes, in receiving the hospitality he gives.[49]

In an unexpected turn of events, it is now the visitor that makes the host truly at home.[50] Derrida writes:

> The Laws of Hospitality, one which describes the contradiction in the essence of the hostess, the other, a conclusion, which tells of the final reversal of the roles of host and guest [*de l'hôte et de l'hôte*], of the inviting *hôte* as host (the master in his own home) and the invited *hôte* as guest, of the inviting and the invited, … of the becoming-invited, if you like, of the one inviting. The one inviting becomes almost the hostage of the one invited, of the guest [*hôte*], the hostage of the one he receives, the one who keeps him at home.[51]

Conclusion: Theology of Hospitality and its Logic of Pure Excess

The information and network society, as we have seen, produces outcasts and cast-aways simply because of their inability to access, catch up with, and enjoy the supposed benefits of this form of society. For us who are found in the center, these cast-aways of the network society are a consequence of our attempts, whether intentional or unintentional, to protect our virtual space and digital turf. In the language of Derrida, they are the unexpected guests who knock on the center and hubs of our network society. The question is: will we let them in or will we let them fade away as we further weave our social networks? Going back to Derrida's notion of hospitality, one might be tempted, upon reading his notion of pure and unconditional hospitality, to easily dismiss it on the grounds of being unrealistic and

---

[49]Derrida, "Hospitality," 9.

[50]The French word *hôte* may take two meanings: it can mean both host and guest. For Derrida, this distinction is important to express the "hostage" taking experience that happens when a host becomes infinitely open in welcoming the guest. Cf. footnote 39.

[51]Derrida, "Hospitality," 9.

unworkable, in both political and ethical terms. It also negates logical thought or even sane reasoning in its attitude of sheer openness and embrace of the stranger, notwithstanding the danger that he or she might bring with him or her. Who, in his or her proper senses, would welcome a potential murderer or terrorist into his or her home? Or who would want to share a table with one who is different and a "suspicious-looking" stranger? Logic dictates that the master of the house should guard his or her house vigilantly and screen out those who are perceived as threats to the security and peace of the household. But Derrida would consider this very cautious stance towards a visitor as a mockery of the real meaning of hospitality, and here lies precisely the importance of Derrida's notion of unconditional hospitality in its transcendence or logic of pure excess, for it forces us to closely consider our ideas and expressions of hospitality and dares us to transcend or go beyond calculative, limited and legalistic forms of hospitality. It compels us to offer ever greater and more generous hospitality, even to the point of confronting our self-preserving convictions and beliefs. In other words, his idea of pure hospitality keeps the hope alive, in our hearts, that a better world is still possible, especially in the treatment of strangers or visitors. The notion of absolute hospitality also safeguards the reverence given to the wholly *other* considered as gift rather than an unwanted alien or visitor. Even the total stranger, according to Derrida, can bring about surprising transformation in the encounter process. Indeed, Derrida's pure hospitality is a dangerous notion. But the dangerous and the different have a way of forcing reality to come to its proper senses, for, as Derrida argues,

> [w]ithout this thought of pure hospitality … we would not even have the idea of the other, of the alterity of the other, that is someone who enters into our lives without being [sic] been invited. We would not even have the idea of love or of "living together (vivre ensemble)" with the other in a way that is not a part of some totality or "ensemble."[52]

Aptly expressed, without this thought (pure hospitality) we would not even have the perspective to correct our conditional and limited offer of hospitality.

---

[52]Derrida, "Hospitality," 129.

At this point, we have not even broached the idea of a hospitable God who is the host of all, especially the marginalized of society. Nor have we mentioned Jesus of Nazareth whose praxis has made God's offer of hospitality concrete and realizable. Derrida's idea of gratuitous hospitality is, I think, a philosophical equivalent to what we have always believed and thought theologically about Jesus' *Abba*. As we continue to theologize on the impact of the new media and the digital world, and as we, as our conference theme suggests, "cast our nets" into this novel reality, let us be reminded that perhaps the nets we cast lead to entanglements and entrapments rather than to the sheer offer of God's hospitality, especially to those on the disadvantaged side of the deepening digital divide.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 37–47

CYBERTECHNOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

An Uneasy Relationship

Delfo Cortina Canceran, O.P.

Etymology of Theology

Theology is Greek. As we know, Greek was widely spoken as the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world and would eventually become the official parlance of the Byzantine Empire. The Greek language holds an important place in the history of Europe, the more loosely defined Western world, and Christianity, in particular the Catholic religion. In fact, Greece was the birthplace of Western culture, with the latter being its seminal culture. Greek was also the language of many of the foundational texts of Western philosophy, such as those authored by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, the Christian Bible was written in Koiné Greek. The Greek language thus constitutes the discipline of classical study. The ancient Greeks pioneered in many fields that rely on systematic thought, such as philosophy and theology, in pursuit of order and proportion. Greek culture thus had a powerful influence which focused on the role of reason which in turn provided the foundation of modern Western culture.

The word theology comes from Greek, and combines two words: "theos" and "logos." Its etymology is ambiguous. The etymological combination of two Greek words (*theos* and *logos*) has created an ambiguity in the discipline of theology because it can mean "word of

God" or "word about God." The prepositions "of" and "about" are not insignificant because they provide the origin of the word—literally from God the Father or from theologian the man. The determination of origin is crucial. The origin gives the person authority to speak on behalf of God or a discipline. This authority justifies the division of the Church into a teaching Church and a listening Church. We know that the teaching Church resembles the magisterium of the Church which defines dogma. However, we know that language is a human creation and it follows that theology is the word about God. Theologians construct a body of knowledge about God, known as theology, as they reflect on God in the Bible and in the world. Thus, theology is a word about God expressed in human language.

These two observations are important in theology and in theologizing because they show the power of Eurocentrism in theology and the ventriloquism of Europe.

Discourse of Theology

Theology is dominantly theocentric and anthropocentric in content, made within the context of ecclesiastical authority. In scholastic theology, beings are hierarchically arranged according to their perfection and excellence. In this order, God occupies the apex followed by Jesus Christ the Son of God as the mediator and then humanity (to read: *man*). In this theology, the focus is on the relationship between God and man and the salvation brought about by the redemption of Jesus Christ in his Paschal Mystery.

In the curriculum, theology as a discipline in the university is placed within the Liberal Arts or Humanities. This section emphasizes the study of classical antiquity and the human condition in forming a citizen to be functional in society using speculative methods in inquiry. The aim of these studies was to produce a virtuous, knowledgeable and articulate person. In this curriculum, the humanism in theology is reinforced and ennobled. As we know, humanism emphasizes the value of human beings and capitalizes on rational thought. During the Renaissance period in Western Europe, humanist movements attempted

to demonstrate the benefit of gaining learning from classical sources as *ad fontes*, or of going back to the sources as the basis of knowledge.

Theology, due to its being dominantly theocentric and anthropocentric, thus becomes ambivalent to emerging technology. This ambivalence ranges from indifference to enjoyment. The dyad of the God and man relationship, as a natural scheme of being, precludes technology, invented by man, as it is far removed from that dyad and is an artificial artifact. The separation between natural and artificial plays a crucial role in the exclusion of technology in theological discourse. From a humanist viewpoint, technology is merely instrumental, therefore inessential and peripheral. Although technology is ubiquitous, theology generally remains indifferent in its standpoint and treatment of technology.

Exclusion of Technology

In the hierarchy of being, technology is conspicuously absent. Technology is an offshoot of practical knowledge produced directly by man and indirectly by God because the raw materials in making technology come from nature as the creation of God. The finished products come from the invention of man; these are created by man as a rational being. Since technology is apart or far removed from God in creation, I conjecture that theology undermines, if not dismisses, technology in the discourse about God. Theologians socialized in the theocentric and anthropocentric frameworks are also ignorant and unprepared to tackle the relationship and intertwinement of theology and technology.

Moreover, technology, being artificial (invented by the hands of man) and not natural (created by God as the author of nature), is excluded in theological discourse. Nature, in the broadest sense, is equivalent to the *natural world, physical world or material world*. The word *nature* is derived from the Latin word *natura* which refers to the essential qualities, innate disposition and intrinsic characteristics of the created world. The transformation of nature effected by man in this conceptualization of nature is already an artificial invention that falls outside the God-nature relationship since man mediates in the

transformation of nature into culture. In this scheme, the relationship between theology and technology is oblique to, if not incompatible with, theological discourse. The binary logic that operates in our worldview is responsible for the separation between nature and technology.

Relationship to Technology

In the relationship between theologian and technology, a relationship of distance is created. This distance is effected by the indirect relationship of God with technology and the direct relationship of humanity with technology. Since theology relates both to God and humanity, technology is only treated obliquely.

This distance is characterized by a consideration of technology as merely instrumental. As instrumental, technology is only a means to an end. Thus, the theologian uses technology as a means to his or her work as an academician in the university, scholar in the community, or researcher in an institution. Thus, the theologian uses the computer to encode his or her theological reflections for publication or lecture and to entertain him or herself when he/she is bored or tired from his or her work. Thus the computer is a means to finish a research paper or article. After finishing the paper or article, the theologian can leave the computer and proceed to the classroom or conference. Sometimes, he or she brings his or her computer into the classroom or conference to use, in his or her lecture or talk, or to aid his or her memory in the lecture or talk. In instrumental technology, the place of technology is diminished, while the position of theologian is elevated, because the performance of the theologian is highlighted in the process or activity. Thus, not only are work and leisure separated but also means and ends, as though they can be easily divorced or readily detached at any time.[1]

---

[1]Technophobia is not limited to anxiety towards technology but is linked with the consideration that technology is irrational and therefore merely instrumental. Technophobia is prevalent among the older adult population which missed out on technology in their education and socialization. Thus the Church, being a traditional institution, and the theologian, being immersed in humanism, can be

Aside from the instrumental view, we have another way of conceiving technology—the constructionist view. In the constructionist view, people construct the meaning of technology. In our example, the theologian constructs the meaning of technology for him or herself. Thus, he or she considers the computer as a means to his or her successful career or profession. The difference between the instrumental and constructionist views is that the intention of the inventor, of the technology, may not coincide with the intention of the user since in constructionism, it is the user, not the inventor, which determines the meaning of technology in the way he or she uses it. Technology is thus not only an instrument for an end, but also a companion in the room, a facility for work, and leisure during boredom. If the person is lonely or bored, he or she can just switch on the computer, log into the internet and surf websites. It is the user who determines the value or significance of technology.[2]

In contemporary discourse on technology, there is not just instrument or construction; technology is also a discursive practice. In discursive practice, technology constitutes the user. Technology is not something external to the user which he or she can detach or separate himself or herself from, as though the user remains the same. Nor does

---

susceptible to technophobia. The avoidance of theologizing on technology and the treatment of technology as instrumental are symptomatic of technophobia.

[2]Considering the price of a computer unit and an internet connection, cybertechnology caters to the needs and leisure of the elite in society. Since they can afford to acquire this technology, the rich have an edge in this information age, adding to their symbolic capital. Thus, the poor are deprived in this information age, and are dependent on the rich for information. The poor can afford the internet cafe but not own their own computer and internet technology.

In this case, a split is inevitable between those who are included in technology and those who are excluded from it. The rich class (the information-rich) takes advantage of this cybertechnology that further exacerbates the dismal condition of the poor class (the information-poor). In effect, the rich class outsmarts the poor class with this information technology which makes the poor more materially and informationally deprived.

the user determine the meaning of technology as though technology is a passive recipient of human construction. Technology constitutes the user. By constitution, we mean that technology not only affects the user but transforms him or her in the process or in the activity.

In the discursivist view, the interaction between theologian and technology is characterized by power relations. These power relations are not one-sided but dispersed. In this way, the relationship can be subjection where the subject (user) is subjected to another—technology. This is shown in the way the user is addicted to the internet whereby he or she submits to the power of technology, or in subjectivation where the subject recognizes himself or herself in technology. The subject and technology resemble each other whereby the user recognizes himself or herself in technology. This is shown in the way users become a media creation of technology, where social networking constitutes their identity as twitters, bloggers, etc. Discursivism thus focuses on practices as a domain of analysis that approaches the study of technology from the angle of what "is done" to the users. As institution, technology governs the behavior of the society in which people are placed and in which they are made. These practices, understood as a way of acting and thinking, constitute the users.

Identity of Theologian

As technology impinges on the theologian, it inevitably transforms his or her identity in the process. In the past, the theologian merely read books and journals alone in the library or in his or her room. Now, he or she can do research on the available websites of the internet and read these materials, especially when he or she is hurrying to finish his or her lessons or talks to beat a deadline. The theologian becomes dependent on the computer not only because it is convenient but also because it facilitates his or her work. For example, compare the use of the typewriter and computer. We know by experience that computer use is better for serving our needs as scholars and researchers in our fields.

However, the theologian does not only use the computer for research as a scholar, but for other activities as well. The use of

internet connected computers is not only for research in writing papers or articles but, after writing or during writing, the theologian can also chat with his or her friends using Skype, or upload his or her pictures and activities to Facebook. In addition, while writing he or she can also listen to music for inspiration or even view Youtube videos once in a while. In front of the computer connected to the internet, the theologian can perform various activities simultaneously: he or she can write a paper, listen to music, and view videos. Thus, the theologian experiences what are called "multiple identities" simultaneously—as scholar, chatter, music lover, and Youtube viewer. In multiple identities, the self is fragmented by various activities. In our example, the identity of the scholar as a writer dominates these other activities but sometimes these other activities intrude and disturb the main activity. "Multiple identities" is not a psychic disorder but a fact of life in a technological world. The subject is no longer defined in terms of centered consciousness, characterized and unified by one self-defining identity or identity-grounding center. In multiple identities, the subject is not centered, but instead is decentered and fractured. Such a decentered subject can encompass many different, perhaps even contradictory, identities brought about by various forms of socialization or interaction that forge the subject over time, as well as by the activities in which he or she participates. Since subjects engage different and multiple identities in response to the social contexts in which they find themselves at a given moment, no one identity is *a priori* or necessarily more central, self-defining, or true than any other.[3]

Aside from multiple identities, technology also brings an anonymous identity. For example, there are websites that do not require the user to reveal her or his identity. Thus, the user can assume different identities: the user can be male or female, a *Manileño* or *probinsiyano*, Filipino or American, handsome or ugly. Users can thus hide physical identities such as gender, appearance, ethnicity, race, etc. because the

[3]"Multiple Identity—The Critique Of The Subject, The Linguistic Turn And The Social Construction Of The Subject, New Philosophical Challenges," *JRank* (http://science.jrank.org/pages/7777/Multiple-Identity.html#ixzz27uvPQK4i).

body is invisible.[4] Many activities on the internet are essentially done anonymously through the use of unidentifiable pseudonyms, fake pictures in profiles, or by preferring a hidden body during chats. While these names can take on an identity of their own, they are frequently separated from the actual user for freedom of expression. The net has increased the ease for a person to distribute anonymous and pseudonymous messages. For example, a person can send a message or join a website using a falsified name or faked picture. Most website softwares allow users to specify whichever name they prefer and perform no check for correct identities. Anonymity is often used to protect the privacy of people, and is related to issues like identity theft, closet identity, sensitive information, etc.[5]

Emergence of Cyberculture

Cybertechnology has become a culture based on the use of computer networks for communication or the study of various social phenomena associated with the internet. Since the boundaries of cyberculture—in terms of location and people—are difficult to define, the term is used flexibly to refer to the culture that emerges from virtual communities in cyberspace. The cyberculture does not only describe the present but also anticipates the future that is linked to advanced

[4]The invisibility of the body has been a point of contention between the humanist intellectuals, who assert the value of embodiment, and the post-humanist intellectuals, who celebrate the power of invisibility. Humanist intellectuals want to defend embodiment because the body, together with its context, is significant in any relationship and interaction. The post-humanists support the disappearance of the body in favor of virtual reality in an information age.

[5]Full anonymity on the Internet, however, is not guaranteed since IP addresses, in principle, can be tracked, allowing identification of the computer from which a certain post was made, albeit not the actual user. Anonymizing services such as I2P—The Anonymous Network or Tor address the issue of IP tracking. Their distributed technology approach may grant a higher degree of security than centralized anonymizing services where a central point exists that could disclose one's identity. See people.dsv.su.se/~jpalme/.../anonymity.html.

information systems and information technology. We are now in an age of information where we are inundated with information and knowledge from the internet. Cyberculture combines the traditional notion of culture and the informational notion of cybertechnology. Culture implies the idea of a group having an identifiable symbolic world. Cyberculture, however, implies the idea of heterogeneous groups, both known and unknown, forming a virtual community. Cyberculture thus includes numerous new technologies and capabilities used by diverse people in various locations.

In cyberculture, anybody who has access to the internet can communicate and join the discussion. Thus, it decenters the space since there are no longer experts that monopolize it. The space is already democratized so that anyone can participate in the discourse. Freedom is the appeal of cyberspace. Users are free to surf and visit websites anytime of the day. They have the control of the technology in the sense that they can simultaneously do multiple activities or they can choose websites according to their tastes. Theologians are not exempt from this information age offered by the internet. They are one group among many participants in communication. They are no longer the experts that can control the production of knowledge and the ventriloquists that can speak on behalf of people. People speak their minds and communicate their thoughts. Expertise in a cyberculture is diminished while participation is increased. Cyberspace thus encourages cacophonous voices in the network or internet.

Toward Cybertheology

Cybertheology is a combination of cyberspace and theology. Its coinage can be uneasy since a new technology is broached in the humanistic discipline of theology. Cyberspace is not only an instrument of theology but a partner in a network of relationships. The theologian is immersed and embedded in technology and is affected and transformed by technology. In this sense, theology should recast its medium and its message, its vocabularies and its images, in cyberspace. The theologian can become technophobic in the sense that he or she

fails to enter into technology as its partner, and not just as user of an instrument. In fact, a theologian can be a cyborg, in cybertheology, which embodies human and technological qualities. Cyberspace is a challenge to theology and the theologian that needs to embark into technology if he or she wants to be relevant and contemporary.

Theologians in a cyberculture have to read and discern the words and voices of many people in the network or internet. They cannot just listen among themselves because they cannot claim their privacy as a group in this network. They cannot assume superiority of knowledge in the marketplace of ideas and opinions, in the network or internet. Users can express their thoughts freely and disagree with opinions candidly. In fact, the theologian can learn from the words and voices in the network and internet. Sometimes one finds the ideas and opinions in the network or internet more intelligent and wise. The theologian can join many virtual communities and communicate their knowledge to these communities. Cyberspace technology is not the monopoly of experts such as theologians, but calls for the active participation of people from all walks of life. People can exercise their agency by joining forces in social movements for democratization. Democratization is the active participation of users and the use of technology for the benefits of the users.[6]

There are two pressing challenges that theologians situated in poor countries should confront. In the absence of a democratized space in information technology accessible to the poor, theologians should bring their issues and protests into cyberspace. In this case, the poor's words and voices are heard as cyberspace provides them a space in discourse. Theologians should remain in contact, or in solidarity, with the poor who are deprived of access to, and use of, the internet and other information networks. Theologians become the representatives of the poor who push their struggles without having

[6]The problem is that the effects of technology on users are known only after some time, and therefore users are generally ignorant. Thus, there is a need for on-going discussion and debate on technology to protect users. They need to transform technology and improve their welfare, instead of being subservient to technocrats, since they are the direct users and consumers.

the sole right to arrogate their voices and words. They cannot hold the center of discourse in the network or internet because they are only one group among many groups of users who are free and empowered to express their ideas and opinions in cyberspace. They have to accept that cybertechnology has transformed or altered their identity such that they can no longer assume or insist on a unified self—they have been fragmented by their exposure to different websites and their engagement with different features of the network or internet.

Conclusion

In the cybertechnological world, theology cannot remain within the discourse of God and humanity; it must include the discourse on technology as a human invention from the creation of God. The binary logic operative in the epistemological framework dividing the natural and the artificial should be rethought and deconstructed in order to free our thought from constraints and to include technology in the common world of human and nonhuman interaction.

Theologians should view the cyberspace world as a network of relationships without boundaries. Community thus expands not only in an actual encounter but also in a virtual relationship where people can interact with one another. Cybertechnology is not merely a novel instrument of communication which enables theologians to upload theological discourses to websites, but a partner in conversation that constitutes their identity.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 49–77

JESUS' MOTHER AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

A Narrative Reading of John 19:25–27

Mirasol C. Navidad, R.S.C.J.

Considered to be dramatic and enigmatic,[1] John 19:25–27 is one of the high points of the Fourth Gospel.[2] In this particular scene at the foot of the cross, Jesus gives his parting message, first to his Mother and then to "the disciple whom he loved."[3] We find in this narrative the triangular conversation[4] in which two messages are carefully presented:

> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. — John 19:26–27[5]

---

[1]Paul S. Minear, *John: The Martyr's Gospel* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984), 143.

[2]Ignace de la Potterié, *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus According to John: Text and Spirit* (Middlegreen: St. Paul Publications, 1989), 133.

[3]Minear, *John,* 143.

[4]Minear, *John*, 143. Minear points out that the scene may be seen as a simple, straightforward account of what took place at that moment, which defines the personal relationships of three individuals.

[5]All Bible verses and their translations are taken from the Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament, 8th Edition, and the New Revised Standard Version (1998).

While we definitely do not consider the Gospel of John as a treatise on Mariology,[6] it does offer a rich theology with regard to the role of the mother of Jesus. A biblical scholar, Ignace de la Potterié,[7] proposes that "the Johannine teaching on Mary may well be much richer than that of the Infancy Gospels of Matthew and Luke." It is then challenging to explore further the role of the mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. Her explicit appearance is chiefly expressed in two pericopes: the Cana narrative (John 2:1–12) and the narrative at the foot of the cross (John 19:25–27). Jesus' address of his mother as "Woman" in both scenes suggests that the reader is to connect 2:1–11 and 19:26–27.[8]

Noticeably, the Fourth evangelist never identified the mother of Jesus by her proper name, unlike in the synoptic evangelists, Acts of the Apostles, and some of Paul's letters.[9] In the Gospel of John, she is identified only as "the mother of Jesus" and as "Woman."

---

[6]It is reiterated that it is important to interpret vv. 26–27 in the light of the roles of Jesus' mother and the beloved disciple within the Fourth Gospel narrative, and not through the lens of later mariological and ecclesial teachings. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*, vol. 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 832.

[7]Ignace de la Potterié, "Mary and the Mystery of Cana," *Theology Digest* 29 (1981): 40.

[8]*The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*, 832.

[9]She is identified as Mariva in the following verses from the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew 1:16, 18, 20; 2:11; 13:55; 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 6:3; 15:40, 47; 16:1, 9; Luke 1:27, 30, 34, 38, 39, 41, 46, 56; 2:5, 16, 19; 2:34; 8:2; 10:39, 42; 24:10; also in Acts 1:14; 12:12 and in Romans 16:6 (*Analytical Concordance to the NRSV New Testament*, 403–404). In addition, references to the "mother of Jesus" (John 2:1, 3) or to "his mother" (Matthew 2:13f, 20f,; 12:46; Mark 3:31; Luke 2:33, 48, 51; 8:19; John 2:5, 12; 19:25; cf. John 6:42; 19:26, "the mother"), without mentioning her name (cf. "your mother," Mark 3:32 par. Matt 12:47/Luke 8:20; "the mother of my Lord," Luke 1:43), are frequent. Cf. Horst Balz & Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsmans Publishing Co., 1991); R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and the Letters of John* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 232. Also refer to BibleWorks Edition 6 (BibleWorks, LLC, http://www.bibleworks.com/).

For Edward Schillebeeckx, the mother of Jesus can only be understood when she is seen in the perspective of Christ.[10] Hence, if the mother of Jesus is viewed in the light of Christ instead of seeing her in her own light, we can have a deeper view and understanding of her role in Jesus' life.

Within this perspective, the present study aims to identify the role of the mother of Jesus in John 19:25–27. It specifically hopes to explore the following questions: What is the significance of the address "mother of Jesus"? Of the women standing at the foot of the cross, why does Jesus address only his mother? What is the significance of "Woman, behold your son! … Behold your mother!"? How does the Christological dimension of John 19:25–27 affect the understanding of the Mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel?

To be able to arrive at the most plausible interpretation of the narrative at the foot of the cross (John 19:25–27), the methodology that will be used in this study is narrative criticism. This particular method focuses on the "what" of a text (its content) and the "how" of a text (its structure).[11] In other words, the text is understood through a careful study of how an implied author communicates a message to an implied reader.[12]

---

[10]Edward Schillebeeckx, *Mary, Mother of the Redemption* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 180.

[11]James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 18–19. This method also focuses on the literary shape of the text. As defined, narrative criticism is a text-centered approach that reads the story of the text in its present, final form. Cf. Robert E. Van Voorst, *Reading the New Testament Today* (Wadsworth: Thomson, 2005), 135 (http://www-relg-studies.scu.edu/facstaff/murphy/courses/exegesis/narrative.htm [accessed February 10, 2011]).

[12]For Chatman, the implied author is not the actual author but the speaker of the literary work, whereas the implied reader pertains to the audience addressed in the narrative. Cf. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 147–150. The process suggests that the narrative critics first read the Gospel text/s as a narrative whole, and what arises from this reading is an encounter with its implied

To have a better panoramic montage of the text under study (John 19:25–27), an overlapping portrait of the Cana narrative (John 2:1–12) will also have to be looked into. Hence, we will also employ a literary technique of linking together by framing,[13] in this case, the two appearances of the mother of Jesus at Cana and at the cross, first foreshadowing, then witnessing the fulfilment of his hour of glorification.[14]

It is our hope that with the aid of narrative criticism, we will be able to draw out the potential plausible frames of meaning inherent in the narrative event under study (John 19:25– 27) and make it more intelligible and relevant for us readers of today.[15]

I. A Background Reading of John 19:25–27 in relation to the Synoptics

As to the location of the narrative at the foot of the cross, John 19:25–27 is part of the second division of the "Book of Glory" (John 13:1–20:31). The second division describes the "hour" of the passion, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension as one event in which Jesus

---

author. This implied author in turn communicates to the implied reader. Cf. Van Voorst, *Reading,* 135. For further discussion on this methodology, refer to Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 19–21; also see Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove, II: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 154.

[13]"Framing" is a literary technique where an event, appearance of a character, or a geographical detail reminds the reader of an earlier appearance of the same event, person, or detail. It may also be that the similarity of his appearances frames the material which comes between for the reader. Cf. David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Brill, 1997), 51–52. For further discussions on framing narratives, see Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism,* 55–56.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Udo Schnelle, "Cross and Resurrection in the Gospel of John," in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John,* eds. Craig R. Koester & Reimund Bieringer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 129–130.

is lifted up to the Father. Brown has divided the Book of Glory into three parts with a conclusion:[16]

- Part I—The Last Supper (John 13–17)
- Part II—The Passion Narrative (John 18–19)
- Part III—The Risen Christ (John 20:1–29)

In this structure, John 19:25–27 is located in part two, namely the Passion Narrative, which is itself partitioned into three divisions:

- Division I—The Arrest and Interrogation of Jesus (John 18:1–27)
- Division II—The Trial of Jesus Before Pilate (John 18:28–19:16a)
- Division III—The Execution of Jesus on the Cross and His Burial (John 19:16b–42)

Our text, John 19:25–27, is also strategically placed in Division III, which comprises an introduction and five episodes.[17] Furthermore, the Johannine narrative of the crucifixion (John 19:16–42) provides us with short episodes of symbolic and theological significance. Right in the middle of the narrative, we find a scene picturing the mother of Jesus at the foot of the cross (John 19:25–27).[18]

---

[16]Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* XIII–XXI (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1970), 545–547.

[17]Brown, *John*, 910–911. Unlike other scholars who would introduce a pattern of seven episodes, Brown's exposition of five episodes is the most preferred in this study. In his structure, he did not add the introduction and the conclusion for the basic reason that the episodes are centered on theological symbolism (the Introduction and the Conclusion part do not have such—they serve more to set the scene). In this structure that Brown proposes, and as used in the text of our study, 19:25–27 is placed at the center. See the diagram which has given highlights to the parallels of the chiastic structure. Moloney also supports the scenes that have been arranged in a chiastic literary structure, with the gift of mother to son and son to mother at its center. Cf. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John,* Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 4 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 502.

[18]Raymond E. Brown & Karl P. Donfried, et. al., *Mary in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 206.

From the Johannine account it is clear that John agrees with the Synoptics about the presence of Galilean women at Calvary. But only John places the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. Perhaps John is only interested in Jesus' words to his mother and the beloved disciple, neither of whom is mentioned in the Synoptic gospels.

Even if neither the mother of Jesus nor the beloved disciple appeared in the Johannine pre-Gospel tradition,[19] Brown would like to assume that this would not preclude historicity, for one could suppose that the evangelist supplemented the pre-Gospel written material with information about the beloved disciple. Perhaps this information is so well-known in the community that there was no need to put it into writing.[20]

Brown, on the one hand, thinks that John drew some basic facts from the synoptic tradition and then expanded these by adding details that lent themselves to his own theological interest.[21] Barrett, on the

---

[19]From the observation, it is agreed that John, leaving aside the mother of Jesus, most probably refers to four women. John 19:15 names three women who may be compared to the three named women of Mark 15:40 and Matthew 27:56 with the following results: Mary Magdalene is clearly the same in the three lists; possibly John's "Mary the wife of Clopas" may be the same as the Marcan/Matthean "Mary the mother of James (the younger) and Joses/Joseph"; it would be a sheer guess, however, to identify John's "his mother's sister" with Mark's "Salome" and Matthew's "mother of the sons of Zebedee." Brown added that the very differences make it unlikely that John borrowed the names of the three named women (besides the mother of Jesus) in John as well as in the Synoptics, making it possible that a tradition of three women was fixed early in Christian tradition. Cf. Brown, et. al., *Mary*, 207. Bultmann reiterated that Mark 15:40 and Matthew 27:56 tell of the three women, recognizing that the only agreement with John is in the naming of Mary of Magdala. He further argues that the Evangelist is not interested in them as witnesses of the crucifixion, that John's interest centers on only one of them, and that is the mother of Jesus. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G.R. Beasey-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 672.

[20]Ibid, 209.

[21]We note here that in episode 1, John agrees with the Synoptics about the fact and substantial content of the title on the cross, but his interest is in the

other hand, maintains that John may have been probably dependent on Mark, but either he, or intermediate tradition, has modified the source markedly.[22] Brown, however, thinks otherwise on the grounds that, first, when John has material in common with the Synoptics, the parallel descriptions often show notable differences in vocabulary, and, second, in this common material, the sequence is not the same.[23]

Dodd posits the existence of an independent Johannine tradition, leaving the possibility that the evangelist has supplemented that tradition by creative imagination.[24] In other words, that John drew some details of John 19:25 from an existing tradition and reworked John 19:26–27 to fit his theology seems tenable as gleaned from the structure of the text.

---

international character of the proclamation and in Pilate's role in making and keeping the proclamation—points on which the Synoptics are silent. Secondly, in episode 2 John agrees with the Synoptics on the detail of the soldier's dividing Jesus' clothes by gambling, but the symbolism of the Johannine episode seems to be centered on the seamless tunic, a garment not mentioned by the Synoptics. Likewise in episode 4, John agrees with the Synoptics that wine was offered to the crucified Jesus, but he stresses that Jesus' thirst fulfilled the Scriptures and brought his work to completion. This element is totally missing from the Synoptic descriptions of the incident. Brown concludes that John and the Synoptics may have elements in common, but the differences are still quite substantial. Cf. Brown, *John,* 915.

[22]Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 455.

[23]The Markan order is as follows: 1) the crucifixion, 2) the division of garments, 3) the inscription, 4) the mention of the two bandits. The Lucan order of the same events is: 1) crucifixion, 2) the mention of the two bandits, 3) the division of garments, 4) the inscription. The Johannine order is: 1) the crucifixion, 2) mention of the two bandits, 3) the inscription, 4) the division of garments. It is noted that these Johannine details give just as plausible a picture as do the contradictory or variant details of the Synoptic tradition. Cf. Brown, *John,* 915.

[24]Charles H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 124–139.

The different scholarly opinions as to what was in the pre-Gospel tradition and what the evangelist added would mean that the evangelist heightened the dramatic importance of the scene and gave the mother of Jesus (Mary) a significant role.[25]

II. The Interrelation Between the Mother of Jesus at the Wedding at Cana in John 2:1–12 and at the Foot of the Cross in John 19:25–27

The framing of two narratives which identifies the distinctive location of these two scenes in which the Mother of Jesus appears (in Cana, 2:1–12 and Calvary, 19:25–27) is best illustrated through a chiastic structure,[26] as suggested by Grassi. The structure, which includes the seven signs in the Book of Glory, serves its purpose in our exploration regarding the role of the Mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.

1 The Wedding at Cana (2:1–12)

2 The Restoration of the Official's Dying Son (4:46–54)

3 Jesus' healing at Bethsaida on a Sabbath (5:1–16)

4 The Multiplication of Loaves (6:1–71)

5 Jesus' healing of the Blind Man on a Sabbath (9:1–41)

6 The Restoration of Lazarus to Life (11:1–44)

7 The great hour of Jesus: his mother, the cross, and the issue of blood and water from Jesus' side (19:25–37)

---

[25]Brown, et. al., *Mary,* 208. In fact, by listing the mother of Jesus first, the implied author gave the mother of Jesus prominence in the scene and set the stage for her important role in the pericope. Cf. Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 133.

[26]Joseph A. Grassi, "The Role of Jesus' Mother in John's Gospel: A Reappraisal," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48/1, 2 (January 1986): 69.

The utilization of the seven-sign series reflects the mother of Jesus having to play a significant role in inaugurating the public ministry of Jesus.[27] As presented in the structure, we could at once identify themes that link together: (3) and (5) speak of Sabbath-healing signs, (2) and (6) presented death-to-life themes, whereas (1) and (7) complement well with each other as beginning and end.[28] In this regard, the mother of Jesus is tied with similar themes: Jesus' hour (2:4; 19:27), the Cana wine and the bitter wine on the cross (19:29, 30).[29] For the purpose of this study, we shall explore how the unity of the Cana and the Calvary scenes becomes a continuous telling of one single story.

The centrality of the mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel finds its place at Cana (2:1–11) which has a connection with the hour of Jesus' glorification (6:62; 2:4; 19:27).[30] Once again, she is introduced not by name[31] but by the title "the Mother of Jesus." According to Brown, "Mary" occurs fifteen times in the Gospel of John but never for Jesus' mother.[32] The fact is that at the foot of the cross she appears beside the

---

[27]Jean Kim, *Woman and Nation: An Intercontextual Reading of the Gospel of John from a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2004), 169.

[28]Grassi, "The Role," 69.

[29]Grassi, "The Role," 69.

[30]Ritva H. Williams, "The Mother of Jesus at Cana: A Social-Science Interpretation of John 2:1–12," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59:4 (October 1997): 679; Grassi, "The Role," 69.

[31]The personal name in identifying the mother of Jesus is never used by the Fourth Gospel evangelist. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (Manila: St. Paul's, 1979).

[32]Ibid. Furthermore, Brown also says that the Fourth Gospel evangelist's insistence on the title "the mother of Jesus" or "his mother" is due to a fact that John is interpreting a tradition about what constituted her true motherhood.

other great unnamed figure, "[t]he disciple whom Jesus loved,"[33] and is put into direct relationship with the present text of our study.[34]

The connection of the two narratives regarding the role of the mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is evident, as some scholars[35] suggest that the passage concerning the mother of Jesus at Cana forms an *inclusio* with the mother of Jesus at the cross because of two significant words, γύναι (2:4; 19:26) and ὥρα (2:4; 19:27).[36] The son's use of γύναι (2:4; 19:26) for his mother signifies a distinction and a mark of respect.[37] Brown posits that it is a polite way to address a

[33]"The disciple whom Jesus loved" is considered to be a central witness to the key events moving from the supper table (John 13:21–26), to the court of the high priest (John 18:15–16), to the cross (John 19:26–27), empty tomb (John 20:2, 3–10), fishing expedition (John 21: 1–8), to the final verses in which he was recognized as the source of the traditions on which this Gospel was based. He typifies the disciple of Jesus *par excellence*. He is the paradigm of discipleship, one who embodies the faithfulness of all believers even unto death. He is a real individual who has been transformed from a merely historical personage to the model of authentic disciple of Jesus. As an individual, he dies; as type, he endures. Cf. Minear, *John,* 148; Raymond F. Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel-II," *The Downside Review* 94 (1976): 118–132; Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 240; Max Thurian, *Mary, Mother of All Christians* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), 163; Franz Mussner, *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St. John* (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), 56.

[34]Brown, et. al., *Mary*, 101–102.

[35]John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 370; Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel-II," 120; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 133–134. Hence, most scholars use the crucifixion scene to interpret the significance of the Mother of Jesus at Cana and thus to establish a unified meaning for her character in the Fourth Gospel. Cf. Fehribach, *The Women*, 23.

[36]Kim, *Woman*, 64.

[37]Sean P. Kealy, *That You May Believe* (Middlegree: St. Paul Publications, 1978), 149.

woman, as well as a way for a son to address his mother.[38] Moreover, the designation "mother" and the form of address "woman" recalls the much-liked Old Testament picture of Israel as woman and mother. "Woman" also makes a connection with Eve in Gen. 3:15.[39] Mary may be viewed as the New Eve in comparison to the old Eve in Gen. 3:15. This too has a certain resemblance to that of Revelation 12:5, 17 where a woman gives birth to the Messiah in the presence of the Satanic dragon or ancient serpent of Genesis, and yet also has other offspring who are the targets of Satan's wrath after the Messiah has been taken to heaven.[40] The offspring of the woman in Revelation is described as "those who keep the commandments of God"; that has

[38]Brown, *John,* 99; Mt. 15:28; Lk. 13:12; Jn. 4:21; 8:10; 20:13. As cited from Kim, *Woman,* 76. Also refer to Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2004), 549.

[39]Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 3, Commentary on Chapters 13–21 (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 280. This is the only text in the Old Testament in which a salvific role is attributed to "woman." Gen. 3:15 is considered to be the protoevangelium. It is Eve who is the woman, yet it is only through her progeny that Eve is victorious over the serpent. In other words, Eve is the conquering woman of the protoevangelium by means of Mary, and Mary in the victory of her Son becomes the new Eve. Cf. Raymond F. Collins, "Mary in the Fourth Gospel: A Decade of Johannine Studies," *Louvain Studies* 3, 2 (1970): 130. There are also several opinions as to the usage of the word "guvnai." Brown, Hoskyns, Braun and Thurian maintain that there is a connection between the mother of Jesus and the Church through the portrayal of Eve in Genesis 3, just as the mother of Jesus at Cana and at the Cross. Zerwick followed the point of connecting Eve and the woman of Revelation 12, yet André Feuillet rejects the connection with Gen. 3:15; instead, he sees the mother of Jesus as representing the eschatological Zion/the mother of the Church. Thus, he rather connects the "woman" at the cross in connection with the "woman" of Revelation 12 and views this woman in the context of Isa. 26:17 and 66:7–9. Cf. Fehribach, *The Women*, 24.

[40]Brown, *John,* 926. In Rev. 12, the mother of the Messiah is also presented as the mother of "the rest of her children, that is, all who obey God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus." Cf. Collins, "Mary," 132. Also see Collen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine*

a semblance with John 14:21–23, which states that those who keep the commandments are loved by the Father and Son.[41]

Another Johannine term which is pregnant with meaning in our exploration of the role of the Mother of Jesus is ὥρα (2:4; 19:27). This term closely resembles those passages in John 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1, and 17:1, where the word is clearly linked with Jesus. ὥρα here serves as a reference to Jesus' final hour—to the time for Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.[42] It is clear that all the events of Jesus' life are oriented toward the "hour" as a point of consummation.[43] During his public ministry, it is repeatedly said of him that his hour has not yet come (cf. 4:2, 23, 25, 28; 7:30; 8:20), yet the passion narrative suddenly begins with the statement, "Now before the feast of the Passover, when

---

Characterization (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 81; Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 348; de la Potterié, *The Hour,* 141; Kim, *Woman,* 189.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Conway, *Men and Women,* 73. A person's hour is the time which he does the work to which he has been specifically assigned. The hour of the woman is that of her childbirth (John 16:21); the hour of the unbelieving Jews is the time in which God allows them to commit their crime (John 16:22); the hour of Jesus is the moment in which the work for which he was sent into this world by the Father is definitely fulfilled (John 12:23–24, 27, 31–32). Cf. André Feuillet, *Johannine Studies,* trans. Thomas E. Crane (New York: Alba House, 1965), 19. Collins affirms that when ὥρα is viewed in its fullest theological sense, there is only one hour of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel—the hour of Jesus' Passion and Glorification. He added that whenever the term is qualified by a possessive pronoun (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 8:31), a demonstrative adjective (12:27–2x; 19:27) or the article (12:23; 17:1), the ὥρα is pregnant with theological meaning. Cf. Collins, "Mary," 121. Furthermore, Collins cited commentators (C.M. Henze, M.N. Eyquem, and H. Leroy) who argue that in the case of 2:4, ὥρα refers to the hour of Jesus to work a miracle, which I suppose is far from a possibility, taking into account the use of the hour in the rest of the Gospel. Cf. Collins, "Mary," 120. Conway also thinks that there is no sense for Jesus to claim that the hour in which he is to work a miracle is not yet here in a story in which he does, in fact, perform a miracle. Cf. Conway, *Men and Women,* 74.

[43]Feuillet, *Johannine*, 20.

Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father" (John 13:1). The "hour" then, on the peak and center of saving history, is Jesus' death and resurrection. It is the precise moment which the Fourth Gospel calls the exaltation of Christ (John 3:4; 8:28; 12:32, 34) on the cross as well as his exaltation and return to the Father. It is the hour of Jesus' supreme manifestation and self-revelation. It is the moment of crucifixion-glorification, the significance of which is central to the believer's faith.[44] Hence, the Cana incident points to this hour of crucifixion, and thus the evangelist can say that Jesus manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him (John 2:1–11).[45]

By mentioning Jesus' ὥρα and the presence of his mother, John ties Cana (2:1–12) to Calvary (John 19:25–27). This is a deliberate *inclusio* on the part of the evangelist where he unifies the public ministry and passion into one continuous manifestation of the glory of Jesus.[46] Moreover, the negative response of Jesus in John 2:4 prepares the reader to understand that if Jesus does act, he will act in accordance with his own conscious purpose, not on the basis of human concern or human need.[47]

Symbolic Characterization of the Mother of Jesus

Although the mother of Jesus appears to be unintroduced in both the Cana (2:1–12) and Calvary (19:25–27) scenes,[48] her role in Jesus' life is significant. The tying of the two narratives portrays the mother of Jesus as being present at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry,

---

[44]Raymond F. Collins, "Cana (Jn. 2:1–12)—The First of His Signs or the Key to His Signs?" *Irish Theological Quarterly* 47 (1980): 91–92; Perkins, *John,* 21; Terence Forestell, *The Word of the Cross* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 73.

[45]Ibid, 91.

[46]Forestell, *The Word*, 73.

[47]Ch. H Giblin, "Suggestion, Negative Response, and Positive Action in John's Portrayal of Jesus," *New Testament Studies* 26 (1979–1980): 203.

[48]Culpepper, *Anatomy,* 133.

when he performs his first sign and where she acts as mediator for this sign, and at the end of his ministry, when "his hour" has finally come (16:32; 2:4).[49] Her representations in a variety of symbolic interpretations are recognized.[50] For Brown, the fact that John never addresses the mother of Jesus as Mary is significant. His interest lies in her motherhood, and that her physical motherhood is reinterpreted in relation to discipleship.[51] Biblical scholars agree that these two Johannine pericopes are pre-eminently Christological.[52]

The narrative is told in the context of a wedding where nothing is said about the spouses themselves. The Cana event (John 2:1–12) tells of a marriage attended by Jesus, his mother and his disciples. It recounts the lack of wine at the feast, where Jesus, who, contrary to the usual usage, addresses his own mother as "woman."

The remark of Jesus' mother, "They have no wine" (John 2:3), can be fully grasped only when it is situated within the context of its own world of Jewish expectations. Wine is a principal Old Testament symbol of blessing (Gen. 27:28, 37; 49:10–12; Deut. 7:13) and an image of the messianic times (Is. 25:6; Jer. 31:12; 49:11–12; Amos 9:13–14; Joel 4:18). The wine of the story clearly symbolizes messianic blessings, and the abundance of the wine symbolizes the copiousness of the messianic goods.[53] The "wine" the mother of Jesus speaks about is the "messianic times and fulfilment." The mother of Jesus is the representative faithful one who is in a situation of expectation

---

[49]Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, *Transformative Encounter: Jesus and Women Re-viewed* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 103.

[50]Kitzberger, *Transformative Encounter*, 103. Bultmann (*John*, 673) sees the Mother of Jesus as representative of Jewish Christianity; Brown (*John*, 109), Thurian (*Mary*, 144–166), and Brodie (*John*, 549) view her as a new Eve.

[51]Brown, et. al., *Mary*, 212–214.

[52]Cf. Conway, *Men and Women,* 73; Collins, "Mary," 125; de la Potterié, "Mary," 41–42.

[53]Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel-II," 121.

in relation to the Messiah and the awaited messianic times.[54] She is indeed a representative figure symbolizing the people who faithfully await the messianic times. Hence, "They have no wine" means "they have no messianic goods!" It can also be an expression of the craving of faithful Israel for the riches of the final age. In retrospect of the messianic times, the mother of Jesus becomes the representative of the faithful remnant of Israel, expressing the anguish of captivity of sin which could not be removed under the old law.[55] The unmet thirst of the messianic people is also viewed as being linked, through her words, to the power of the messiah to quench it.[56] The evangelist also says that, in the Cana event (John 2:1–12), the biological relationship between Jesus and his mother is not as important as the attitude of faithful expectation of the messianic gifts.[57]

Another remark of Jesus' mother, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5), invites the servants to hear the word of Jesus and to act on Jesus' orders. Here, Jesus' mother directs the community to obey Jesus. She becomes the "spiritual mother" who gives birth to a community of faith and obedience to the Son of the Father in heaven.[58]

In both remarks of Jesus' mother in the Cana event, we see her significance in her relationship with Jesus. She becomes now a symbol of the "woman" of the messianic times.[59] She no longer stands in the simple relationship of mother to Him, but has become His spouse in the work of the new creation.[60]

---

[54]Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel-II," 121–122.

[55]Richard J. Dillon, "Wisdom Tradition and Sacramental Retrospect in the Cana Account (Jn. 2:1–11)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24 (1962): 291–192.

[56]Minear, *John*, 146.

[57]Collins, "Cana," 91.

[58]Thurian, *Mary*, 143.

[59]Collins, "Cana," 91.

[60]Dillon, "Wisdom," 291–292.

What is curious though after the Cana event is that she disappeared from the scene as soon as she has issued her command to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Minear argues that in this command she becomes instrumental in calling for this first "sign" of the Son's glory. Hence, the unmet thirst of the messianic people is linked through her words to the power of this messiah to quench it.[61] Consequently, it seems that the narrator is more concerned with her representative and symbolic role rather than with her individual story.[62]

In the narrative at the foot of the cross (John 19:25–27), we encounter Jesus entrusting the Beloved Disciple to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" In Jesus' passion, death and glorification, he gives his mother a new role: to be the mother of the "disciple whom he loves," that is, those who show fidelity to the Lord and every believer who knows him intimately. Hence, a new relationship is established in the hour of his exaltation. It should be noted here that Jesus does not first of all entrust his mother to the beloved disciple; rather, Jesus first confides him to her care.[63] Jesus gives his mother a significant role as the mother of the disciple *par excellence* and the disciple is given a role as the son. The role is preceded by a revelatory formula which is used in John when something about God's plan is being communicated.[64]

---

[61]Minear, *John*, 146.

[62]Minear, *John*, 146. Kitzberger maintains that the absence of the mother of Jesus from John's story in the long intervening period after the Cana event is perplexing. It is viewed that the narrative is open-ended, and that she is not depicted as accompanying Jesus during his ministry in Galilee and his journeys to Jerusalem; neither was there any clue as to where she remained and lived during that period. Hence, for Kitzberger it is surprising to encounter her again standing at the foot of the cross, together with three other women, that is, her sister and Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Cf. Kitzberger, *Transformative Encounter*, 103. On the contrary, Lieu argues that Jesus' mother is at the head of those who go with him to Capernaum (John 2:12). Cf. Judith M. Lieu, "The Mother of the Son in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 117/1 (1998): 64.

[63]Kealy, *That You May Believe*, 149.

[64]Buby, *Mary*, 106.

The revelatory formula found in it introduces a special new role for the mother of Jesus.[65]

By the cross, Jesus' relationship with his mother is transformed. His death puts an end to her physical motherhood, but instead she became the mother of the Beloved Disciple. It is a role she receives in the "hour" of Jesus (John 13:1). Accordingly, the crucified Jesus leaves behind him at the foot of the cross a small community of believing disciples.[66]

"Behold, your mother" (John 19:27)! This revelatory formula, indicating a new role bestowed on the mother of Jesus, is important as it establishes an authentic line of succession through which the community can make a connection with Jesus.[67] As John the evangelist is implicitly linking the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, this new role given to the mother of Jesus is established.[68] Hence, there emerges a familial relationship in terms of discipleship. Just as in Luke, the mother meets the criterion of the eschatological family. Luke dramatizes that Jesus' mother and brothers are the true family of Jesus by bringing them back on the scene as disciples after the Ascension

---

[65]Grassi, "The Role," 72. This is a role she will exercise especially with regard to the Beloved Disciple.

[66]Brown, et. al., *Mary,* 212.

[67]Kim, *Woman*, 190. The role of Jesus' mother is two-fold: 1) She is an important bearer of the tradition of the reality of Jesus' death, how he died, and in a connected way, who he was. 2) She embodies this tradition in a living way by her maternal continuation of Jesus' love for his disciples. Cf. Grassi, "The Role," 73, 77. That Jesus employs a revelatory formula ("Behold") and performative language suggests the accomplishment of a new relationship—Jesus constitutes a new family, and the formation of this new family at the cross provides a nucleus for the community of believers. Cf. Culpepper, *The Gospel*, 234.

[68]Ibid. Also refer to Brown, *The Community*, 197. Jesus' act of mutually giving the Beloved Disciple and his mother to each other symbolizes what he is accomplishing on a "higher," spiritual level from the cross—that those whom the Beloved Disciple represents do become brothers of Jesus, not by matrilineal descent, but by a patrilineal kinship which Jesus' blood sacrifice will establish. Cf. Fehribach, *The Women*, 139.

(Acts 1:14). In Mark 3:33–35, Jesus rejected any family claim on him stemming from blood relations. He substituted for the physical family, a family based on discipleship (doing the will of God). In John, the brothers of Jesus are replaced by the beloved disciple—no natural relative, but someone especially loved.[69]

Jesus' mother is also seen as the new Eve, the "mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20). At the foot of the cross, she becomes the mother of the beloved disciple who represents all believers.[70] Here a new relationship is born as Jesus establishes a relationship which does not take its origin from his mother's maternity.[71] Now she assumes a new role—she becomes the "spiritual mother" of the beloved disciple. The mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple are symbols of the call to perfect discipleship which reaches its highest demands in the context of community, where intimacy, love, care and concern for one another converge at the foot of the cross.[72] Hence, reciprocal love within the community defines the disciples of Jesus: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Moreover, the dynamic interaction "of Jesus' remaining in us" and "our remaining in Jesus" (John 15:7–8) is what constitutes the true essence of discipleship.[73]

---

[69]Cited from Troy W. Martin, "Assessing the Johannine Epithet 'The Mother of Jesus,'" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60:1 (January 1998): 65. See further discussions on this point in Brown, et. al., *Mary*, 213.

[70]James McPolin, *John* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1979), 207.

[71]Max Zerwick, "The Hour of the Mother: John 19:25–27)," *The Bible Today* 18 (April, 1965): 1191.

[72]Buby, *Mary*, 108–109.

[73]Matthew Vellanical, "Discipleship According to the Gospel of John," *Jeevadhara* 10 (1980): 141.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Beloved Disciple is nameless. All we receive is a description that he is "the disciple whom Jesus loved,"[74] and yet he plays a distinctive role in John's gospel.[75] He is believed to be the one and the same beloved disciple who is described as a witness and the author of the Gospel in 21:24.[76] Collins suggests, however, that it is best to leave to him the anonymity which was intended by the final author of the gospel.[77]

The mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross attest to their love and commitment to Jesus. They witness the beginning of the community, the Church which is brought forth from the cross and the life-giving water which flows from the side of Jesus (John 19:34). On the part of Jesus, he realized that his journey to the Father had been completed, for after entrusting the "Beloved Disciple" to the "Woman" and the "Woman" to the "Beloved Disciple," the evangelist concludes: "After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished … and bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (John 19:28, 30). Here, the moment of the Church's birth at the cross (John 19:25–27) reveals a new union between the Mother of Jesus, who is the mother of the faithful, and the gift of the Spirit.[78]

There is no doubt that, like the mother of Jesus, the beloved disciple is considered to be a historical character.[79] To this end, Culpepper states,

---

[74]He is mentioned in the following Johannine texts: 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20. As to the rest of the Gospel, Jesus loves his disciples (e.g., 13:34; 15:2) as the Father loves Jesus (e.g., 3:16, 35; 5:20; 10:17; 14:21). "The disciple whom Jesus loved" exemplifies this perspective. Cf. Margaret Davies, "Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel," *Supplement Series* 69 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992): 340.

[75]Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 121.

[76]Conway, *Men and Women*, 179–180.

[77]Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel-II," 30.

[78]Ignace de la Potterié, "Maria y a Santisima Trinidad en San Juan," *Estudios Trinitarious* 19:2 (1985), as abstracted in *New Testament Abstracts* 31 (1987): 31.

[79]Demetrius R. Dumm, *A Mystical Portrait of Jesus: New Perspectives on John's Gospel* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 28.

"It is now generally agreed that the beloved disciple was a real historical person who has representative, paradigmatic, or symbolic significance in John."[80] He exemplifies as an ideal disciple, and even if he appears to be an idealized figure, the conclusion of the Gospel indicates that he was an actual person who was the mediator of the tradition on which the Gospel was based (John 21:24).[81] He is described as being loved by Jesus and one who reclines on Jesus' chest at the last supper.[82] The designation "close to the breast" is significant, for it signifies not only personal affection in an intimacy, but also knowledge of the mind and will of God, along with the obligation to share that knowledge with the community, and so as Jesus was God's beloved spokesman, so this man is Jesus' beloved spokesman.[83] He arrives first with Peter to go to the tomb, and though both are presented with the same evidence, it is he who sees and believes (John 20:8). Unlike Thomas, whose faith was dependent on a "physical" vision of the risen Jesus, the beloved disciple comes to faith without seeing the risen Christ. In Chapter 21 of the Fourth Gospel, it is he who stays close to Jesus, believes and recognizes him.[84] In addition, the anonymous "disciple whom Jesus loved" also has a representative function to play.[85] Thus, he is

[80]Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 121. But it is with clarity that the beloved disciple is presented here in a symbolic sense that transcends his historical significance. See also Dumm, *A Mystical Portrait of Jesus*, 28. Brown also supports the general agreement that the Beloved Disciple is a historical person. Brown, *The Community*, 31.

[81]Koester, *Symbolism*, 242.

[82]Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 21.

[83]Minear, *John*, 148–149.

[84]Neal Flanagan, "Mary in the Theology of John's Gospel," *Marianum* 40:1–2 (1978): 116.

[85]Koester, *Symbolism*, 242. He identifies the following primary tasks of the Beloved Disciple: 1) As a recipient of Jesus' love and a model of fidelity, he provides a model for all disciples. 2) Bear witness to what Jesus said and did (21:24), for the testimony of the Beloved Disciples also sets a direction for the testimony of other disciples. 3) As the Beloved Disciple was entrusted with the care of Jesus' mother, he became a brother of Jesus (in the post-resurrection,

not just one of the representative figures in the Fourth Gospel; he is the representative figure in the Johannine tradition. He is entrusted a leadership role in the beginning of the community of disciples along with the mother of Jesus—as its first members.[86]

By the cross, Jesus' relationship with his mother is transformed. His death puts an end to her physical motherhood, but instead she became the mother of the Beloved Disciple. It is a role she receives in the "hour" of Jesus (John 13:1). Accordingly the crucified Jesus leaves behind him at the foot of the cross a small community of believing disciples.[87]

Moreover, the presence of other women at the foot of the cross cannot be ignored. The reader is informed that she is accompanied by other women.[88] The Johannine group of women (the mother of Jesus, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene) who stand by the cross contrasts with the four soldiers (John 19:23).[89] However, A. Köstenberger argues that there is no agreement on the way in which the soldiers and bystanders are related with the evangelist.[90] Nevertheless, Fehribach argues that the way in which the implied

---

brother was used in a way for those who were related to Jesus by faith but not necessarily by kinship). Cf. Koester, *Symbolism*, 242–243.

[86]Niceta M. Vargas, "Word and Witness: An Introduction to the Gospel of John," Unpublished manuscript (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology-Ateneo de Manila University, 2004), 321.

[87]Brown, et. al., *Mary*, 212.

[88]The identification of the three women varies from gospel to gospel.

[89]McPolin, *John*, 206.

[90]Köstenberger, *John*, 547. See also Brown who thinks that there is no implied contrast between these two groups. However, other commentators (e.g., D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* [Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991], 615; Barrett, *John*, 551; Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 348; Schnackenburg, *John*, 273, 276) believe that the construction does imply such a contrast. Köstenberger posits that if a contrast is intended, it is hardly a sharp one, and that it is more likely that the two groups are distinguished as the narrative moves from one to the other.

author of the Fourth Gospel listed and identified these women at the cross has added literary significance.[91] These women are believers who "stand by" Jesus, who are close and loyal faithful followers, whereas the unbelievers are those who "go away from" Jesus (John 6:66–67). This group of women further represent all those who confess faith in their crucified Lord, who, through faith, overcome the scandal of the cross.[92] In John's account, Jesus is not totally abandoned during the hour of his death.

III. Synthesis

We have explored how the mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, who is never named, featured prominently in two pericopes. First, at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, she appears at the wedding at Cana (2:1–12), and again, at the end of his public ministry, she is found at the foot of the cross, together with the other women and the beloved disciple (19:25–27). In both narratives, it is Christological in structure and content. Feuillet affirms the fact that both passages cannot be understood apart from their essentially Christological meaning and the Johannine use of symbolism.[93] The primary focus is Jesus, the Messiah, who fulfils the Jewish messianic expectation, the one who brings the messianic blessings and salvation to the people. Thus, the reader is led to the fact that the hour of Jesus is the hour of his passion and glorification, when he finally exercises his messianic role.[94]

The mother of Jesus is introduced to a new role as mother for the Beloved Disciple, who is the representative of all believers. In this new role, the Messiah discloses the identity of her new son,[95] and the

---

[91]Fehribach, *The Women*, 133.

[92]McPolin, *John*, 206.

[93]Feuillet, *Johannine*, 28. Also see Collins, "Cana," 141.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Minear, *John*, 147.

prophetic revelation of God's will for the messianic people conveys a mandate for her to respond positively to the continuing mission of the community of disciples.[96] This is evident even in the earlier part of the gospel, in the Cana event (John 2:1–12), that she now becomes the woman of the messianic times.

In our study of the text of John 19:25–27 side by side with John 2:1–12, the evangelist clearly implies that he is not interested in the individual history of the Beloved Disciple and of the mother of Jesus, but in their symbolic function in relation to the Church and its relationship with Christ and his messianic work.[97] The two significant figures are symbols of the call to perfect discipleship which reaches its highest demands in the context of community and in the care and concern for one another.[98]

IV. Conclusion

In our exposition of the text under study, John 19:25–27 conveys an important message that the mother of Jesus undoubtedly plays a central role in the Fourth Gospel. Evidently, she is present at the beginning and end of Jesus' earthly ministry as mother and as "woman." In John 2:1–12, she is presented as one who actively contributes to accomplishing the will of the Father. While at the foot of the cross in John 19:25–27, her presence, together with the Beloved Disciple, enables the establishment of a new family of God.[99]

She epitomizes what fidelity and love mean by standing at the foot of the cross (John 19:25). She willingly participated in Jesus' sufferings which will eventually become her birth pangs as she assumes her ultimate role of spiritual motherhood for Christians. The mother of

[96]Minear, *John*, 147.

[97]Thurian, *Mary*, 163.

[98]Buby, *Mary*, 108–109.

[99]Conway, *Men and Women*, 84–85.

Jesus and the Beloved Disciple's symbolic functions transcend their historical significance.[100] They are authentic models of what discipleship of Jesus means.

Finally, the Fourth Gospel does not place so much importance on the mother of Jesus as his biological mother, a maternal relationship between mother and son. While the image of "mother" is strong in the Filipino context—she is one who stands as a figure of security, a symbol of strength and wisdom, one who nurtures and fosters a sense of family interrelatedness, one who is compassionate and always ready to help her afflicted children—the Gospel of John stresses a familial relationship based on discipleship. Those who constitute God's family are those who obey God's word. This only underlines that discipleship goes beyond the confinement of our homes. Every Christian is called to embrace the commandment, to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34; 15:12).

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Barrett, Charles K. *The Gospel According to St. John.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978.

Beck, David R. *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel.* New York: Brill, 1997.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple.* Manila: St. Paul's, 1979.

———. *The Gospel According to John* XIII–XXI. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1970.

Brown, Raymond E. and Karl Donfried, et. al. *Mary in the New Testament.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.

[100]Dumm, *A Mystical Portrait of Jesus*, 28.

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991.

Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Conway, Collen M. *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999.

Culpepper, R. Alan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

———. *The Gospel and the Letters of John*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Dodd, Charles H. *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: University Press, 1965.

Dumm, Demetrius R. *A Mystical Portrait of Jesus: New Perspectives on John's Gospel*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001.

Fehribach, Adeline. *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

Forestell, Terence. *The Word of the Cross*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974.

Harrington, Daniel J. *John's Thought and Theology: An Introduction*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1990.

Kealy, Sean P. *That You May Believe*. Middlegree: St. Paul Publications, 1978.

Kim, Jean K. *Woman and Nation: An Intercontextual Reading of the Gospel of John from a Post-Colonial Feminist Perspective*. Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Kitzberger, Ingrid Rosa. *Transformative Encounter: Jesus and Women Re-viewed*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Koester, Craig R. *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

Marrow, Stanley B. *The Gospel of John: A Reading.* Makati: St. Pauls, 1997.

McHugh, John. *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament.* London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975.

McPolin, James. *John.* Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1979.

Minear, Paul S. *John: The Martyr's Gospel.* New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984.

Mussner, Franz. *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St. John.* London: Burns and Oates, 1967.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral.* DownersGrove, II: Intervarsity Press, 1991.

Potterié, Ignace de la. *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus According to John: Text and Spirit.* Middlegreen: St. Paul Publications, 1989.

Powell, Mark Allan. *What is Narrative Criticism?* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Resseguie, James L. *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Robinson, John A. T. and J. F. Coakley. *The Priority of John.* London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1985.

Schillebeeckx, Edward. *Mary, Mother of the Redemption.* London: Sheed and Ward, 1964.

Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *The Gospel According to John* Vol. 3. Commentary on Chapters 13–21. New York: Crossroad, 1987.

Senior, Donald C.P. *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John.* Collegevile: The Liturgical Press, 1991.

Thurian, Max. *Mary, Mother of All Christians.* New York: Herder & Herder, 1964.

Van Voorst, Robert E. *Reading the New Testament Today.* Wadsworth: Thomson, 2005.

Vargas, Niceta M. *Word and Witness: An Introduction to the Gospel of John*. Unpublished manuscript. Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology-Ateneo de Manila University, 2004.

Waetjen, Herman C. *The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple: A Work in Two Editions*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2005.

Articles/Journals

Collins, Raymond F. "Cana (Jn. 2:1–12)—The First of His Signs or the Key to His Signs?" *Irish Theological Quarterly* 47 (1980).

———. "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel-II." *The Downside Review* 94:315 (1976).

———. "Mary in the Fourth Gospel: A Decade of Johannine Studies." *Louvain Studies* 3, 2, 1970.

Davies, Margaret. "Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel." *Supplement Series* 69. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

Dillon, Richard J. "Wisdom Tradition and Sacramental Retrospect in the Cana Account (Jn. 2:1–11)." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24 (1962).

Feuillet, André. "Christ's Farewell to His Mother." *Theology Digest* 15 (1967).

Flanagan, Neal. "Mary in the Theology of John's Gospel." *Marianum* 40:1–2 (1978).

Giblin, Ch. H. "Suggestion, Negative Response, and Positive Action in John's Portrayal of Jesus." *New Testament Studies* 26 (1979–1980).

Grassi, Joseph A. "The Role of Jesus' Mother in John's Gospel: A Reappraisal." *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 48/1,2 (January 1986).

Lieu, Judith M. "The Mother of the Son in the Fourth Gospel." *JBL* 117/1 (1998).

Martin, Troy W. "Assessing the Johannine Epithet 'The Mother of Jesus.'" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60:1 (January 1998).

Potterié, Ignace de la. "Maria y a Santisima Trinidad en San Juan." *Estudios Trinitarious* 19:2 (1985). Abstracted in *New Testament Abstracts* 31 (1987).

———. "Mary and the Mystery of Cana." *Theology Digest* 29 (1981).

Schnelle, Udo. "Cross and Resurrection in the Gospel of John." In *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, eds. Craig R. Koester & Reimund Bieringer. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

Vellanical, Matthew. "Discipleship According to the Gospel of John." *Jeevadhara* 10 (1980).

Williams, Ritva H. "The Mother of Jesus at Cana: A Social-Science Interpretation of John 2:1–12." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59:4 (October 1997).

Zerwick, Max. "The Hour of the Mother: John 19:25–27." *The Bible Today* 18 (April 1965).

Commentaries

Bultmann, Rudolf. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G.R. Beasey-Murray. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. *John,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2004.

Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of John,* Sacra Pagina Series Vol. 4. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

Newsom, Carol A. and Sharon H. Ringe. *The Women's Bible Commentary.* Westminster: John Knox Press, 1992.

The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Vol. 9. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Dictionaries and Bible

Balz, Horst and Gerhard Schneider. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsmans Publishing Co., 1991.

House, Mark A. *Compact Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2008.

The Catholic Study Bible: The New American Bible. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Internet Source

http://www-relg-studies.scu.edu/facstaff/murphy/courses/exegesis/narrative.htm.

BibleWorks, LLC. BibleWorks 6. http://www.bibleworks.com/.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 79–97

VATICAN II AND WOMEN*

Helen R. Graham, M.M.

Fifty-four years ago, on January 25, 1959, John XXIII invited eighteen Curia cardinals to accompany him to a ceremony at St. Paul Outside the Walls on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, the final day of the Octave for Christian Unity. During his address, he made the following "carefully timed announcement"[1]:

> Venerable brothers and our beloved sons! We announce to you, indeed trembling a little with emotion, but at the same time with humble resolution of intention, the name and the proposal of a twofold celebration: a diocesan synod for the city, and an ecumenical council for the Universal Church.

Journalist Desmond Fisher writes that "what they heard stunned them. The new pope—he had been elected only three months earlier—told

*Updated version of a paper delivered first at DeLasalle University, Manila, on November 17, 2012, and again at the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies on August 2013.

[1]Desmond Fisher, "Curial horror greeted John XXIII's announcement of ecumenical council," *NCR* (January 25, 2012). See Fisher's recent article, "A journalist at the council considers what's been lost," in *A Church Reborn: Second Vatican Council 1962–1965*, special 50th anniversary issue of the *National Catholic Reporter* (October 11, 2012).

them he intended to summon an ecumenical council and would they please give him their views about it. … [T]hey looked at the pope, first in amazement and then in horror."[2] It was expected that John XIII would be merely an interim pope who would not make waves!

In his speech at the opening of the council in Rome on October 11, 1962, Pope John XXIII, somewhat tongue in cheek, commented that

> We uttered those words in the presence of the Sacred College of Cardinals on that memorable January 25, 1959, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the basilica dedicated to him. It was completely unexpected, like a flash of heavenly light, shedding sweetness in eyes and hearts.[3]

When the Second Vatican Council opened, there was, it seems, no clear idea of what its result might be. Pope John XXIII insisted, however, that it be a *pastoral* council, and not, as in previous councils, one that would correct heresies. In his opening speech to the Council, Pope John XXIII said that while in the past the Church had always opposed errors, "and frequently has condemned them with the greatest severity,"

> Nowadays, however, Christ's Bride prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations ….
>
> [T]he Catholic Church, raising the torch of religious truth by means of this Ecumenical Council, desires to show herself to be the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and goodness ….[4]

---

[2]Ibid. The Curia worked to pre-empt the Council, expecting it to be completed in one session. Two European cardinals protested. The Curia proposals were swept aside. The first meeting lasted 17 minutes.

[3]"Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council," October 11, 1962, in Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (America Press, 1966), 711–712. For the significance of the change of style and vocabulary characteristic of Vatican II, see John O'Malley, "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" *TS* 67 (2006): 3–33. See also his history of Vatican II, *What Happened at Vatican II* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

[4]Ibid, 716.

The council met in four distinct sessions each year from 1962–1965, in what John O'Malley termed "the biggest meeting in the history of the world," with some "2,400 council fathers (not counting the *periti*) participating at any given time …. A total of 2,860 attended part or all of the four periods."[5] Women were not at all on the horizon![6]

Women Auditors at Vatican II: Guests in their Own House[7]

Twenty-three women auditors eventually did attend the council. The story of how they got there makes for fascinating reading. Douglas Horton, a Protestant observer, kept a diary which was published in four volumes, one for each of the four sessions. He missed women, particularly since initially he was not permitted to bring his wife Mildred. Early on he wrote in his diary:

> It suddenly came over me, as I sat looking at this vast assembly of almost three thousand people today that it has about it an air of artificiality and that the main reason for this is that there is not a single woman in the whole company. Up and down the nave you look and into the transcepts, nothing but men. It is an abstracted body, incomplete, a torso of true catholicity, speaking more of an outmoded past than of the living present. Let us hope that the world will see something of Rome's strong women at Vatican III.[8]

---

[5]O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 20, 21.

[6]In an article in *The Month*, Rosemary Goldie quotes journalist Katherine Burton who wrote in April 1963, six months before the question even came up, "I think the really big excitement will come when, some day, the curia finds out that there are women in the church. And I have a feeling that moment is now nearing." Rosemary Goldie, "Women in the Church," *The Month* (February 1964): 84. As cited by Carmel Elizabeth McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House: The Women of Vatican II*, reissued (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 45.

[7]Subtitle taken from McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House*.

[8]Douglas Horton, *Vatican Diary* Vol. I (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1964–1967), 63, as cited by McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House*, 19–20.

Journalist Eva Jung-Inglessis told Mercy Sister Carmel McEnroy, in an interview, that already a seed had been publicly planted at a national meeting of the German Bishops before the council. When the floor was opened for questions,

> a young woman at the back said, "I wonder if the women will be invited to the council." People thought, what a silly question! It was self-evident that no woman could ever be invited to a council …. The bishop who directed the meeting was perplexed for a moment and did not know what to say. He finally responded, "Now, to this council, no, but the third Vatican Council, yes." So all were happy.[9]

For the second conciliar session (beginning September 29, 1963), Douglas Horton was able to bring his wife, Mildred, who was given tickets for the opening ceremonies each morning and for special occasions, but who was not permitted to attend the working sessions. It seems that the observers and their wives were treated to special outings and were able to eat in various monastery refectories, a historical first! McEnroy writes that it was "the Reformation women [who] prepared the way for their Catholic sisters to take back some of their own church space."[10]

But it would take a friend on the inside to achieve the needed breakthrough which

> came on October 23, 1963, during the discussion on the church as people of God (*Lumen Gentium*). Leon Josef Cardinal Suenens, archbishop of Milines and a council moderator, said that systematically excluding women from active church participation made no sense in an age when they go almost to the moon. He called for increasing the number and range of lay auditors. He continued: "Women too should be invited as auditors: unless I am mistaken, they make up half of the human race."[11]

---

[9]McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House*, 20.

[10]McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House*, 21.

[11]McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House*, 41.

A week before the reopening of the council for its third session (begun on September 14, 1964), Pope Paul VI announced to a small group of religious women his intention to invite "a few qualified women" to be "a feminine representation, not numerous of course but significant and quasi-symbolical."[12]

Thus were twenty-three women auditors admitted to the last two sessions of the council. Initially they were to be "seen and not heard," but thanks to the intervention of another friend on the inside, council theologian Bernard Häring, who said "that if women were invited, they should have a place in the commissions formulating the documents," three of the women—Rosemary Goldie, a lay leader from Australia, Mere Guillemin, a Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from France, and Loretto Sister Mary Luke Tobin, president of the Conference of Major Superiors (later to become the Leadership Conference of Women Religious [LCWR])—were invited to attend commission meetings where they were allowed to speak as freely as they wished.[13]

Toward a Roman Catholic Theology of Womanhood

Ivy Helman notes that prior to the 1960s,

> "Roman Catholic theology often addressed women's roles and duties as wives and mothers, only rarely venturing into their lives outside the home …. [S]eparation of women into their own significant theological category began in the late 1880s, [but] it became more focused in the 1930s with *Casti connubii*, only becoming developed fully after 1960 … when the theological language changed significantly" toward developing a Roman Catholic official theology of womanhood. Parallel

[12]McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House*, 50.

[13]Sister Mary Luke Tobin, "Women in the Church: Vatican II and After," *Ecumenical Review* 37/3 (1985): 295–305, here 296.

> with this development in Roman Catholic theology was the growth of the feminist movement.[14]

The Feminist Movement. More than a century and a half ago, 1848 to be exact, the first Woman's Rights Convention was held in New York. In the "Declaration of Sentiments" that followed the convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote that the history of humankind is "a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having [as] its direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her."[15] This first-wave feminism evolved out of women's involvement in abolition in the 1830s.

> Many women fought for freedom from slavery only to realize their own second-class status. For example, some women went to Britain for an anti-slavery conference and were refused seating. This occurrence led some women to form separate women-only abolitionist groups. Gradually, many women began to understand the full nature of their situation in society.[16]

A second wave of feminism emerged in the mid-1960s. In 1968, Mary Daly, borrowing from Simone de Beauvoir's classic *The Second Sex* (1949), wrote her "landmark, scathing critique of the misogyny she observed in Catholicism"[17] (*The Church and the Second Sex*). The

---

[14]Ivy A. Helman, *Women and the Vatican: An Exploration of Official Documents* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012), 1.

[15]"Editor's Preface," in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, ed., *The Women's Bible* (New York: European Publishing Company, 1895), vi.

[16]Helman, *Women and the Vatican*, 2.

[17]Sara Corbet, "Mary Daly 1928—Gyno-Theologian," in the Sunday Magazine of the *New York Times* (December 26, 2010): MM 14. Of Daly's visit to a session of Vatican II, Corbet wrote:

> Like any good Catholic studying God in Europe, she went to Rome. Sitting in St. Peter's Basilica in 1965, Daly watched a session of the Second Vatican Council, a spectacle of cardinals and bishops—"old men in crimson dresses"—droning on in Latin. And to one side, a smattering of black-habited nuns. "When the veiled nuns shuffled to the altar rail to receive 'Holy Communion' from the hands of a priest,"

book "got her fired, briefly, from her teaching position [at Boston College], but as a result of support from the (then all-male) student body and the general public, she was ultimately granted tenure. … [The] Boston College Jesuits worked uneasily with Daly for more than three decades."[18]

By the 1980s, the feminist movement had become global. Feminist theologies were being developed on all continents.

> Asian feminist theologies emerged as a response of Christian women to … multiple forms of oppression. It began as a grass-roots movement when Christian women gathered to read the Bible and raised questions based on their life experiences. Different ecumenical networks, including the Women's Desk of the Christian Conference of Asia, the Women's Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, and the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology, have nurtured the women's theological movements in Asia.[19]

As Ivy Helman notes, the "historical development of feminism [has] affected the Roman Catholic Church and sparked the construction of a theology of womanhood."[20] Before we take a look at some of the official documents, first a little detour into theological education for women.

Theological Education for Women: It is hard to believe that until the mid-20th century, theological education for women was non-existent! It was only in 1943 that Holy Cross Sister Mary Madeleva

---

> Daly wrote later in an essay, "I felt that I was observing a string of lowly ants at a bizarre picnic."

[18]Tom Fox, "Mary Daly, radical feminist theologian, dead at 81," *National Catholic Reporter* (January 4, 2010): http://ncronline.org/news/women-religious/mary-daly-radical-feminist-theologian-dead-81 (accessed Janury 5, 2010).

[19]Kwok Pui-Lan, "Feminist Theologies, Asian," in Letty M. Russell & J. Shannon Clarkson, eds., *Dictionary of Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 101. The Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) has been producing *In God's Image*, "an Asian Christian women's effort to provide a forum for expressing our reality, our struggles, our faith reflections and aspirations for change," for almost thirty years now.

[20]Helman, *Women and the Vatican*, 8.

Wolff, then president of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana (1934–1961), established at Saint Mary's the pioneering Graduate School of Sacred Theology for women.[21] This was the first school to grant master's and doctor's degrees in Sacred Theology to religious and lay women. For more than a decade, St. Mary's was the only institution to do so.[22] Theological education for women only began in Rome in 1954 with the opening of Regina Mundi Institute. Regina Mundi closed its doors in 2005.[23]

In the Philippines, the Sister Formation Institute (SFI) came into being two decades after Sister Madeleva established the first school of Sacred Theology for women at St. Mary's College. At that time, SFI provided a one-year program of basic theological and scriptural education for young sisters in formation. We did not begin a degree program until 1990 when SFI became the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS), almost fifty years after Sister Madeleva's

[21]For example, in an interview for Catholic-Net, Sister Sara Butler, MSBT, makes the following comment: "I studied for my master's degree at the Catholic University of America. This was 1961, and women weren't admitted to theology, so I got a degree in religious education. I never felt anything like resentment over that at all, but I do remember thinking it was really quite, I don't know, remarkable." Sheila Gribben Liaugminas, "Change of Heart on Women Priests," http://www.catholic.net/index.php?id=159&option=dedestaca (accessed October 27, 2012).

[22]Saint Mary's College is a private Catholic women's college founded in 1844 by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Holy Cross Sister Madeleva Wolff, who was the first woman religious to receive a doctorate from Berkeley, California, served as the first dean and president of the College of St. Mary-of-the-Watch in Salt Lake City, Utah (1925–1933). She served as president of St. Mary's College, Notre Dame (1934–1961) (http://www3.saintmarys.edu/departments/religious-studies [accessed August 19, 2012]).

[23]In his column in the *National Catholic Reporter* for June 17, 2005, John Allen wrote of the closure of Regina Mundi: "There's some sad news this week with the closing of Regina Mundi, the first center of studies in Rome explicitly created for the theological education of women, and long a symbol of the intellectual coming of age of women in the Catholic Church. Ironically, Regina Mundi marked its fiftieth anniversary just last year" (http://www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/word/word061705.htm#eight [accessed October 27, 2012]).

initial project. IFRS is in the process of planning brief renewal programs for the updating of those who have been in the field.

The women's movement gained momentum in North America in the early 1980s.

> The Sisters of the Holy Cross who sponsor [Saint Mary's] college had in the era following Vatican II initiated summer programs for the spiritual enrichment of women religious. The convergence of the contemporary women's movement and the intense interest in spirituality made a women's college like Saint Mary's a likely and promising place for a center of Spirituality.[24]

In March 1984, The Center for Sprituality at St. Mary's College was formally inaugurated. It was also proposed that an annual lecture be established on a theme concerning "Christian Spirituality, especially as this theme relates to women of the Church." The texts of the lectures would be available in published form. Paulist father Kevin A. Lynch, president and editorial director of Paulist Press, "agreed to publish annually what came to be known as the Madeleva Lecture series."[25] The first Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality was delivered by Monika Hellwig on March 23, 1985.[26]

---

[24]Dlores R. Leckey & Kathleen Dolphin, eds., *Monika K. Hellwig: The People's Theologian* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010), vii–viii.

[25]Leckey & Dolphin, *Monika K. Hellwig: The People's Theologian*, viii.

[26]Among those who have delivered the annual Madeleva lecture are: Sandra M. Schneiders (twice), Joan Chittister, Elizabeth A. Johnson, Margaret Farely, Rosemary Reuther, and Kwok Pui-Lan. A reunion of Madeleva lecturers was held in 2000 to share their wisdom. Elizabeth Dryer writes of this reunion:

> We were also acutely aware of speaking to those women who have suffered grievously from unjust ecclesial laws, customs, practices and attitudes. We wanted to speak to those who have been fired from church positions without due process and in some cases without cause; to those who have been silenced, ridiculed, ignored or dismissed because they are women; to those who are not invited to share power and be included in decision-making; to those who are suffering battle fatigue from long and faithful commitment to change. We wanted to offer a word of hope and courage to those who are disheartened or impatient

Toward a Theology of Womenhood: Ivy Helman's book, *Women and the Vatican*, provides answers to questions about women, from the perspective of the Roman Catholic Church, through an exposition of official Church documents. She notes that from the perspective of theology, such questions cannot receive a satisfactory answer prior to the 1960s, even though some documents beginning in 1880 do mention women. The 1960s brought significant changes in theological language especially toward defining a Roman Catholic theology of womanhood.[27]

It was Pope John XXIII who, in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, observed what he termed the three characteristics of our age: 1) the working classes have gradually gained ground in economic and public affairs; 2) women are now taking a part in public life; and 3) nations have either achieved or are on the way to achieving independence.[28] Concerning women, the pope further stated that

> Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and in public life. (*PT* 41)

This concern of John XXIII was echoed two and a half years later in Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* which states:

> … with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. (GS 29)[29]

And again in *Lumen Gentium* we read:

---

with change that seems to come at a snail's pace. (Elizabeth A. Dreyer, "In the Tradition of Sister Madeleva," *America* [June 17, 2000])

[27]See Helman, *Women and the Vatican,* 1.

[28]John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (Paulist Press, 1963), nos. 39–42.

[29]Walter M. Abbott, ed., "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), no. 29. Sister Mary Luke Tobin was a member of the committee that drafted *Gaudium et spes*.

> There is … in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex, because "there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all 'one' in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). (LG 32)

At the conclusion of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI, specifically addressing women, said:

> [T]he hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved. …
>
> Women … make it your task to bring the spirit of this council into institutions, schools, homes and daily life. Women of the entire universe, whether Christian or non-believing, you to whom life is entrusted at this grave moment in history, it is for you to save the peace of the world.[30]

A decade later, Pope Paul VI, addressing participants at the National Meeting of the *Centro Italiano Femminile,* said

> Within Christianity … since its very beginning, women have had a special dignity, of which the New Testament shows us many important aspects …; it is evident that women are meant to form part of the living and working structure of Christianity in so prominent a manner that perhaps not all their potentialities have yet been made clear.[31]

Again, another decade later, in his encyclical *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Pope John Paul II cited the text of Genesis that "God created [*adam*] in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27) as "the immutable *basis of all Christian anthropology*."

> This concise passage contains the fundamental anthropological truths: man [*sic*] is the highpoint of the whole order of creation in the visible world; the human race, which takes its origin from the calling into existence of man and women, crowns the whole work of creation;

---

[30]"Address of Pope Paul VI to Women," December 8, 1965, reproduced in Helman, *Women and the Vatican*, 28–29.

[31]Paul VI, Address to Participants at the National Meeting of the Centro Italiano Femminile (December 6, 1976), as cited by John Paul II in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 5.

> *both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree*, both are created *in God's image*.[32]

But toward the end of the encyclical one realizes that man and woman are only equal up to a point, as John Paul II reiterates the teaching of *Inter Insigniores* that

> Since Christ, in instituting the Eucharist, linked it in such an explicit way to the priestly service of the Apostles, it is legitimate to conclude that he thereby wished to express the relationship between man and women, between what is "feminine" and what is "masculine" …. This is clear and unambiguous when the sacramental ministry of the Eucharist, in which the priest acts "*in persona Christi*," is performed by a man.[33]

In 2004, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger issued a letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, entitled "On the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World," which sparked a host of reactions and commentaries. Among them is this response of Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister:

> Two positions vie for ascendance here, one only serving to negate the other. First, the document waffles between two anthropologies, two

---

[32]John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* 6. See also Pope John Paul II, "Letter to Women" (June 29, 1995), on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, China).

[33]John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* 26. Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Declaration Concerning the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood," *Inter Insigniores* (October 15, 1976). This teaching was reiterated for a third time in John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, "Apostolic Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone" (May 22, 1994), in which he issued the following strong assertion:

> Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk. 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful. (no. 4)

For an analysis see Ladislaus Orsy, "Stability and Development in Canon Law: The Case of Definitive Doctrine," in *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 105–114.

> theological world views, and tries, in vain, to satisfy both. It reinforces the notion of a dual anthropology—that men and women are essentially different creatures as a result of their sex organs—and it blurs it at the same time. Women, it assures us in one segment, are fully "human" and made in the image of God. Women have their own unique role to play in the economy of salvation, in other words. Men and women are, therefore, equally responsible to nurture and take responsibility for the human enterprise. In another place, however, the other anthropology is equally clear. Sex—femaleness—not personhood, not the nature of what it means to be human, determines our role in life, the document argues. The natures of men and women are determined by their sex, it says unequivocally, and women are, therefore, determined to be the caregivers of the family and the partner most responsible for the success of family life. A "boys will be boys' theology of marriage, which for centuries kept women in damaging relationships, lurks threateningly near the surface here.[34]

When Pope Francis was leaving Rio after World Youth Day, July 29, 2013, he was asked by reporters regarding women in the Church. John Allen reports briefly on what he said:

> Argued for the importance of women in the church, yet said John Paul II "definitively … closed the door" to women priests. He called for a deeper "theology of women" beyond disputed questions such as whether they can be lectors at Mass or head Vatican agencies such as Caritas Internationalis.[35]

Most news outlets were falling over each other, racing to move the pope's comments about "gay persons"—his term. News flash: the pope reiterated Catholic teaching, both about homosexual activity and about the ordination of women as priests.

While the global media zeroed in on the Pope's comments regarding homosexuality, Phyllis Zagano has paid attention to what "the pope did not rule out—nor has any church teaching ruled out—the restoration of women to the ordained order of deacon. In fact,

---

[34]Sr. Joan Chittister, "To the 'experts in humanity': Since when did women become the problem?" *NCR* (August 2, 2004), accessed online August 3, 2004.

[35]John Allen, "Pope on Homosexuals: 'Who Am I to Judge?'" *National Catholic Reporter* (July 29, 2013, aboard the Papal plane).

he led right into the current international discussion about women in the diaconate."[36]

It is clear that the feminist movement has definitely been an influence in the efforts of the official Church toward a development of a Roman Catholic theology of womanhood.

Women in the Immediate Aftermath of the Council

Seven years after the close of Vatican II, martial law was declared in the Philippines. Religious women found themselves dodging the water canons of the military in the streets as they joined students, workers, farmers, and many others in protest against the martial law regime.[37] The situation in the Philippines had been rapidly deteriorating in the years prior to martial law. Among the highlights of this period was the famous La Tondeña strike (1975), which saw significant numbers of priests and religious out in the street in solidarity with the workers. Sr. Mary John Mananzan writes that it was at this time that she had her "first encounter with military brutality and experienced helplessness before the reality of force and institutional violence."[38] A number of religious were arrested during these years and spent time in prison as

[36]Phyllis Zagano, "What the Holy Father meant to say …," *National Catholic Reporter* (August 14, 2013).

[37]It was mostly religious who joined the protest movements along with workers, farmers and students in the early days of martial law. Laity of the upper class only came out after the assassination of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino on August 21, 1983.

[38]"Redefining Religious Commitment Today," in Sr. Mary John Mananzan, ed., *Women Religious Now: Impact of the Second Vatican Council on Women Religious of the Philippines* (Manila: Institute of Women Studies, St. Scholastica's College, 1993), 139.

political detainees.[39] We were learning what being religious women in the last quarter of the 20th century might demand of us.

Inspired by a study made by Sr. Augusta Neal on the religious women in the United States 20 years after Vatican II, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, O.S.B., undertook a survey assessment of the impact of Vatican II on the life of the Church on the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 1990. Religious women were chosen for the survey because it was believed that among Church sectors, it was perhaps the women religious who "experienced the most radical changes within the past two-and-a-half decades …. Aside from the purposes of documentation, the study will hopefully serve as a basis of policy decisions and a help in the redirection of religious congregations of women."[40]

In addition to the publication of the results of the survey, eight religious women who had celebrated their silver jubilee were asked to write testimonies of how their mind had changed since Vatican II.[41]

Women and the Second Vatican Council at Fifty

On the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II, Sister Mary Luke Tobin wrote that

> an emerging women's movement in the Roman Catholic Church has captured attention worldwide because it is challenging an intransigent and patriarchal tradition of that church and is making serious headway

[39]Perhaps the most prominent was Sister Marianni Dimaranan, C.F.I.C., who spent about 47 days in prison in full habit.

[40]Sr. Mary John Mananzan, ed., "Foreword," in *Women Religious Now: Impact of the Second Vatican Council on Women Religious of the Philippines* (Manila: Institute of Women Studies, St. Scholastica's College, 1993).

[41]Those who provided testimonies include the following: Sisters Virginia Fabella, M.M.; Emelina A. Villegas, I.C.M.; Mary Rosario B. Battung, R.G.S.; Bonaventure Tanjuakio, C.F.I.C.; Helen R. Graham, M.M.; Julma C. Neo, D.C.; Consuelo Varela, I.C.M., and Mary John Mananzan, O.S.B.

> towards its goal: restoring the equality in theory and practice which belongs to a Christian and Catholic theology of persons.[42]

She cites one "compelling statement" from paragraph 29 of *Gaudium et spes* which she claims "leaves no uncertainty about the intentions of the authors of this Vatican Council document to eliminate from the church the sin of sexism."[43]

While she credits the wider women's movement in general for the growth in consciousness among women in the Church, she focuses on the struggles of Roman Catholic women in the years following the Second Vatican Council.

In their preparation for the 1987 World Synod of Bishops on the Laity, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) drew up a report which reviewed "developments in the discussion of women's place in the church since Vatican II." Tobin continues:

> The report expresses concern that many women leave the church because the church is insensitive to their desire to "participate fully" in its life and mission. WUCWO concludes its report by listing a number of matters which call for a response at the official level. These include: need for changes in the education of the clergy, including study of the rightful role and dignity of women in the church; the importance of having women as well as men conduct these programs; the problem of exclusive language in the documents and liturgies; positive affirmation of the vocation of single women; relative absence of women from advisory or decision-making bodies or positions in the church.[44]

The optimism that many of us felt in the early post-conciliar period (when we were very young) has been on the wane for the past several years. Among the events that are out of sync with Vatican II thinking

---

[42]Tobin, "Women in the Church: Vatican II and After," 295–305, here 295.

[43]Tobin, "Women in the Church: Vatican II and After," 295–305. Sr. Mary Luke Tobin was a member of the committee that drafted *Gaudium et Spes*.

[44]Tobin, "Women in the Church: Vatican II and After," 304.

are: the failure to implement Episcopal-collegiality,[45] the silencing of theologians,[46] Vatican Investigation of Women Religious of the United States,[47] the doctrinal assessment of the LCWR conducted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and released on April 18, 2012,[48] Benedict XVI's efforts to "reform the reform" which is quite visible especially in recent liturgical decisions,[49] and

[45]See Ladislaus Orsy, "Episcopal Conferences: Communio among the Bishops," in *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 16–34; Ladislaus Orsy, "The church inherited conflicting intents on collegiality," in *A Church Reborn*, special 50th anniversary issue of the *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR) (October 11, 2012): 22. Tobin, "Women in the Church: Vatican II and After," 295–305.

[46]See Bradfor Hinze, "The controversies of post-conciliar theology," *A Church Reborn*, 39.

[47]See the Apostolic Visitation Website at http://www.apostolicvisitation.org/en/about/sistermaryclare.html; see also Thomas Fox, "Women religious visitations to begin in April," *NCR* (January 12, 2010); Joan Chittister, "Apostolic Visitation: Why 'Bother? Why be Bothered?'" *NCR* (June 23, 2010).

[48]The CDF was previously known as the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition. For an official copy, see "Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious" (http://www.usccb.org/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=55544). See also "LCWR Statement from Presidency on the CDF Doctrinal Assessment" (http://lcwr.org/media/lcwr-statement-presidency-cdf-doctrinal-assessment); Kim Lawton, "Legacy of Vatican II at heart of dispute between Vatican, US Nuns," *Religion News Service* (August 7, 2012). Numerous articles have been published, too many to record here.

[49] More recently, Benedict XVI's *Summorum Pontificum* (July 7, 2007), his *motu proprio* concerning the liturgy, has revived interest in the destiny of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* specifically and, more generally, the role of Vatican II in the theological orientation of Benedict's pontificate …. Starting in 2005, and not only through the *motu proprio* of July 2007, the pontificate of Benedict XVI has put considerable effort into emphasizing the need for a "reform of the liturgical reform." (Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* [Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2012], 205)

many more. We live in a very critical time for the reception of Vatican II, but this would require another paper.[50]

What might be women's role in the Church of the future?

Women in the Church of the Future

I cannot pretend to have insight into what the future might bring, but I have been profoundly inspired by the response of the leadership of the LCWR in the face of a very deep crisis in the lives of the eighty percent of religious women's congregations who are represented by the LCWR. So I bring this paper to a conclusion on a note of hope in the midst of profound crisis. In her presidential address at the 2012 LCWR Assembly, Franciscan Sister Patricia Farrell spoke of living in a "time of crisis," and she added "that is a very hopeful place to be," as transformation is preceded by crisis.[51] She cautions not to make too much of the doctrinal assessment as "it is not the first time that a form of religious life has collided with the institutional Church. Nor will it be the last …. There is an inherent existential tension between the complementary roles of hierarchy and religious which is not likely to change."[52]

Pat Farrell goes on to suggest six ways to navigate the shifts for each of which she provides commentary: 1) through contemplation, 2) with a prophetic voice, 3) through solidarity with the marginalized, 4) through community, 5) non-violently, and 6) by living in joyful hope "in the face of all evidence to the contrary." She believes that "God is calling to us from the future … we are being readied for a

---

See Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in I* Sacrosanctum Concilium (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012).

[50]See Orsy, *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates.*

[51]Patricia Farrell, "Navigating the Shifts," Presidential Address at the LCWR Assembly (August 10, 2012), 1. Downloaded from the NCR website (accessed August 11, 2012).

[52]Farrell, "Navigating the Shifts," 1, 2.

fresh inbreaking of the Reign of God." And she finally concludes her presidential address, with an expression, originally in Spanish, from the days of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile: "They can crush a few flowers but they can't hold back the springtime."[53]

[53]Farrell, "Navigating the Shifts," 3, 12.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 99–125

LOCAL SPACES, GLOBAL AUDIENCES

The Role of Local and Global Factors in Shaping the Feminist Movement in Iran

Juhn Chris P. Espia

I. Introduction: Globalization, Feminisms and Islamophobia

Globalization is accompanied by increased consciousness of the world as a whole. This and other effects of globalization have important implications for gender relations and the status of women in all societies.[1] Global processes have an indirect impact on social pressure for democratization in the form of expansion of "social reflexivity and de-traditionalization." As they become better informed about new and varied political alternatives, people become less likely to accept traditional models of political and gender regimes.[2] Globalization "allows for the subversive possibility of women seeing beyond the local to the global." Even those who never physically leave their communities of origin are more likely now to evaluate their own lives by placing their rights, options and restrictions in a comparative

[1]Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1990), 8.

[2]Anthony Giddens, *Beyond the Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 111.

and global perspective.[3] Exposure to geographically different influences and to issues framed in a global context can encourage greater scrutiny of localized traditions and behavior patterns. In some cases, this leads to the construction of new social relationships.

The post-Third Wave era, sometimes known as post-Feminism, is an era where most scholars would claim women's rights is something that can be assumed rather than contested. Feminism is not a singular concept but rather a multifaceted and multidimensional set of ideas that are often contradictory of each other. But, however diverse the ideas may be, all are concerned with women's inferior position in society and the discrimination they face because of the prevailing social, economic, political, or cultural order. The emergence of several diversified forms (or, for some, labels) of feminism—"Liberal" feminism, "Marxist" and "Socialist" feminisms, "Radical" feminism, "French" feminism, "Black" feminism and "Womanism," "Multiracial" feminism, "Individualist" feminism, "Post-structural" and "Post-modern" feminism, "Ecofeminism," etc.—encompasses so many aspects that even the use of the term in a plural sense fails to do it justice.[4] The use of "feminisms" is still at the conceptual level and remains ripe for redefinition.

It is difficult to study gender regimes and women's movements in localities without taking the global context into account. The interaction between history, geography, geopolitics, political economy and culture, women's struggle and agency, and global factors such as intervention by global and regional powers, human rights regimes and feminist networks is integral to understanding the dynamics of religion and politics in the context of feminism. Iran presents an interesting case. It was dominated by an Islamic state, at certain periods, with an experience of a more secular rule in the Shah. While it was never

[3]Zillah Eisenstein, "Women's Publics and the Search for New Democracies," *Feminist Review* 57:1 (1997): 157.

[4]Anupama Chowdhury, "Historicizing, Theorizing, and Contextualizing Feminism," *Journal of English Studies* 4:10 (2009): 29–30.

colonized by a Western power, its upper-class has served as an effective vehicle for the spread of ideas from the outside world.

The feminist movement in Iran, by stressing the historical context of the holy texts, challenging the clergy's monolithic power to interpret, and reformulating Islamic concepts and law from a "feminist" perspective, has paved the way for rethinking gender in the context of Islam. They have opened the doors of (re)interpretation of sacred texts and debates on women's issues to groups other than Muslims.

But they also face reactive gender conservatism and fear of the West prevailing among fundamentalists. In particular, the last two decades saw a growth in the criticism of feminism as being responsible for the spread of "Islamophobia." Islamophobia as a term captures a wide range of sentiments and misconceptions about the religion and its believers. Islamophobia, for the critiques of the feminist movement, creates a caricature of Islam as entirely one dimensional, without any internal differentiation or opinion, and as misogynistic and oppressive to women. This "gendered Islamophobia" stigmatizes the religion even though, compared with other world religions, its treatment of women is arguably preferable and more enlightened.[5]

How did this feminist challenge and the subsequent response become possible? What roles could be attributed to globalization? This article examines the role of local and global factors in rethinking gender in Iran. It looks at the role of history, interpretive frames, repertoires, information, and education in shaping local and global factors responsible for the growth of feminism in Iran. I use the term *space* here as the product of the (re)definition of what it means to be a woman in an Islamic context, in both the public and private spheres. The notion of *audiences* in this case refers to the search for a more global platform for their advocacy and the role of international organizations, feminist networks and the diaspora communities in the process of contending for more and better space for women in Iran.

[5]Muhammad Mahmudul Hasan, "Feminism as Islamophobia: A Review of Misogyny Charges against Islam," *Intellectual Discourse* 20:1 (2012): 55–56.

II. Key Watershed Events in the Feminist Movement in Iran

The feminist movement in Iran shares this characteristic with feminist movements in other countries: it was shaped by history, internal developments and the dynamism of its society, particularly the social praxis of women, as well as external factors, both during colonial times and in the present era of globalization.[6] This section reviews the internal developments in Iran. It also serves as an introduction to succeeding sections on the impact of globalization on the movement.

Writer Aili Mari Tripp identifies three phases of transnational feminist mobilization: 1880–1930, 1945–1975, and 1985–present. The transition across these phases is a two-dimensional process. First, the degree of participation of the "global south" increased, and second, as southern participation increased, so did southern feminists' willingness to advocate the equal rights generally favored all along by the "global north."[7] The transition across these three phases would have an impact in Iran.

Women's organizations were seen as an immediate by-product of the Constitutional Movement of 1903 and were organized around the idea of pushing for one important constitutional provision: public education. Many of these secret societies organized women during protests. One such organization was the *Anjuman-i Hurriyyat-i Vatan* (Homeland Freedom Society), organized in 1907 in the wake of the revolution, and which had 60 women members. The Women's Society (*Anjuman-i Nisvan*) was formed in 1910 with 150 members. They adopted a new name, *Anjuman-i Mukhadarat-I Vatan* (Homeland

[6]Nayereh Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," *Social Research* 69:3 (2002): 852–853.

[7]Aili Mari Tripp, "The Evolution of Transnational Feminisms," in Myra Marx Ferree & Aili Mari Tripp, eds., *Global Feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

Ladies Association), in 1911.[8] In 1913, a new group called the *Anjuman Khavatin-i Irani* (Iranian Women's Society), with a reported 5,000 members and extensive connections with the media, was formed.[9]

Women's groups after this period were dominated by women coming from society's upper echelon and were more educated. Their higher level of awareness enabled them to assert the centrality of the "woman question"[10] in Iranian national aspirations. For this group of women, the recognition of women's rights is necessary for Iran to claim its place in the international community of modern and "civilized" countries. This advocacy gave birth to the "grandmother" of feminist organizations in Iran, the Patriotic Women's League. Its preeminence in that period was recognized by other women's organizations and it was seen as the representative of women's concerns. It participated in the Second Eastern Women's Congress held in Tehran. The Iranian government of the 1930s, however, was committed both to consolidating its control over all social and political organizations in Iran and to maintaining local/national standards of feminist progress according to its own definition. The League was therefore caught in a bind: use the state's line against the platform of the Eastern Women's Congress or the platform to embarrass the state into more progress. Co-optation by the state, which resulted in warring factions within, eventually caused the demise of the organization.[11]

This resulted in the birth of the Women's Awakening Project of 1936–1941. The Project demanded that all Iranian women remove

---

[8]Camron Michael Amin, "Globalizing Iranian Feminism: 1910–1950," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4:1 (2008): 17.

[9]Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56–70.

[10]According to Paidar, the way the "woman question" is framed during this period goes this way: How much concession in terms of rights should the state give to women, in order to accommodate the interest of both the clerics and the international community?

[11]Amin, "Globalizing Iranian Feminism: 1910–1950," 18–19.

their veils in public. In exchange, women were to be given greater access to education and state employment. In practice, the benefits of employment and education extended to very few women. The violent enforcement of unveiling and the false official "celebrations" of the Women's Awakening, however, harassed and disturbed many segments of Iranian society.[12]

The founding of the Women's Party in 1943 and the Women's Suffrage Campaign in 1943–1946 opened a new space for feminists to challenge the state. The party was the first independent political organization to declare the political rights of women its primary agenda. The Party sought international legitimacy as an integral part of its strategy to influence official and national official audiences in favor of equal rights for men and women. It was eventually co-opted by a renascent state feminism effort and it subsequently moderated its tone.[13] In 1946, the Women's Party changed its name to the less partisan-sounding Women's Council, seemingly to permit affiliation with a wider circle of women's groups.[14]

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a broad-based movement to overthrow Mohammed Reza Shah. The array of political groups came from all over the spectrum and various social forces: leftists, nationalists, Islamists, the middle class, the working class, the urban poor, the intelligentsia, men and women.[15] Ideological theorists of the new Islamic Republic adopted a gender discourse based on the work of Ali Shari'ati, the popular leftist Islamic theorist of the revolution.[16]

---

[12]Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Zanha-yi Millat: Women or Wives of the Nation?" *Iranian Studies* 26:1 (1993): 53.

[13]Amin, "Globalizing Iranian Feminism: 1910–1950," 19.

[14]Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran*, 127.

[15]Valentine Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate," in T. Saliba, C. Allen, & J. Howard, eds., *Gender, Politics, and Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 17.

[16]Catherine Sameh, "Discourses of Equality, Rights and Islam in the One Million Signatures Campaign in Iran," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12:3–4 (2010): 445.

The model evoked by Shari'ati during this period was Fatima.[17] For him and the regime, Fatima represented what an ideal woman should be as "she took on responsibilities and became socially engaged, equal to men but in a different way."[18]

This "separate but equal" doctrine was seen by the regime as an antidote to the Western notion of a "highly individualistic and sexually objectified" woman, as well as a response to women's seclusion within patriarchal notions of Islam.[19] In effect, what the regime was trying to do was appeal to the anti-imperialist sentiments which ended the reign of the Shah. From a more conservative vein, Khomeini also argued for women's freedom within Islam. For him, Islam has never been against women's freedom. The goal of the revolution was to give her back the dignity that was taken away by the "consumerist, sexually exploitative and individualist trends" promoted by Westofixication during the Shah's reign.[20]

Post-revolutionary Iran was a period of varying opportunities for women. The consolidation of the Islamic state was followed by the mandatory imposition of *hejab*.[21] Women were also excluded from certain occupations and educational fields. Rights, within the family, earned during the shah era[22] were repealed and this signaled a serious defeat for women who had been promised greater equality under revolutionary Islam.[23]

---

[17]Mohammed's daughter.

[18]Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (London: Yale University, 2003), 5.

[19]Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*, 5.

[20]E. Sanasarian, *The Women's Rights Movement in Iran: Mutiny, Appeasement and Repression from 1900 to Khomeini* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 117.

[21]Refers to both the veil and the act of wearing it.

[22]For example, a family law which restricted polygamy and the unilateral right of men to divorce women were among the first targets of the new Islamic regime.

[23]Sameh, "Discourses of Equality, Rights and Islam in the One Million Signatures Campaign in Iran," 447.

The symbolism of the *hejab* is very important here. For women of this period, the veil is an instrument of male domination. For them, if the world was not shaped by this domination, there would be no need for the *hejab.*[24] Seen as a symbol operating within a system, the feminists of this period attempted to subvert a religious and social meaning. Religion had become a repository of traditional values that could be selectively used.

Forced sex segregation and attacks on civil rights during this period contributed to the growing disillusionment that resulted in a turning against the Islamic regime. The challenge came not only from the secular opposition but from new religious intellectuals and an increasing number of Muslim reformers. They articulated demands for revision in the interpretation of Islamic texts, reform in the sharia and the secularization of the legal system—the separation of the Church and the State. This challenge came in the form of a faith-based framework (Islamic feminists), through various schools of secular feminism, women activists, and intellectuals of diverse inclinations.[25] Women were the first to show signs of resistance to the new regime in the form of rallies, militant street demonstrations, and sit-ins. When faced with harsh repression, they continued to pursue a subtle yet persistent form of resistance.[26]

Based on the review of key events, it could be surmised that the feminist movement in Iran cannot be positioned as a monolithic body of individuals and organizations who agree on a single view of the place of women in an Islamic context. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Before delving therefore into how they sought to "rethink" gender in the context of Islam, it is useful to characterize the various

---

[24]Kevin McDonald, *Global Movements: Action and Culture* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 188.

[25]This includes members of the Shia majority and minorities such as Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, Bahai, and Sunni activists.

[26]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 858–860.

approaches which actors within the movement have employed as well as their relative positions in relation to each other and with the state.

Since the 1979 revolution, Iranian women's attempts to establish transnational networks and international connections have been divided into three approaches: missionary and ideological, diplomatic and pragmatist, and integrative and networking.[27] These three approaches have roots in developmental stages of the movement at the beginning of the 20th century.

The missionary approach is associated with the ruling hardliners. Their main purpose is to establish international contacts to propagate their idea of Muslim womanhood to the rest of the world. This view, as was mentioned earlier, is symbolized by Fatima, who represents a patriarchal gender model which emphasizes sex differences and sex-based division of labor. This includes the Women's Society of Islamic Revolution which was later on replaced by the Women's Society of the Islamic Republic, with the latter founded by the female relatives of Khomeini. As an ideology, the brand of Islamism being exported by these women impacted various communities differently. For instance, in one community it may have resulted in violence against women not wearing the *hejab*, while in others it may have triggered an interest in the wearing of the headscarves.[28] These communities are not only located inside Iran—they also include those in other countries.[29]

The pragmatists have gradually replaced the "missionaries." They are mostly drawn from the ranks of professional and highly educated Iranian women.[30] They are very active in international conferences and

[27]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 858–860.

[28]Golnar Mehran, "The Presentation of the Self and the Post-Revolutionary Textbooks," in Nikki Keddie & Rudi Mathee, *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 232–233.

[29]For example, Sudan and Algeria.

[30]They are also well-connected to state organs and to the bureaucracy.

seek to establish international connections in order to improve Iran's gender image. In the course of their experience with sexist barriers both locally and globally, they have become more open-minded, pragmatic, and conscious of women's rights. This movement away from the radical and the ideological was due in part to the UN-sponsored regional and world conferences on women's rights.[31] Feminists coming from this group will be vital in "globalizing" the movement.

The last category of feminists in Iran is more integrative and networked. They are made up of independent Iranian women activists inside and outside Iran. Just like the pragmatists, they also seek international connections with women's organizations in various parts of the world. Their purposes have included earning publicity for their efforts, exchanging ideas and experiences, gaining a support network and solidarity in their fight against sexism and repression in Iran, and becoming a united part of the international women's movement. The size and diversity of this category has been increasing. More women, religious and secular as well as members of religious minorities inside and outside Iran, joined the forces of the reform movement because of their disillusionment with the Islamic state.[32]

III. Rethinking Gender: The Role of Global Factors

This section focuses on the role of global and local factors in shaping the rethinking of gender in Iran. It will look at the experiences of the movement beginning in the 1970s, especially those of the pragmatist and integrative/networking approaches. It will also outline how the movement has moved over the years from a more secular brand of feminism into a very distinct form of radicalism: Islamic Feminism. It is divided into three sections: Feminism in the Revolutionary Era, Developments in the 1990s, and The Birth of Modern Islamic Feminism.

---

[31]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 870–873.

[32]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 873.

A. Feminism in the Revolutionary Era

The influence of global factors can clearly be seen in the first display of defiance by women in 1979. This protest coincided with the celebration of International Women's Day on March 8. The day of celebration eventually turned into a weeklong protest against the new burdens of women. As was mentioned in the previous section, these include the declaration of mandatory veiling, the removal of reforms on women's rights, and the removal of women judges from the courts. One of the most prominent slogans of that protest was, "*Freedom is neither Eastern nor Western, It is universal.*"[33] Such messages were dismissed as products of bourgeoisie thinking and Westoxification by leftists, nationalists and Islamists.[34] The protest and the banners were not only an attempt to provide a universal account of their struggle, but also an attempt to show that their struggle had an authentic national background with indigenous roots dating back one hundred years.[35]

The 1970s saw a flourishing of global feminism in official and non-official venues. This could be seen in the different regional and world conferences on women which have been sponsored mainly by the United Nations since 1975. Accompanying forums of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) gave rise to global cooperation among different women's organizations and the blossoming of a global feminist consciousness.[36] Among the grassroots groups and transnational feminist networks which have arisen in Iran are the Network of East/

---

[33]Emphasis is mine.

[34]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 860–861.

[35]This was during the early years of modernist reform, especially in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911. It is interesting to note that in that earlier period, women were simply concerned with pushing for public education. The expansion of their advocacy which now includes an array of concerns is a reflection of the global trend.

[36]Fereshteh Ahmadi, "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context," *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion* 22:2 (2006): 53.

West Women, *Encuentros Feministas*, Women Living under Muslim Laws, and the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights.[37]

Even conflict has found its way into the process of the struggle for women's rights. The first decade of the Islamic regime coincided with the Iran-Iraq War of 1980–1988. Members of the women's movements faced brutal repression from the theocratic regime. However, as the need for labor increased, they became successful in lobbying for more employment opportunities for women.[38] The death of Khomeini in 1989 not only created a relaxation in terms of culture, arts, film, and music, but also a rivalry for succession, ideological friction, and a gradual exhaustion of revolutionary zeal in the decade-long repression and pointless war which killed thousands. The post-war reconstruction project (*sazandegi*) promoted by Khomeini's successor, Hashemi Rafsanji, paved the way for the growth of intellectual debate, spiritual reflection and secular activism, especially among women. Liberal clerics supported economic liberalization. A population explosion forced the state to launch a successful family planning campaign which gave women access to contraception.[39]

B. Developments in the 1990s

In 1990, Iran was granted a seat on the 45-member UN Commission on the Rights of Women. It was further exposed to global discourses on women's rights and pressured to comply with some internationally accepted standards. This gave birth to women's sports and transnational games as another active arena[40] for international contacts and connection

[37]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 854–856.

[38]While this might have been the case, women were still confined to "low risk" jobs and those that are considered for "those with nimble fingers," such as assembly line jobs in munitions and equipment factories.

[39]Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate," 18–20.

[40]Fa'ezeb Hashemi , an active sportswoman and daughter of former president Hashemi Ralsanjani, played an important role in this area.

building.[41] The 1995 Beijing Conference on Women is also an interesting case. One of the UN requirements for a delegation to participate in the Beijing Conference was the preparation of a reliable national report on women's conditions. During the preparatory meetings for Beijing, many elite Islamist women were compelled to come up with a reliable report.[42] The prepared report, which noted the lack of accurate statistics about women, was sent for review and subsequently went through revisions to ensure compliance. After the 1995 world conference on women in Beijing, an amazing array of women-oriented NGOs developed in Iran and have since included, in their advocacy, accurate information on women's conditions on the ground.[43]

Another key global element that needs to be explored is the role of women migrants and diaspora communities abroad, especially in the West. Because Iran was never colonized, language is a barrier that needs to be broken, especially when we begin to think of language not only as a means of establishing connections but also in the sense of the global feminist discourse.[44] The growth in the number of educated Iranian women abroad also resulted in the growth of Iranian women's organizations in Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia.

As of 1999,[45] there were 97 Iranian women's rights groups concentrated among those continents. The activities of these women

---

[41]Mehran, "The Presentation of the Self and the Post-Revolutionary Textbooks," 252.

[42]Apparently, it revealed an embarrassing situation regarding women, and so was held up and went through several changes. This example of the eye-opening, educational, and challenging process of preparation for a world conference on women brought home the relevance of women's studies and feminist literature which will be discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

[43]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 870.

[44]Primarily English, but Iranian women also had to learn other major European languages such as French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

[45]More accurate recent figures are not available, but many reports, such that of Badran, note an increase. See Margot Badran, "Islamic Feminism: What's in

include raising international awareness and mobilizing international pressure, especially on violations of women's rights. They were also instrumental in supplying women activists inside Iran with materials and scholarly works published abroad and in carrying out research on women in Iran.[46]

While the movement has been very active and has contributed enormously to the struggle for women's rights in Iran, it has remained largely secular in nature. Moreover, despite the campaign having been widespread, it has been a failure largely due to the absolute power of fundamentalists over the state's institutions. The answer to this problem is the involvement of elite Iranian women in the struggle.[47] The period in the 1990s is oftentimes cited by students of feminism in Iran as the birth of modern Islamic Feminism. According to scholars, Islamist Feminism is a 20th century phenomenon, even though it is supposed in the world of politics that Islamist movements signify a trend that ushers in a return to the medieval Islamic period.[48]

C. The Birth of Modern Islamic Feminism

How possible is it to talk about Islamic Feminism which seems, in and of itself, a contradiction of terms? According to noted feminist scholar and advocate Margot Badran, it could be understood as "a feminist discourse and practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm." This classification therefore includes both those Muslim women activists who identify themselves as Islamic feminists and those who do not, and also those women who are in power and those who are not.[49]

---

a Name?" *Al-Ahram Weekly* 569:2 (2002), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/569/cu1.htm (accessed March 9, 2013).

[46]Tohidi, "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan," 877–879.

[47]Ahmadi, "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context," 34.

[48]Said Amir Arjomand, "Islam, Political Change and Globalization," *Thesis Eleven* 76:1 (2004): 9–11.

[49]Badran, "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?"

The basic methodologies of Islamic Feminism combine both traditional Islamic methodologies—*ijtihad* (independent investigation of religious sources) and *tafsir* (interpretation of the *Qur'an*). Islamic feminists use methods and tools of linguistics, history, literary criticism, sociology, anthropology, etc. rooted in post-modernism, something that is drawn as well from the global feminist discourse.[50] One essential point of postmodern feminist critique is that it focuses not only on the power hidden in relations of domination, which many face in everyday life, but also on the ideological forces that authorize and sustain these relations of domination.[51]

A feminist reading of Islam is almost unavoidable. This is because Islam is a part no longer of the oppositional discourse, but rather the *discourse in power.* The *Shari'a* became the basis of the legal system of the Islamic state and its custodians had to deal with contradictory aims. On one hand, they had to uphold the family and restore women to their "true and high" status in Islam while at the same time upholding men's *Shari'a* prerogatives on the other. A major argument of Islamic feminists is that some verses in the *Qur'an* cannot be employed in modern times. They draw primarily from the arguments of Abdol Karim Soroush,[52] which distinguish between the "essentials" and "accidentals" of Islam. The essentials *(zati*) in Islam are those that cannot be changed. The essentials of Islam are elements without which Islam is not Islam. There are yet others, which he calls "accidentals" (*arazi*), which are the results of the special time and place Mohammed was born into and socialized. For example, *tawheed* (Oneness of God) is an essential because "it could not have been otherwise." It was

[50]Ahmadi, "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context," 36.

[51]Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott, *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 58.

[52]He is known as the "Martin Luther of Shiite Islam" for his reformist ideas. In the early days of the Islamic Republic, he was one of the most prolific and eloquent intellectuals of the Islamic Revolution and a member of the Council for Cultural Revolution. He is now regarded as one of the most rebellious and learned critics of clerical rule in Iran.

accidental that the prophet was born in Arabia and therefore that the language of Islam is Arabic, something that according to Soroush significantly shaped the conceptual framework of the *Qur'an*.[53]

Thus, as the argument goes, rather than being a manifesto, the *Shari'a* is a product of a particular cultural interpretation and cannot put forward immutable answers to the questions of a given historical period. Iranian Islamic feminists demand that the *Shari'a* needs to be reinterpreted on the basis of a feminist approach and new laws deduced according to contemporary needs.[54] Iranian Islamic feminists employ in their analyses some of postmodernism's conceptual tools. A large part of this is the recognition of "multiple truths, multiple roles, and multiple realities" as part of postmodern feminists' focus.[55] Iranian Islamic feminists also favor postmodernists' rejection of an essential nature of women. That postmodern feminism offers a useful philosophy for diversity in feminism, because of its acceptance of multiple truths and rejection of essentialism, is just what Islamic feminism needs for legitimizing itself in the feminist discourse. Besides the acceptance of diversity, Iranian Islamic feminists also adhere to a postmodernist view of language: a mechanism of institutional control. In particular, they have criticized not only the *Qur'an* and the *Shari'a*, but the Bible as well, as being rooted in a male interpretation of doctrine and a male interpretation of God.[56]

---

[53]Ahmadi, "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context," 37–39.

[54]According to Keddie, for example, the role of women in the Shari'a was influenced by Mediterranean emphasis on female virginity and chastity as central to male honor. This has something to do with the difficult terrain and mixed settlement in the region, which threatens genealogical purity.

[55]Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of Modern Debate* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 54.

[56]Ahmadi, "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context," 36.

A very good example is the rereading of the story of Adam's rib concerning the origin of women. In most *hadith*,[57] woman comes from that rib and that is used as a basis for arguing that in all matters, men precede women.[58] The feminist reinterpretation consists in going back to the *Qur'an*. The garden story, for feminists, shows the equality between men and women. They are both equally capable of making choices such as disobeying God (and eating the forbidden fruit). After all, in Islam both men and women are expected to perform the five ritual duties.[59]

Another mainstream interpretation relates to marriage. Men are allowed to have as many as four wives provided they can support them. The children of a marriage belong to the husband. A wife may only obtain divorce from her husband if she pays a certain sum. For Islamic feminists, marriage is a contract involving the consent of both parties. Men are also required to take care of their wives and should provide for their maintenance after the separation.[60]

The last 25 years since the Iranian revolution saw a flourishing of cultural products generated by Iranian feminists. The growing number of women's organizations and institutes, as well as a variety of women's journals now being published in Iran, attest to the significance of rethinking women's gender roles. Some of these journals, such as *Zanan*,[61] explicitly define themselves as feminist-oriented and are

---

[57]Reports or sayings of the deeds or sayings of Mohammed transmitted to his companions.

[58]Nayereh Tohidi & Jane H. Bayes, "Women Redefining Modernity and Religion in the Globalized Context," in Nayereh Tohidi & Jane H. Bayes, eds., *Globalization, Gender and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 24–26.

[59]Herbert Bodman, "Introduction," in Herbert Bodman & Nayereh Tohidi, eds., *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity within Unity* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1998), 5.

[60]Tohidi & Bayes, "Women Redefining Modernity and Religion in the Globalized Context," 26–27.

[61]*Zanan* is the most important journal in Iran that articulates the Islamic feminists' ideas. During the past years, *Zanan* has become one of the most

embarking on a project of thorough and radical interpretations of Islamic sources about women's rights.[62]

A new trend is emerging among Islamic feminists in Iran. Islamic feminists now use theories and methodologies of both Islamic and secular schools. A good example of secular and Islamic feminists' cooperation concerns the right of women to work as lawyers, as well as a joint protest campaign in 1999 against the ban of women judges. Another example is the participation of several secular women activists in the divergent roundtable discussions that Islamic feminists have held. Islamic feminism in Iran has extended the domain of feminist dialogue in the country, not only to include secular women but also clerical scholars (*ulema*).[63] Women in this case have not only taken advantage of this cooperation between secular and Islamic feminists; they have also taken advantage of the role of debate in determining orthodoxy in Islam. Gender issues and women's rights have taken the forefront in these debates.

Increased crackdowns against dissidents and the renewed control of Parliament by hardliners resulted in 2,000 women staging a sit-in, calling for the revision of the Constitution, in front of the University of Tehran in 2005. They were joined by Iran's famous living poet, Simini Behbahani. They also received widespread support from Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu, feminist and human rights

---

significant documents for studying Islamic feminism until it was closed down in 2002.

[62]Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Muslim Women's Quest for Equality: Between Islamic Law and Feminism," *Critical Inquiry* 32:4 (2006): 630.

[63]Ahmadi, "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context," 45. For the first time, Shi'a clerics in the *Qhom*, the center of religious and political power of Shi'a clerics, were "obliged" to open their doors to a Muslim feminist woman with a University of Cambridge doctorate in anthropology (Ziba Mir-Hosseini), who engaged in a challenging face-to-face debate on gender issues with several prominent Islamic ulema. Most of the interviewed clerics were those who had or still have strong connections with governmental positions in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

lawyer Shriin Ebadi, the Islamic Students Association, and various NGOs and webloggers.[64] This is further testament to the kind of international support that the movement receives.

In celebration of this event a year later, they staged another sit-in in *Haft-e Tir* Square. This protest called for reforms in Islamic Law. In particular, they called for a ban on polygamy, equal rights to divorce for women and men, joint custody of children after divorce, equal rights in marriage, an increase in the minimum legal age of marriage for girls to 18, and equal rights for women as witnesses. The state security's response was violent: they broke off the rally and some protesters were beaten and arrested.[65]

Two months later, women's rights activists launched the One Million Signatures Campaign (OMSC). Through door-to-door contact, the Internet, meetings, and public conferences, the campaign, as the title implies, aims to generate one million signatures in support of changes to discriminatory laws against women.[66] The second phase of the campaign involves working with legal experts in order to draft new laws to replace unjust ones. The campaign uses three approaches. First, it builds on Islamic feminist and reformist discourse to articulate women's equality within an Islamic human rights framework. Second, it aims to reconcile the Iranian approach which works to foreground the campaign as a distinctly Iranian, as opposed to Western-influenced, project that deserves support from a modern Islamic state.[67] The organization has

[64]Sameh, "Discourses of Equality, Rights and Islam in the One Million Signatures Campaign in Iran," 447.

[65]Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Is Time on Iranian Women Protesters' Side?" (June 16, 2006), http://www.merip.org/mero/mero061606.html (accessed March 9, 2013).

[66]Updates on the campaign are available at the campaign's website, Change for Equality (http://www.campaignforequality.info).

[67]Sameh, "Discourses of Equality, Rights and Islam in the One Million Signatures Campaign in Iran," 449.

chapters in Iran and in places as far as California.[68] Coupled with a robust multi-lingual presence on the Internet, the campaigners were successful in framing the movement as both local and transnational.

IV. Conclusion: What Space? Which Audiences?

In examining the interaction between Islam, human rights, global connections between different organizations, and women's personal sense of agency, it is useful to return to how Robins conceptualized the dynamic interface between culture and identity in the new global context. Globalization may bring about convergence and *homogenization* in world culture. More cosmopolitan developments bring about encounters which produce *hybridization*. However, there are groups which respond to global upheavals by returning to their roots, religious traditions and fundamentals. The last type of response can be characterized as a *resurgence* of indigenous culture.[69]

A. Changing Spaces

The global resurgence of political Islam is a response to liberalism, secular nationalism, and secular socialism. It was brought about in part by the failure of modern secular nationalism and socialist states to deliver balanced economic, political and cultural development. The feelings of uncertainty, generated by these failures, invite a sense of localism and even tribalism.[70] In the case of Iran, it was a response to the perception of a corruption of culture and belief as well as the failure to deliver, in a number of key socio-economic areas, by the Shah regime. The resulting difficulties have been framed by the Islamic

[68]"One Million Signatures Campaign Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws," Change for Equality (2006), http://www.campaignforequality.info/english/spip.php?article18 (accessed March 9, 2013).

[69]Kevin Robins, "What in the World's Going On?" in P. Dugay, ed., *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 33.

[70]See Tohidi & Bayes (2001).

revolutionaries of 1979 as an evil produced by "Westoxification," the Western corruption of Iranian society.

Indeed, gender is a central dimension in the crises of identity brought about by globalization. The integration of women in labor markets, the shifts of power relations between men and women, the presence of women in institutions, and access to printing, scripture and social media have placed gender on the center stage.[71] The revival of patriarchal codes, veiling and sex segregation in Iran cannot simply be reduced to a religious revival, or a religious reaction, but rather as a response to the larger issue of identity. It is, in a sense, a discourse of the powerless and the powerful. Islamists are faced with a threat of cultural homogenization and they therefore try to control "others" in their midst: women. Modernized women are viewed as agents of the Western enemy and an integral part of the Western imperialism project. This is where women attempted to challenge access and control of a *space*: the definition of what it means to be a woman in an Islamic context, in both the public and the private sphere. Over time, the conception by female dissidents and the ruling male elite of what this space means is a story of constant negotiation and renegotiation, sometimes open and violent, sometimes subtle and in secret.

In the course of the movement's history, this space was conceived around access to public education, removal of the *hejab*, the right of suffrage, women in the labor force and, in the post-revolutionary era, the bigger question of women's place in orthodox Islamic doctrine, which encompasses both the public and private role of women. The last one presents an interesting paradox: how men cannot anymore invoke the support of women without more space in the public and the private sphere. The sense of "awakened agency" among women resulted in their refusal to return to play the role of obedient housewives and mothers and have instead began to demand for civil rights and equal status. Male elites, in turn, have recognized the role

[71]Minoo Moallem, "Transnationalism, Feminism and Fundamentalism," in Elizabeth A. Castelli, ed., *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 119–148.

that women have in retaining state power and have become more flexible and pragmatic. This resulted in significant concessions in the post-revolutionary years.[72]

The adoption of a more global discourse on feminism has strengthened the position of women in contesting this space. The incorporation of the traditional Islamic methodologies, such as *ijtihad* and *tafsir*, and the post-modern tools of linguistics, history, literary criticism, sociology and anthropology prove to be interesting. This has allowed women to contend for space in an Islamic context but, at the same time, do away with the label of "agents of Westernization," a tag which still generates antagonism in parts of Iran. The meeting of the global feminist discourse and traditional methods has allowed them extraordinary leverage to question and interpret traditional Islamic doctrine.

B. Different Audiences

The notion of *audiences* in this case refers to several things: the search for a more global platform for their advocacy, the role of international organizations, feminist networks, and the diaspora communities.

Since the early part of the campaign, Iranian feminists have been involved in spreading their ideas and advocacies outside of the Iranian state. With increased access to communication, women were able to bring international attention to their concerns. The UN and the various conferences were also useful avenues for women to challenge the male-dominated government outside of its borders. In an atmosphere where there is limited space for contention, this seems like a natural response.

The diaspora community has been instrumental in raising international awareness, mobilizing international pressure, and in carrying out research and increasing the awareness of women inside Iran. Religion has not only enabled them to find a link to home; it has enabled them to contrast themselves as well as learn from the "Other," especially the language of the global feminist discourse.

[72]Tohidi & Bayes (2001: 39–41).

Transnational connections generate campaigns which have the possibility of creating what Reed and Foran referred to as "cultures of political opposition." These cultures, as manifested by individuals, groups and organizations, create the possibility for radical ways of giving meaning to the period that they are living through.[73] In the case of Iran, the campaign for human rights within an Islamic framework and women's equality discourses, such as the One Million Signatures Campaign, have been successful at building on the shifting social practices, beliefs and desires of millions of Iranian women and men who have adopted a different version of Islam from that of the ruling Islamic hardliners.

Better educated women have taken lead roles in movements, such as in Iran. Their role in these movements, however, has changed. Instead of a submissive and sheltered role, they have found a legitimate and accepted social space for political activism.[74] Indeed, the role of education in the development of feminist movements in Iran cannot be overemphasized. Since 1989, the enrollment rate of women, especially in tertiary education, has been steadily increasing. In the last ten years, for instance, 60 percent of those who passed the college entrance examinations in Iran were women. In Shavarini's 2005 study, many women who went to college to get a degree did so to gain respect and independence as well as run away from "controlling" family environments. Later on, they became part of a pool of professionals who have a different understanding of gender roles from that of their very conservative families.[75]

---

[73]Jean-Pierre Reed & John Foran, "Political Cultures of Opposition: Exploring Idioms, Ideologies, Revolutionary Agency in the Case of Nicaragua," *Critical Sociology* 28:3 (2002): 338–339.

[74]Janet Bauer, "The Mixed Blessings of Women's Fundamentalism: Democratic Impulses in a Patriarchal World," in Judy Brink & Joan Mencher, eds., *Mixed Blessings: Gender and Religious Fundamentalism Cross-Culturally* (New York: Routeledge, 1997), 223.

[75]Mitra Shavarini, "The Feminisation of Iranian Higher Education," *Review of Education* 53:1 (2005): 337–340.

Evidence from three surveys conducted in Iran from 2000–2003 indicate that educated young women in Iran are significantly more likely to work outside the home, marry later, give birth later, have fewer children, and have more egalitarian marriages than other Iranian women. Surprising numbers of older Iranians also espoused feminist attitudes. The majority of respondents in a nationally representative sample of urban Iranians identify themselves as advocates of women's rights.[76] There is indeed a lot to hope for in the direction which the movement is going: towards greater *spaces*, more *audiences*.

Bibliography

Ahmadi, Fereshteh. "Islamic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islamic Context." *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion* 22:2 (2006): 33–53.

Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of Modern Debate*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992.

Amin, Camron Michael. "Globalizing Iranian Feminism: 1910–1950." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4:1 (2008): 7–30.

Arjomand, Said Amir. "Islam, Political Change and Globalization." *Thesis Eleven* 76:1 (2004): 9–28.

Badran, Margot. "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?" *Al-Ahram Weekly* 569:2 (2002). http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/569/cu1.htm. Accessed March 9, 2013.

Bauer, Janet. "The Mixed Blessings of Women's Fundamentalism: Democratic Impulses in a Patriarchal World." In *Mixed Blessings: Gender and Religious Fundamentalism Cross-Culturally,* eds. Judy Brink & Joan Mencher. New York: Routeledge, 1997.

Bodman, Herbert. "Introduction." In *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity within Unity*, eds. Herbert Bodman & Nayereh Tohidi. Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1998.

[76]Charles Kurzman, "A Feminist Generation in Iran?" *Iranian Studies* 41:3 (2008): 320–321.

Butler, Judith & Joan W. Scott. *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Change for Equality. "One Million Signatures Campaign Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws." 2006. http://www.campaignforequality.info/english/spip.php?article18. Accessed March 9, 2013.

Chowdhury, Anupama. "Historicizing, Theorizing, and Contextualizing Feminism." *Journal of English Studies* 4:10 (2009): 28–39.

Eisenstein, Zillah. "Women's Publics and the Search for New Democracies." *Feminist Review* 57:1 (1997): 140–167.

Giddens, Anthony. *Beyond the Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

Hasan, Muhammad Mahmudul. "Feminism as Islamophobia: A Review of Misogyny Charges against Islam." *Intellectual Discourse* 20:1 (2012): 55–78.

Keddie, Nikki. *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. London: Yale University, 2003.

Kurzman, Charles. "A Feminist Generation in Iran?" *Iranian Studies* 41:3 (2008): 298–321.

McDonald, Kevin. *Global Movements: Action and Culture*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Mehran, Golnar. "The Presentation of the Self and the Post-Revolutionary Textbooks." In Nikki Keddie & Rudi Mathee, *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, 232–253. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. "Muslim Women's Quest for Equality: Between Islamic Law and Feminism." *Critical Inquiry* 32:4 (2006): 629–645.

———. "Is Time on Iranian Women Protesters' Side?" June 16, 2006. http://www.merip.org/mero/mero061606.html. Accessed March 9, 2013.

Moallem, Minoo. "Transnationalism, Feminism and Fundamentalism." In *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*, ed. Elizabeth A. Castelli, 119–148. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Moghadam, Valentine. "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate." In *Gender, Politics, and Islam*, eds. T. Saliba, C. Allen, & J. Howard, 15–51. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Najmabadi, Afsaneh. "Zanha-yi Millat: Women or Wives of the Nation?" *Iranian Studies* 26:1 (1993): 51–71.

Paidar, Parvin. *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Reed, Jean-Pierre & John Foran. "Political Cultures of Opposition: Exploring Idioms, Ideologies, Revolutionary Agency in the Case of Nicaragua." *Critical Sociology* 28:3 (2002): 335–370.

Robertson, Roland. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage, 1990.

Robins, Kevin. "What in the World's Going On?" In *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, ed. P. Dugay. London: Sage Publications, 1997.

Sameh, Catherine. "Discourses of Equality, Rights and Islam in the One Million Signatures Campaign in Iran." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12:3–4 (2010): 444–463.

Sanasarian, E. *The Women's Rights Movement in Iran: Mutiny, Appeasement and Repression from 1900 to Khomeini*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982.

Shavarini, Mitra. "The Feminisation of Iranian Higher Education." *Review of Education* 53:1 (2005): 329–324.

Tohidi, Nayereh & Jane H. Bayes. "Women Redefining Modernity and Religion in the Globalized Context." In *Globalization, Gender and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts*, eds. Nayereh Tohidi & Jane H. Bayes. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Tohidi, Nayereh. "The Global-Local Intersection of Feminism in Muslim Societies: The Cases of Iran and Azerbaijan." *Social Research* 69:3 (2002): 851–887.

Tripp, Aili Mari. "The Evolution of Transnational Feminisms." In *Global Feminism*, eds. Myra Marx Ferree & Aili Mari Tripp. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 127–138

BEYOND BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES (BECs)

Challenges to the Reception of Communio Ecclesiology in Asia

Norlan H. Julia, S.J.

Filipino bishop Francisco Claver (1929–2010), whose writings and episcopal work were dedicated to the realization of Vatican II's vision, considers the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) as "the new way of being church in Asia today." For him, the BECs are the most effective manifestation of the Council's communion ecclesiology as well as the most potent vehicles of the Church's much needed renewal. This article aims to evaluate Claver's assertion drawn mainly from the Philippine experience of the BECs. The theological contributions of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) will serve as framework and tools in the critique. Some of the key assertions of the FABC include the local church as agent of evangelization, the triple dialogue with religions, cultures and the poor, and participation as the mode of ecclesial life.

The article will therefore look at the challenges faced by BECs in the contemporary Philippine and Asian situation and raise some questions such as: How can BECs retain the vibrancy and potency which they enjoyed in their early years? What forms can or should BECs take in the multi-cultural and multi-religious, albeit largely poor Asian context? May BEC lend its name to new forms of communio emerging as a result of modern technology, in Asia as well as in other parts of the world? Far from giving certain and definite answers, this article simply

aims to put these questions forward in order to jumpstart a discussion around these pressing theological and practical questions.

Vatican II: Birthing of the World-Church and the Asian Church

Rahner described Vatican II as a *caesur*, a "neat break" from a culturally narrow past, from a monolithic Eurocentric Church to a truly pluriform world-Church. For him, "the Second Vatican Council is the beginning of a tentative approach by the Church to the discovery and realization of itself as world-Church." For him, this "becoming a world -Church" in Vatican II is the third period in a theologically accurate division of Church history. Just as in its earliest years, the Church underwent a transition from its inward-looking Jewish-Christian world into the vast and unfamiliar Greek-Roman world, and in the process, breaking away from cherished traditions and principles such as circumcision and the Torah; so now, it is moving from a Eurocentric, monolithic Roman Church to a multi-cultural, polycentric world-Church. This new transition demands, as before, a *caesura*, a break, an interruption in the history of salvation.[1]

Catalino Arévalo, a Filipino theologian, notes how Vatican II has borne fruit in and for the Church in Asia by way of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). When Pope Paul VI visited Manila in 1970, a group of bishops met and discussed how they could work together to implement the renewalist program of the Council. Four years later, the Asian bishops came together for the first time as the FABC. Arévalo says: "'The FABC is truly an issue of 'the grace that was the Second Vatican Council.' It has marked a decisive

[1]K. Rahner, "Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council," *Theological Investigations* XX: *Concern for the Church*, trans. Edward Quinn (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981), 78, 82. Cf. in the same volume, "The Abiding Significance of the Second Vatican Council," 90–102.

'turning to history,' a movement toward realizing a Church in Asia."[2] As Vatican II is for the universal Church, so is FABC for the Church in Asia. Over the 30 years that FABC has been in existence, it has developed its own theological method and vision of the church in Asia, reflected in its numerous statements and papers. These, in turn, have stimulated the theological reflection of many professional and emerging Asian theologians who are contributing to the growth of inculturated Asian theology.[3]

For Francisco Claver, S.J., a Filipino bishop, the key pastoral idea of Vatican II which gave birth to creative and effective pastoral initiatives is its thrust towards a more participatory Church. The post-conciliar projects such as inculturation, collegiality, co-responsibility, liturgical renewal and other similar projects are concrete expressions of participation: the institutional church participating more fully in the daily lives of the people, and the laity participating in shaping the life and ministry of the Church.[4] A unique aspect of this ethic of participation is the commitment of Asian Churches to dialogue. Felix Wilfred summarizes the orientation of FABC in the word "*dialogue*." For him, dialogue

> frees the Church from becoming a self-centered community, and links it with the people in all areas and dimensions of their lives. According to the bishops, dialogue in Asia needs to be pursued in three inter-related spheres: Asian religions, Asian cultures, and the immense multitude of the poor."[5]

---

[2]Catalino Arévalo, "… The Time of the Heirs …," in Gaudencio Rosales, D.D. & Catalino Arévalo, S.J., *For All the Peoples of Asia* I (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), xvi. See also Edmund Chia, "Thirty Years of FABC: History, Foundation, Context and Theology," *FABC Papers* 106 (2003).

[3]For a summary of scholarly works on the theology of FABC, see James H. Kroeger, *Theology from the Heart of Asia: FABC Doctoral Dissertations* I (1985–1998) and II (1998–2008) (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2008).

[4]Francisco Claver, "The Church in Asia: Twenty and Forty Years after Vatican II (Personal Reflections: 1985 and 2005)," *FABC Papers* 117 (2005): 74.

[5]Felix Wilfred, "The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC): Orientations, Challenges and Impact," in Gaudencio Rosales, D.D. &

Peter Phan cites the pioneering liturgical reforms, the development of indigenous theology, the efforts at interreligious dialogue and inculturation and the engagement in social reform and development in various parts of Asia as concrete instances of the reception of Vatican II in Asia.[6] Michael Amaladoss holds that inculturation and dialogue are imperatives in the conduct of evangelization in Asia.[7]

BECs: Communio Ecclesiology in Action

Francisco Claver is fully convinced that Basic Ecclesial Communities are the most compelling evidence of the reception of communio ecclesiology in Asia, particularly in the Philippines. For him, in these church communities are manifested more than in others the key elements of a renewed church according to the vision of Vatican II: dialogue, participation and co-responsibility.[8] He traces the beginnings of the BECs in the Philippines in the early 70's, when the bishops of Southern Philippines met in a regional conference (Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference or MSPC, August 1971) to reflect together on how the reforms of Vatican II may be seen enfleshed in their areas. In line with the Council's thrust towards liturgical renewal and greater lay participation in the life of the Church, the MSPC unanimously voted

---

Catalino Arévalo, S.J., *For All the Peoples of Asia* I (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), xxiv–xxv.

[6]Peter Phan, "Reception of Vatican II in Asia: Historical and Theological Analysis," *FABC Papers* 117 (2005): 107–127, esp. 112–121. See also Peter Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (Maryknoll, N.Y. : Orbis Books, 2004).

[7]Michael Amaladoss, "Is There an Asian Way of Doing Theology?" *East Asian Pastoral Review* 45 (2008): 1027.

[8]Francisco Claver, *The Making of the Local Church* (Quezon City: Claretian Publ., 2009), 107. What follows is a summary of Claver's presentation on the BECs in this book. Mary Fitzpatrick examines Claver's vision and theology of the local church in Mary Fitzpatrick, *Bishop Francisco F. Claver, SJ, 1972–90: On the Local Church* (Manila: De la Salle University Press, 1995).

to recommend to local bishops only two proposals for implementation: 1) the training of lay ministers for small village congregations, and 2) the improvement of the work with indigenous peoples in the region.[9] This paved the way to the formation of BECs, very much akin to the small Christian communities called Communidades de Bases in Latin America.[10] In the 1980's, dioceses in central Philippines also started forming BECs, and in the 1990's, the BEC Office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines recorded over a thousand BEC clusters in the country, classified under 93 names.[11] The FABC formally acknowledged the significance of BECs and endorsed its implementation in its member countries. No record, however, could be found and no study has been made on the practise of BEC in Asia.

As Claver explains it, BECs are "worshipping communities of faith discernment-and-action at the lower levels of the Church, that try, in a participatory way, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to put life and faith together in an integrated whole."[12] This definition incorporates what, for Claver, are the elements that distinguish BECs from other church bodies. Firstly, BECs are communities guided by the pastoral method summarized as " faith-discernment-action." In these communities, the members reflect on their experiences in the light of the Word of God and discern together the course of action to which the Holy Spirit is directing them.[13] In the 70's, when the Philippines

[9]Ibid., 41–42.

[10]On the history, formation and significance of the Comunidades in the Latin American experience, see Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church,* trans. Robert Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986); Marcello Azevedo, *Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil: The Challenge of a New Way of Being Church,* trans. John Drury (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1987).

[11]Claver, *The Making of the Local Church*, 115.

[12]Claver, *The Making of the Local Church*, 110. See also Jose Marins et al., *Basic Ecclesial Communities: The Church from the Roots* (Quezon City: Claretian Publ., 1983), 12–20.

[13]This is also called the "pastoral cycle of experience-reflection-action." See Claver, *The Making of the Local Church*, 100–101. What the FABC endorsed as

was under the grip of the Marcos dictatorship and countless innocent civilians were subjected to warrantless arrests, illegal detentions, suspicion of conniving with insurgents, and forced recruitment to paramilitary groups, the BECs provided its members an avenue in which they could make sense of their experiences of violence and injustice and come up with discerned action in response to their experience.[14]

Secondly, BECs are led and run by laypeople, thus giving them a chance to exercise directly and actively their kingly-prophetic-priestly role. Since BECs emerged in grassroots communities in far-flung villages that see their parish priest only once a month, or worse, once a year for patronal feastday, the lay-leaders take on the priest's role of presiding in the liturgy of the Word. Not only the lay-presider, but the rest of the community share their thoughts and reflections on the Word of God. Decisions as to the communal stand and action to be taken on a particular social issue are deliberated upon and made by the entire community, not by one person alone. In this way, the BEC is truly participatory in accordance with Vatican II's communio ecclesiology. The co-responsibility which must characterize the Vatican II Church is nowhere more palpable than in the BEC where members are no mere passive spectators in the liturgy, followers of ready-made decisions, or recipients of the Church's charitable works. In the BEC, lay people are actively engaged in all aspects of their Christian community life.

---

the "Asian Integrated Pastoral Approach" (ASIPA) is herein adopted by the BECs. See "Asian Integrated Pastoral Approach towards a New Way of Being Church in Asia (AsIPA): Report of the Consultation on Integral Formation (Nov. 3, 1993)," in Franz-Josef Eilers, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia* II (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), 107–111.

[14]Most of Claver's finest pastoral letters tackle the urgent social justice issues during the Marcos era; see F. Claver, *The Stones will Cry Out: Grassroots Pastorals* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978). For a study on the Philippine experience during and after the Marcos dictatorship, see Ateneo de Manila University-Office of Research and Publications, *Memory, Truth-telling and the Pursuit of Justice: A Conference on the Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship* (Quezon City: AdMU Office of Research and Publications, 2001).

Thirdly, in the BECs, Christians are able "to put life and faith together into an integrated whole." Inculturation and dialogue happen in its most profound sense in the BECs. For Claver, inculturation may be seen as "the ongoing and salvific dialogue between a people and the Holy Spirit in regard to their special way of being human, their culture." It is in the BECs that the people's faith encounters their concrete situation and circumstances as human beings set in a particular culture. In this encounter, faith and culture mutually influence, support or challenge each other, and in the process, enrich or purify each other.[15] For instance, the strong family ties that characterize Filipino culture serve as a reliable source of emotional support and a stable foundation of unity among family members. However, the same ties become an obstacle to the maturity of socio-political institutions when these are co-opted to maintain political dynasties and justify the practice of nepotism in government and oligarchy in civil society.[16] This is challenged when, in the BECs, members reflect on Jesus' words on loving family more than Him (Mt. 10: 37) and on the priority of doing God's will over obligation to one's family (Mt. 12: 48). As the members seriously engage in the experience-reflection-action cycle and actively participate in the life of the community, they set the stage for the Spirit's transformative action which engenders conversion within the culture and impels them to become agents of the same Good News to others.

Challenges and Prospects in the 21st Century Asia

Claver admits to his rather idealized presentation of the BECs, despite the real problems in the formation and conduct of BECs that he mentions. Nonetheless, he believes that for all the deficiencies of

[15]Claver explains the dynamics and moments of inculturation in *The Making of the Local Church*, 136–140.

[16]Claver, *The Making of the Local Church*, 55–56. See also Sheila S. Coronel et al., eds., *The Rulemakers: How the Wealthy and Well-born Dominate Congress* (Quezon City: Phil. Center for Investigative Journalism, 2004).

the BECs in their actual practice, it has to be credited for relentlessly pursuing the vision of Vatican II's communio ecclesiology, the new way of being Church, and for being a vehicle of social transformation.[17] So that BECs can continue to be an effective manifestation of a renewed Church, they have to face the challenges of contemporary society. Claver's account of the genesis and growth of the BECs is confined mainly to the rural areas of Southern and Northern Philippines where he served as local ordinary. In its early years in the 70's and in the peak of its growth throughout the Philippines in the 80's and 90's, BECs saw their development from the liturgical to the developmental and liberational forms. In those years, when Philippine society was beset by a series of political crises, the BECs were vibrant bodies that provided people with the spiritual vision and social cohesion to struggle for social justice and human rights. However, in the early years and decade of the new millennium, BECs have had to find a new way of engaging in social issues that no longer require protest marches or non-violent assemblies, but long-term advocacies and lobbying in legislature for the enactment of laws that will ensure the protection of rights wilfully violated in the period of the dictatorship. Now that the struggle has shifted from open struggle against an oppressive dictatorship to a long-drawn campaign against corruption in government, BECs are trying to figure out how to sustain the original passion for social justice which accompanied them in their formative years.[18]

---

[17]Claver, *The Making of the Local Church*, 123–127; Marins, *Basic Ecclesial Communities*, 41–54. See Mary Ann Charity Durano, *The Pastoral Vision of Francisco Claver and Orlando Quevedo on the Role of Basic Ecclesial Communities in Social Transformation within the Philippine Context*, unpublished MA Thesis (Ateneo de Manila University, 2003); "SCCs/BECs Towards a Church of Communion: Final Statement of the AsIPA 4th General Assembly (Nov. 8–15, 2006)," in Franz-Josef Eilers, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia* IV: *Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 2002–2006* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2007), 179–185.

[18]Ivan Petrella looks at the challenges faced by base communities inspired by liberationist aims beyond the initial phase of struggle against unjust structures to maintaining and sustaining stable institutions. See I. Petrella, *The Future of*

The evolution of BECs (Basic Ecclesial Communities) from BCCs shows how it has dealt with the presence of non-Catholics and non-Christians in the community. Where the term "Christian" did not simply denote a religious affiliation, but also connoted an ideology, i.e., foreign and un-inculturated, it was replaced with "Ecclesial," thus giving emphasis to the priority of the assembled community regardless of religious affiliation. This shows the BECs' evolution from a religion-based community to a faith-based community without necessarily compromising its emphasis on the Gospel and the values of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, in an evolving Philippine society where non-Christians are gradually emerging as a potent force amidst a Christian majority, can BECs be re-invented to welcome even non-Christians as members? Claver did not tackle this question. Hence, in a way, his focus was limited to the traditional intra-Christian type of basic communities. Aloysius Pieris has successfully moved beyond the traditional form of BCC or BEC towards BHCs—basic human communities. Like the BECs, these BHCs are small grassroots groups who also reflect and discern the Spirit's movements through the pastoral cycle. The main difference is that the members come from different religions and the Scriptures that they read are not only the Judeao-Christian Scriptures, but also the Rig Veda, the Qu'ran, the Upanishads and other sacred texts. They do cross-Scriptural reading, allowing the various texts to shed light on each other and deepen the member's insight into their respective faiths.[19] In these BHCs, the dialogue of life and of religious experience envisioned by the FABC among adherents of the various religions in Asia becomes a concrete reality. Is this the future form of the BECs in the Philippines and in Asia?

The advent of modern technology has also revolutionized the traditional concepts of church and religion as well as belonging and

---

Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); I. Petrella, *Beyond Liberation Theology: A Polemic* (London: SCM Press, 2008).

[19]Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark Ltd, 1988), 111; Aloysius Pieris, *Fire and Water: Basic Issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 77–80.

participation in community. Although most Asian countries are poor in comparison to a couple of economically prosperous countries like Japan, South Korea and China, the effects of modern technology are a reality that the Asian Church has to confront. Alongside traditional church structures such as the parish, transparochial communities and BECs have sprung virtual communities in cyberspace that are very attractive especially to young people,[20] hence the popularity of online prayer guides, online retreats, and online prayer groups which count teenagers and young adults as their followers.[21] The BECs as Claver has discussed them are mainly groups of adults. Many young people do not find from the parish or from the BECs the sense of belonging that they feel in these virtual communities, yet the FABC has described the Asian Church as the Church of the Youth. It acknowledged that for the most part, Asia is a continent of the young and, therefore, an urgent priority for the Asian Church.[22]

---

[20]On the dynamics of the cybercommunities in terms of belief and belonging, see Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000), 247–256. Ward tackles the problematic of the "ex-carnate" or "dis-embodied" nature of engagement in such virtual communities and the "realized eschatology" that lies behind these types of communities. See also Ward's other works where he explores the relationship between a post-modern, post-secular culture and religion, and develops considerably the methodological basis of my engagement between theology and culture: *True Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) and *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 2004).

[21]Some examples of these are: Online Holy Week Retreat given by a Filipino Jesuit, Fr. Johnny Go (http://www.phjesuits.org/features/1252-while-standing-by-and-fence-sitting [accessed May 3, 2012]), a similar format offered by the American Jesuits (http://www.loyolapress.com/lent-retreat.htm [accessed May 3, 2012]), and a Catholic online community already on its 11th year (http://www.ecatholic2000.com/index2.html [accessed May 3, 2012]).

[22]See "Message and Resolutions of the Asian Bishops' Meeting (November 29, 1970)," in Gaudencio Rosales, D.D. & Catalino Arévalo, S.J., *For All the Peoples of Asia* I (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), 3–10, on 6. See also the results of the consultation on youth ministry in the Asian Churches: "The Youth of Asia Envisioning the Fullness of Life and Human Dignity in the Church,"

Hence, this is an urgent challenge to the Church, both in its theology and in its pastoral practice. If the Asian Church born of the Council's communio ecclesiology will continue to be participatory in the 21st century, then the youth of Asia should feel themselves co-responsible for the future of the Asian Church. Can one speak of virtual communities as BECs too? When these virtual communities can come together in a chatroom to pray together and can be mobilized to campaign for reform in governments and in the Churches, are they not performing the liturgical-praxis function of the BECs? Do not these communities foster participation among their members and inculturation in their own way? Can we therefore speak of these online communities as a new form of ecclesial community? What are the problems and complexities, both in theology and in practice, of lending to these communities the status of an ecclesial community?

Towards Continuing Renewal

Aloysius Pieris, a Sri Lankan Jesuit, holds that Vatican II was

> "a Pentecost of violent renewal" because of its far-reaching decisions, which contained an imperative to change the whole Church structurally and attitudinally, with regard to its lifestyle and worship, ministry and theology, so as to be a credible witness and a readable sign before the contemporary world.[23]

Pieris adds: "The commitment to maintain that momentum of this renewal on the frontiers of the Church is exactly what fidelity to the Council as well as the reception of the Council means for us today." The Churches are being challenged to sharpen their powers of imagination in order to rethink conventional church structures and pursue the path of the BECs towards the realization of a new way of being Church. The local churches play a crucial role in advancing the vision of Vatican II's

---

in Franz-Josef Eilers, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia* II (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), 101–105.

[23]A. Pieris, "Vatican II: A Crisigenic Council with Unwritten Agenda," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 42/1–2 (2005): 15, 22.

communio ecclesiology. By taking initiatives to implement the reforms of the Council, the local Churches respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit, the dynamic element in the Church.

But this dynamic element in the Church blows wherever it wils (Jn. 3: 8). Hence, the Church must always be attentive to the promptings of this Spirit. Can it be that the Spirit is leading the Church towards recognizing the new forms of BECs such as the basic human communities (BHCs)? If God is to be found and loved and served in all things, as St. Ignatius of Loyola held, could he be actively present in the world wide web as well, and there creating communities of faith? May we, therefore, speak of basic virtual communities (BVCs) such that whether in its traditional form or in its alternative form as BHCs, or in its emerging forms ushered in by modern technology, BECs play a crucial role for the continuing reception of Vatican II's communio ecclesiology? Claver held that with all the challenges that BECs have to face in 21st century Philippines and Asia, "the reality of the BECs as we have them now is in fact one of people struggling toward those ideals … (however), the mere struggling is enough in a church which Vatican II says is in need of continual reformation."[24] Hence, the struggle to build BECs in whatever form conducive to the promotion of the communio ecclesiology must continue with a view towards ensuring the vibrancy of the Asian churches in the years to come.

[24]Claver, *The Making of the Local Church*, 126–127.

Landas 26:1 (2012) 139–163

TWIN TOLERATIONS

The Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan Experience

Duke Thomas G. Dolorical

There is a love-hate relationship between the Philippine State, embodied by its instrument, the government, and its largest religion in terms of membership, the Catholic Church[1], at least from the viewpoint of observers. Recent issues have proven this point, such as the jousts between Pro-RH and Anti-RH supporters which would ceremoniously be punctuated with the legislation of the RH law. The sequel of this saga could be seen in Bacolod, with its diocese displaying its Team Patay/Team Buhay tarpaulins in an attempt to foist the Catholic faithful to vote for Team Buhay (a list of senatorial candidates who opposed the passage of the RH law) and refrain from supporting Team Patay (a list of Senatorial candidates who supported the passage of the RH law). Constitutionalists called it a partisan jab, even a vendetta, against those who were instrumental in the passage of the said law, and by no less than the bishop—the embodiment of the magisterium in the Philippines, with the bishop extending his forearm where Caesar's domain begins. Then again, these instances in which the Catholic Church, under the leadership of

[1]In this essay, I shall use the term "Church" to refer not only to the ordained leaders (bishops, priests, deacons and sisters) of the Catholic Church but also to the involvement and interactions of lay partners and collaborators with the latter. It shall also be used to refer to the different Church-based or affiliated organizations.

its clergy, becomes embroiled in issues which are considered "secular" (and must therefore not be forayed into by religious organizations or institutions) spark debates and lively discussions, and an automatic revisit of the age-old democratic doctrine of Separation of Church and State. In the Philippines, the principle of the Separation of the Church and the State is enshrined in Article 2, Section 6 of the 1987 Constitution, otherwise known as "Declaration of Principles and State Policies." It states that "The Separation of the Church and State shall be inviolable." Despite the prominence of this provision, the numerous instances wherein the Philippine Catholic Church and the State, through its instrumentalities, have clashed with each other attest that this principle is not much upheld, or does not hold much water. Due largely to differences of opinions and positions on vital issues affecting the country, the cases previously mentioned could only be the tip of the iceberg. However, even if this is popularly the case, there are also plenty of instances wherein the Catholic Church—through its affiliated organizations—and the Philippine government often collaborate with each other to achieve a particular undertaking complementary to that of the latter, or implement and work for an undertaking where the government's competencies fall short. While there is a treasure trove of cases and instances wherein the Catholic Church has been instrumental in attaining undertakings geared towards greater and authentic democratization,[2] I shall focus my attention on a particular sphere and ingredient of democracy and

[2]The Catholic Church, at least the one identified with the Filipino clergy during the Propaganda and the Revolution and not to be mistaken with the Aglipayan Church, has historically been at the forefront of campaigning for wider spaces of liberty and social justice. It was also identifiably visible during the time of the Marcos Conjugal Dictatorship, calling for people to uphold justice and truth in the face of a Damocles sword in the form of the military. It was also visibly felt during the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada (although my personal participation in that movement as a very young Soc-Dem activist caused me remorse to this day, as it paved the way for a far more worse presidency. From here forward, I impose upon myself to exhaust all possible constitutional means before resorting to extra-constitutional means). The Church makes felt its support for campaigns seeking to represent and mainstream the plight of the marginalized, etc.

democratization: the Catholic Church's active involvement in one of this country's important democratic fabrics—elections. The general backdrop of Philippine society lays down the conditions by which the Catholic Church lends its precepts and principles as the kernel of the motivating causes or principles of most movements and collective actions whose interventions are not meant merely to address recurring electoral concerns but are evenly aimed towards social justice and the attainment of authentic democracy in a widely impoverished country. Even the uninitiated will not find this fact surprising as it is in electoral contests, especially with an electoral system that is in dire need of timely and apt reforms, where corrupt politicians and political dynasties capture and legitimize the power and authority that they wield.

Philippine elections have been an important "priority concern" of Philippine Catholic bishops as they collectively issued a total of eleven (11) pastoral statements regarding elections.[3] It clearly illustrates a void in morality extant in elections as partisan elements and organizations exercise strategies and tactics that blatantly undermine human dignity. This has also been buttressed by the existence of several Church-based and -affiliated organizations, such as the Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB) and others, that respond to the different gaps left unaddressed by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) due to various reasons. Most of the involvements and interventions of these Church-based and -affiliated organizations have been either to complement the work of different governmental duty-bearers with regard to elections[4] or to directly collaborate and coordinate with the COMELEC, in clearly

[3]Antonio F. Moreno, "Dancing with the Philippine Electoral System: The Rise and Fall of the Church's Electoral Engagement," *Landas* 24:1 (2010): 105–119.

[4]An example of this was when COMELEC, in partnership with other governmental agencies and organizations, took the cue to enfranchise what was seen to be seven (7) vulnerable sectors of this country's electoral processes, namely, 1) Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), 2) Detainees, 3) Internally Displaced People (IDPs), 4) Indigenous People (IPs), 5) First-Time Voters (FTVs), 6) the Elderly, and 7) Overseas Absentee Voters (OAVs). COMELEC, in partnership with other NGO-POs, a good fraction of which are Church organizations, implored for the assistance of the different governmental duty-

defined terms, on various platforms of engagement and venues of collaboration. Specifically, Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan—translated into English as "the Church in the Service of the Nation (SLB)—has been among those traditional Church-affiliated organizations that have ceaselessly worked for greater democratization in this country through its proactive electoral interventions, among others, since the restoration of formal democracy. Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB) is the socio-political arm of the Society of Jesus. It traces its history to the bleak and tumultuous final years of the Martial Law era.[5] At a time when the prevailing conditions of the country were very bleak, Jesuit priests and seminarians, together with other religious and lay individuals, saw that the continued hold on power of the severely repressive Marcos Conjugal Dictatorship,[6] aided by the military establishment, which was responsible for the deaths and disappearances of thousands of Filipinos, has been judged as unacceptable as it continued to rob and dehumanize the collective dignity of the Filipino people. On the other hand, a communist rebellion that was rapidly gaining momentum in the country-side using violent means to end the dictatorship had also been perceived as an equally unacceptable option. Thus, given the confluence of events and seemingly dead-end path that the Philippines was on during that period, the common sentiment to urgently address the existing conditions prevalent in the country, along with the then loosely-knitted group's eschewal of violent means in addressing the general effects of the Marcos Conjugal Dictatorship, led to the formation of what would come to be known as the "NAMFREL Marines"[7] which eventually evolved into a non-profit and non-stock organization

---

bearers attending to the welfare and needs of the aforementioned sectors, such as the BJMP for detainees, etc.

[5]See "About: Who we are" at www.slb.ph.

[6]I am borrowing the term from Primitivo Mijares's creatively titled work on the Marcos dictatorship, "The Conjugal Dictatorship."

[7]In preparation for the 1986 snap elections, NAMFREL, the COMELEC citizens' arm, would deploy this group of religious and lay individuals in "hotspots" where election violations and election-related violence could break-out.

presently known as SLB.[8] For more than 25 years, SLB envisioned and worked for "a Filipino nation that celebrates love of country and genuine democracy." SLB invokes its deeply Christian ideals in working towards and attaining this end "in the spirit of faith that does justice with [the] preferential option for the poor." Among Civil Society Organizations, SLB is known for its political engagements, notably during elections. Since the enshrinement of the 1987 Constitution, SLB has been actively involved in undertakings seeking to fortify and strengthen this country's electoral processes. With elections being among the foremost institutions and key ingredients of democracy, SLB was keen to observe that the Filipino people's confidence and faith in the said institution must be restored[9] if democracy is to be rebuilt. With SLB's founding came its intertwined dynamic involvement in this country's electoral history. SLB's individual, intra-CSO/NGO, and inter-governmental collaborative experiences offer a glimpse into the collaborative relationships between the Church and the State while staying well within each one's respective loci of influence. In this essay, I will discuss the inevitable and all too frequent interface between the Church—through the experiences and interventions of SLB—and the State—through its instrumentality, the COMELEC and other governmental line-agencies. Given that the focus of this essay is the interaction between the government and the Church, I argue that this relationship is facilitated—and strengthened even—by the multi-various venues brought about by administrative needs and gaps that are extant to the COMELEC and other governmental line-agencies with regards to full and efficient general electoral exercise and implementation in the Philippines. I argue further that these instances of intervention are thus but opportunities for twin tolerations to exist in the Philippines.

[8]See www.slb.ph.

[9]This is due to the eroded integrity of the COMELEC as it has been co-opted by the Marcos dictatorship to legitimize its rule, save for the fact that this institution was destroyed by the Marcos regime when it was transformed into a token democratic institution.

TWIN TOLERATIONS

I will utilize the concept of "Twin Toleration" as a framework in proceeding with my essay and in pointing out that, in the case of the Philippines, as in most other countries both Christian and non-Christian alike, separation of Church and State in democracies does not necessarily mean the actualization of the French secularist tradition more popularly known as *laicite,* or the total separation of—and clear demarcation between—the two institutions as totally independent of each other. In simple terms, Alfred Stepan points out in his *Twin Tolerations* that although there might exist a degree of freedom and independence between the two institutions, this does not necessarily have to mean a complete separation between the two. There must, however, be a clearly specified differentiation between each institution's sphere of influence, and respect thereof, allowing for venues of interaction, albeit limited, to exist. Stepan lays down the necessary conditions in order for "twin tolerations" to exist. He goes on to point out that in most democracies, certain institutional and political requirements are set as a minimum before a polity can be considered as such.[10] Dahl's seminal work, *Polyarchy*, articulates that before transition to a democracy is completed, "free and contested" elections must take place.[11] In the same work, Dahl argued that some requirements of a democracy are the existence of opportunities to formulate preferences, signify said preferences, and have these preferences factored-in in governance. He continues by explaining that the satisfaction of these conditions depend upon the fulfillment of eight necessary guarantees, namely: 1) freedom to form and join organizations, 2) freedom of expression, 3) the right of suffrage, 4) eligibility for public office, 5) the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, 6) alternative sources of information, 7) free and fair elections, and 8) that governmental agencies responsible for policy-making must rely

[10]Alfred Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

[11]Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

upon votes and other expressions of preferences.[12] However, Linz and Stepan argue that, although the latter does not contend the importance of these institutional requirements in the process of democratization or strengthening democracy, sole reliance upon the latter requisites will not suffice. Other conditions must be considered, such as the crafting of a constitution that takes into mind the welfare of minorities and enshrines guarantees respecting and protecting liberties and entitlements, an elected government that rules within the bounds set forth by a constitution/law, and the establishment of horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms within the said system.[13] If Dahl's and Linz-Stepan's criteria are to be combined, Stepan considers that for democracy to be consolidated, a dynamic, critical and robust civil society and the opportunity to create it must be in place. Pointing out that democracy is a system of conflict regulation that allows open competition over values and goals that citizens want to advance so long as a) disputes are settled amicably, b) rights are respected, and c) all groups are granted the right to the advancement of their interests both in political and civil society within the bounds of law, Stepan poses the following questions in a work co-authored with Juan Linz: "What does this imply about religion, politics, democracy and the twin tolerations? What are the necessary boundaries of freedom for elected governments from religious groups, and for religious individuals and groups from government?"[14] Stepan proceeds in arguing that:

> The key area of autonomy that must be established for democratic institutions is that the institution[s] that emanate from democratic procedures should be able, within the bounds of the constitution and human rights, to generate policies. Religious institutions should not have

[12]Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

[13]Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

[14]Juan J. Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

> constitutionally privileged prerogatives which allow them authoritatively to mandate public policy to democratically elected governments.[15]

This being said, Stepan situates the respective locale each institution should occupy in a democratic political system. Stepan adds that, consistent with the core institutional definition of democracy, a key area of autonomy for religious freedom—from the state and even from other religions—is that individuals and communities must have complete freedom to worship privately. More as individuals and groups bound to society, religious practitioners must also be able to publicly *advance their values in civil society*,[16] and therefore sponsor organizations and movements in political society as long as public advancement of these beliefs does not encroach upon the liberties of others, violate democracy and the law, or use violence.[17] It therefore necessarily connotes that no group in civil society—including religious groups—can be prohibited from forming a political party. He continues to point out that constraints to said political party shall only be applicable if its actions violate democracy and that the determination as to whether or not it violates the latter should be decided not by parties but by the court.[18]

Stepan argues further that the broad framework of minimal freedom for the democratic state and the minimal religious freedoms of citizens can, from a purely theoretical perspective, produce an extraordinarily broad range of patterns of religion-state relations in political systems that would meet the minimal definition of democracy.[19]

---

[15]Alfred Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

[16]Italics mine.

[17]Alfred Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

[18]Alfred Stepan, *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations.*

[19]In the same work, Stepan specified 15 member states of the European Union which have met the core institutional requirements of a democracy and have

I argue that, similar to this position, the Philippines in essence practices and experiences a religio-political arrangement premised in the concept of Twin Tolerations. While it may be argued that, as of late, political parties whose core principles adhere to Catholic dogma exist and actively vie for political power via the country's electoral processes, which is in essence a manifestation of the principles under Twin Tolerations, I shall point out that, apart from direct participation of religious political parties such as the "Ang Kapatiran Party" in electoral contests, a broad range of patterns of religion-state relations, at least in the realm of elections, exists indeed in the Philippines. I shall, however, limit my focus on the active interaction of the State (through its instrumentalities) and the Church (through one of its affiliated socio-political organizations, Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan) in the electoral processes of this country, particularly its synergistic convergence in its campaign to actively enfranchise marginalized sectors and more so the improvement of this country's electoral processes, and that despite the limited freedoms each institution experiences, an array of venues and opportunities of interaction and cooperation have in fact been taken by corresponding state instrumentalities and Church organizations sharing common goals and advocacies to address the issues previously appertained to. While staying well within the bounds of their respective spheres of influence, conventional and unconventional patterns of complementary measures have been explored and exhausted by State and Church entities in achieving their common goals, in this case the enfranchisement of the seven vulnerable sectors of our electoral processes and the general reform of the country's electoral system.

SITUATING TWIN TOLERATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines, after a prolonged harrowing experience in the throes of the Marcos-Military dictatorship, has seen a simultaneous

---

socially and politically established the twin tolerations. Five of the fifteen standing member states of the European Union have established churches; Norway, which is not a member of the EU but is a democracy, has an established church.

escalation of uncertainty given the bleakness of the general social, economic and political climate, as well as the dangerous ebb in confidence of the Filipino citizenry in democratic edifices and institutions. It is however contradictory in the sense that at a time when the Filipino people's clamor for the restoration of authentic democracy was substantiated through a people power movement, disengagement and discontent was also looming among the majority of the Filipino people. The dislodged pre-martial-law landed elite were trying to re-insert themselves into the wobbly political order of the country which was predominantly being held by the new elite (thanks to cronyism and Marcos's hefty rewards to loyal lapdogs), or traditional politicians allied with Corazon C. Aquino's administration who belonged to political clans and were instrumental in Aquino's capture of power. The transfer of governmental authority had already been conducted during the snap election which sparked the chain of events that brought Marcos down. Although Dahl pointed out that "free and contested elections must take place" in order for democratic transition to ensue, the Marcos-sponsored snap election was far from being free. This was due to Marcos's uncontested monopoly on violence and intimidation. SLB and other like-minded organizations among the laity and other secular groups responded to the need of the situation by guarding the canvassing and transfer of ballots. This, together with the decline in popularity of Marcos's Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement) or KBL due to the numerous atrocities he and his military henchmen committed, the uncovering of the IMF of the Philippine Government's overestimated international reserves,[20] blatant corruption here and there, and his failing health, caused Marcos's eventual defeat, after which he then refused to concede. With this picture in mind, politicians who were strongly allied with Marcos were forced to consider abandoning Marcos to support Aquino if they were to survive in a post-Marcos setting where martial-law displaced elites would reclaim their "rightful" place. The existence of opportunities where each can "formulate preferences, signify these

[20]Richard J. Kessler, "Politics Philippine Style, Circa 1984," *Asian Survey* 24:12 (Dec. 1984): 1209–1228.

preferences and have these preferences factored-in in governance" was fulfilled as the 1987 Constitution was ratified. Though created to legitimate Aquino's accession to power and replace the Marcos-authored 1973 constitution, it also provided the other guarantees that Dahl, Stepan and Linz prescribes in order for twin tolerations to exist.[21] The creation of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was the first order of affairs of the new regime, tasked with reclaiming ill-gotten wealth and putting to account public officials who were errant during Martial Law; it in effect functioned as an oversight and vertical-horizontal check over affairs of governmental agencies. The separation of powers of the three important branches of government was also restored, thereby restoring the check and balances mechanism invalidated by the Marcos regime.

It may be argued that the renewed prospect of restoring democratic governance, albeit sluggish and painstaking, has provided spaces and latitudes for civil societies, religious groups and partisan interests to negotiate their respective niches in what was then a fledgling Philippine democracy, as legal guarantees and entitlements capacitating such organizations to organize and do so were emplaced. The newly installed Aquino administration saw the abundance of citizens groups and civil society organizations, of which a good number were Church-based, involve themselves in undertakings that would futher strengthen people's participation in democratic institutions. SLB, being among the many organizations that are influenced by Christian values and Catholic Social Teaching (CST), advances these beliefs in the general democratic order and continuum of this country. It formed itself into a distinguishable organization by advancing advocacies that contribute to nation-building and democratization through its engaged citizenship framework of interventions infused with CST, the Ignatian Pedagogical

[21]These eight necessary guarantees are, namely, 1) freedom to form and join organizations, 2) freedom of expression, 3) the right of suffrage, 4) eligibility for public office, 5) the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, 6) alternative sources of information, 7) free and fair elections, and 8) dependence of governmental agencies responsible for policy-making upon votes and other expressions of preferences.

Paradigm, and other general Christian values. SLB prides itself in advancing and promoting the interests and welfare of the marginalized, as its interventions are always in preference for improving the plight of the poor. It also supports the undertakings of other like-minded secular and religious organizations (such as AMRSP, CBCP-NASSA, CEAP, etc.) and constantly participates in religious-secular coalitions such as VFORCE[22] and the like, responding to various issues and concerns in Philippine political society. SLB advances these ideals in the Philippine political sphere through proactive, non-partisan and peaceful means, and always within the confines of legality and morality.

What then are these advocacies, interventions and activities that not only maintain SLB's recognition of the separation of Church and State according to conventional definition but at the same time actualize Linz-Stepan's concept of "Twin Tolerations?" Do these interventions contradict the legal boundaries provided by law? Do these interventions necessitate an interface with the State or should it be constrained within the limits or folds of Catholicism?

SIMBAHANG LINGKOD NG BAYAN: AN EXERCISE OF TWIN TOLERATIONS

Since the restoration of democracy in the Philippines and until the contemporary era, SLB has carefully navigated its space in the political dimension of the country. More than a civil-society group, SLB is a religious organization that is composed of religious and lay individuals whose mission goals are: 1) raising the social consciousness of, but not necessarily limited to, the Catholic faithful, 2) furthering the values of Catholic Social Teaching, and 3) creating opportunities for volunteerism, collaboration, and collective action.[23]

---

[22]Benjamin T. Tolosa, "Framing the Challenges of Political Empowerment and Engagement: Ideational Interventions for Democratization since 2005," in *Agenda for Hope: Ideas on Building a Nation* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009).

[23]See www.slb.ph.

Commensurate to these, SLB seeks to fulfill its mission through 1) continuing education and formation in good governance, active citizenship, and Catholic Social Teaching for Church organizations, schools, community-based organizations, and the general public, 2) raising awareness of advocacy issues which are promotive of human rights affecting governance and marginalized sectors, and 3) partnering with other institutions engaged in initiatives that demand public accountability from government. As such, SLB continues to initiate electoral interventions among the general Filipino electorate nationwide. SLB has been crafting voters' education manuals, and continues to do so, for the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) which the latter also utilizes to distribute and conduct among different parishes nationwide. This collaboration started during the 1992 synchronized elections and continues up until today, as reflected by the crafting of the Pinoy Voters Academy Voters Education Manuals in the 2007 and 2010 elections and the Pinoy Big Voter (PBV) manual for the upcoming 2013 elections. More than fulfilling its mission, SLB has been contributive to the fortification of elections as one of the necessary democratic institutions in this country. A series of electoral involvements spanning from the 2007 until the upcoming 2013 elections illustrates SLB's contributions not only to the heightening of the Filipino electorate's consciousness but also to the strengthening of this country's electoral processes as among the vital democratic institutions which are the domains of the State and its instrumentalities. While staying within the limits set forth by the doctrine of separation of Church and State, SLB has in fact contributed to democratization instead of meddling or hampering its development, as what is commonly construed regarding Church-affiliated organizations or even the Catholic clergy's meddling with secular affairs. These interventions and engagements are either in partnership with other electoral organizations or are individually initiated by SLB. On several occasions, SLB explored and exhausted collaborative undertakings with governmental line-agencies such as the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), among others, in order to address

gaps in the full exercise of marginalized sectors[24] in this country's electoral processes. These engagements are as follows: 1) VFORCE, 2) TF2010, and 3) TF2013.

VFORCE

VFORCE started as the Bantay Bayan Project and would later on become known as the VFORCE.[25] It served as a continuing framework for engagement which also coordinated and expanded action among stakeholders in the May 2007 elections. The statement of purpose of VFORCE[26] calls for the Filipino people to politically engage not only the electoral process, but also national politics and political actors in general, amidst widespread disengagement and apathy among Filipinos. It served as a venue for collaboration of civic-groups and religious organizations aiming to harness the potential of the youth, which comprised 40% of voters according to the COMELEC, as a key and instrumental factor in the outcome of the 2007 elections. It also laid down the framework in defense of the country's democratic institutions in short-term[27] and long-term engagements, centering on the deepening and leadership training of the youth as a source of future leaders. VFORCE also presented a menu of options that offered venues for volunteerism among the youth, and at the same time targeted to

[24]Pertains to the seven (7) sectors that are systematically disenfranchised due to varied factors and conditions, namely, 1) First-Time Voters/Youth, 2) Elderly, 3) Internally Displaced Persons, 4) Detainees, 5) Overseas Absentee Voters, 6) Persons with Disabilities, and 7) Indigenous People.

[25]Tolosa, "Framing the Challenges of Political Empowerment and Engagement: Ideational Interventions for Democratization since 2005."

[26]Tolosa, "Framing the Challenges of Political Empowerment and Engagement: Ideational Interventions for Democratization since 2005."

[27]This is due to the eroded confidence of the Filipino electorate in the COMELEC's integrity, given that then Chairman Abalos had been involved in the NBN-ZTE controversy while another commissioner was involved in a vote-rigging operation meant to secure the victory of GMA.

fill perennial gaps left unaddressed by the COMELEC, such as the security, sanctity and accuracy of the ballot from different types of machinations, and accessibility of relevant information necessary for making informed choices in the election. VFORCE presented these under two broad headings: political education and election monitoring.[28] SLB's contributions have been in the dispensation of political education and voters' education runs. SLB developed the Pinoy Voters Academy (PVA) voters education manual which was then massively reproduced by the PPCRV and circulated nationwide, addressing the lack of accessibility to necessary information regarding the electoral process in depressed and far-flung communities which could not be covered and reached by COMELEC's election-related information paraphernalia and information dissemination campaigns. Furthermore, SLB utilizes its vast networks and partners which are strategically located all over the country in order to intensify its information and voters education campaign. It seeks the assistance of Catholic Social Action Centers in different dioceses all over the country as CBCP-NASSA is among its established partners, and taps into the different Jesuit, Lasallian and other CEAP schools and organizations nationwide, thereby covering most regions in the country. It was also in 2007 that SLB started operating a call and text center facility in partnership with telecommunication providers PLDT and Globe Telecom, with the aim of providing toll-free information services regarding elections, including candidates' profiles and referrals of reports regarding cases of electoral violence and irregularities.

TASK FORCE 2010 (TF2010)

Continuing the synergistic and collaborative beginnings of VFORCE, Task Force 2010 (TF2010) recognized the socio-political reality that, despite the soundness of a rights-based approach of different voters' education campaigns, the impact, contrary to expectations, is not always even. Despite the right of suffrage being

[28]Tolosa, "Framing the Challenges of Political Empowerment and Engagement: Ideational Interventions for Democratization since 2005."

a universal guarantee, the previously mentioned seven (7) vulnerable sectors have been among those who are not able to exercise this right due to different issues and factors. Such has always been the case in the Filipino people's electoral history and experience, as Bro. Ernest Andal, S.J., observes: "elections are conducted not so much as to genuinely encourage people's full participation in order to hear their voice but simply to get the elite elected into power."[29] He continues to expound that "as long as there are enough people casting their votes to provide some semblance of legitimacy to the electoral exercise, full participation of all the vulnerable sectors [was] never thoroughly facilitated by government institutions." This is not only inimical to Philippine democracy but is also a clear manifestation of the incapacity and failure of the government to attend to the different needs of the said sectors. The same statement demonstrates how Christian precepts and values imbibed by SLB are enmeshed with its support and furtherance of available "secular" universal principles and entitlements, which are designed to protect and uphold the well-being of stakeholders concerned, in this case the vulnerable sectors and the general Filipino electorate as a whole. It also demonstrates the unceasing efforts of SLB to fortify and strengthen democratic institutions by universalizing the accessibility of such to the Filipino people, and by providing the venues for actualization and demanding the existence of mechanisms that will allow for said institutions' accessibility and use where there is none.

SLB would eventually collaborate with like-minded institutions, electoral watchdogs and governmental agencies to work towards the enfranchisement of the said sectors and in reforming existing electoral laws through legislation and administrative reforms; in effect, "reminding the State that there are segments in society that [need] to be truly valued and given equal treatment according to their human dignity." This consortium of 19 electoral stakeholders and watchdogs, with SLB serving as its official secretariat, was responsible for the attainment of a wide range of goals in several key result areas.

---

[29]Ernald Andal, *Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan: An Example of Electoral Engagement of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines* (speech) (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2011).

In collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Commission on Elections (COMELEC), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and Department of Social Welfare and Development, Task Force 2010 was successful in 1) identifying the seven vulnerable sectors, as there was previously not a single database for this, 2) conducting regional sectoral consultations, 3) conducting a registration campaign for the identified vulnerable sectors, 4) designing election-related information materials and paraphernalia, 5) conducting Voters Education and Training of Trainers runs, and 6) institutionalizing key electoral reform agendas through legislation.

SLB, being the official secretariat of Task Force 2010, has taken the lead in closely collaborating with the Commission on Human Rights and the COMELEC in identifying the seven vulnerable sectors. A series of regional sectoral consultations (conducted in Baguio City, Davao City, Naga City, Samar, Zamboanga City, and Pampanga) were made, identifying the different factors impeding the full electoral participation of the relevant stakeholders and local duty-bearers in different regions. Local governmental duty-bearers and stakeholders gathered and consulted with local NGOs and CSOs to discuss the different factors capacitating and impeding their full electoral participation. These consultations documented sector, geographic, and culturally-specific issues of the different vulnerable groups, while also keenly mindful of the different over-arching and cross-cutting issues among the latter. SLB also deployed its scholastic and lay-members to gather and collate base-line data regarding the seven vulnerable sectors. Once collated, the outputs from said consultations and the gathered baseline data were then utilized by different Inter-Agency and NGO Technical Working Groups (TWGs) organized by the COMELEC in identifying, addressing by way of legislation, and implementing among respective and necessary duty-bearers reform agendas supplied by the sectors on the ground through the interventions of Task Force 2010. The tangible results of these interventions are the legislation of the following COMELEC Resolutions: No. 9485 (Polling Accessibility for PWDs), No. 9371 (Detainee Registration and Voting), and No. 9427 (Indigenous People Registration). It is also worth noting that the

outputs of the same consultations have been utilized by the DFA and the COMELEC in institutionalizing reforms for the enfranchisement of Overseas Absentee Voters, resulting in improvements in the accommodation and services accorded to OAVs by the DFA and COMELEC in the processes of registration and voting through the legislation of COMELEC Resolution No. 9269. As a direct impact of the recommendations of SLB and TF2010, 52,869 OAVs were registered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia alone.[30] Clearly, the nature of these undertakings has been non-partisan, and yet is considerably beyond the all too constraining conventional definition and notion of separation of Church and State. It is even beyond what Twin Toleration posits, as it was not only SLB's intention to further its beliefs in the public sphere within the limits imposed by law, for the involvement of SLB in the public sphere—which the doctrine of separation of Church and State so constrainedly defines—simultaneously strengthens the democratic institutional foundations under which such a doctrine is created. While proactive engagement and cooperation with various governmental agencies may be among the means by which SLB seeks to support and strengthen vital democratic institutions, it continues to do so critically.

Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan also saw the felt need to assist COMELEC in informing the general Filipino public regarding the AES or Automated Election System. With limited time and PCOS machines, SLB organized regional voter's education runs in partnership with local church and TF2010 networks, gathering the vulnerable sectors and the general electorate in order to maximize the availability of a single PCOS machine to a wider audience. In fact, SLB was able to gather members of the different vulnerable sectors and other electoral stakeholders in 31 places[31] all over the country as it rolled-

[30]Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, *Ensuring the Right of Suffrage to Electoral Participation: Giving Access to Vulnerable Sectors in 2010*, Final Report (Quezon City: Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, 2010).

[31]These places are as follows: Naga City, Pampanga, Tagum City Jail, Davao City Jail, Quezon City Jail, Mangyan Settlements in Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Bukidnon, San Juan City Jail, Zamboanga City, Tunga (Leyte),

out and implemented its voter's education runs. In fact, all 16 regions of the country were covered and around 14,829 individuals were informed.[32] Recognizing that SLB cannot do this undertaking alone, Training of Trainers Runs (TOTs) were conducted in 11 out of the 16 regions of the country, training around 2,642 voter educators who in turn produced a multplier effect that was helpful for the campaign.[33] SLB has also effectively mounted a voter's registration campaign in its aim to intensify and broaden the participation of vulnerable sectors in the electoral process. In partnership with local community organizations such as Tunga Responsible Youth Organization (TRYO), 149 elderly and persons with disabilities in far-flung areas of Tunga, Leyte were registered.[34] It is estimated that SLB, in partnership with local organizations, was able to register 3,459 voters nationwide, and separately, around 1,740 individuals were able to register in their respective locations as they were assisted by SLB to set-up satellite registration centers in close coordination with each location's local COMELEC. Furthermore, SLB directly lodged complaints against errant COMELEC officials who refused to register members of the Agta Tribe who were being assisted by the Claretian Missionaries. The errant public officials' attentions were called and they were reprimanded for their conduct.

Its information dissemination campaign was calibrated to cater to the needs of ordinary and functionally illiterate individuals. Most materials were translated from the English language into local languages and dialects and were distributed for free. SLB and TF2010 also partnered with different radio stations, namely DZXL 558 (AM),

---

Manila, Quezon City, Culion (Palawan), Nabua (Camarines Sur), Tabaco (Albay), Sorsogon City, Iloilo, Bacolod, General Santos, Cotabato, Batangas City, Taytay Rizal, Marikina City, De Lasalle University, Tagum (Ilocos Sur), Cagayan de Oro, etc.

[32]See note 31.

[33]See note 31.

[34]See note 31.

IFM 93.9 (FM), DZRH (AM), YES FM (FM), and Easy Rock (FM) to fully exhaust the broadcast media in covering as many voters as possible, asking them to vote responsibly in and proactively engage the 2010 elections. A total of 840 minutes of airtime was given by the said stations to SLB and TF2010. 62,500 (registration and how-to-vote using the PCOS machine) posters and 1,800 CDs (radio ads) were distributed. Around 86,000 voters education manuals, detailing the rights-based approach to voting and the proper use of the PCOS machine, were distributed to different partners and stakeholders all over the country.[35]

In the same vein, SLB has also re-established its Gabay Halalan Call and Text Center Facility in partnership with the same telecom providers, this time incorporating additional information regarding the AES and PCOS machine.

TASK FORCE 2013

Task Force 2013 is a revival and continuation of the beginnings of Task Force 2010. It still aims to continue enfranchising the aforementioned vulnerable sectors. It retained most of its previous members and welcomed the collaborative efforts of other organizations, and continues to encourage citizen engagement by providing venues for collaboration and volunteerism. It also encourages the general Filipino electorate to consider actions and electoral engagements that will not only consider the outcome of the upcoming 2013 elections but that of the 2016 Presidential elections as well. It continues its voters education campaign, having crafted its latest Voters Education Manual entitled "Pinoy Big Voter" (PBV), which is also being used by the PPCRV. As of late, SLB has already conducted numerous Training of Trainers runs and Voters Education campaigns. SLB is also currently in discussion and coordination with other electoral stakeholders regarding the accuracy and transparency of the PCOS machines that have been and will be used (this coming election).

[35]See note 31.

It is also poised to set-up the Gabay Halalan Call and Text Center in mid-April. SLB continuously seeks to exhaust creative venues in order to entice the youth and members of the vulnerable sectors. SLB also actively utilizes its weekly Sunday CGE radio program at Radio Veritas 846 to mount its massive information dissemination campaign regarding the upcoming elections, as well as its Engaged Citizenship Campaign. SLB continues to proactively collaborate and work with the COMELEC and other governmental agencies.

CONCLUSION

At the onset, the doctrine of separation of Church and State, while meant to assign each entity its respective space, has become a clear basis in guaranteeing that one entity will not meddle with the other. But as it is inevitable that these two entities will interact, either directly or indirectly, with each other, the doctrine must be re-examined, but not in the sense that it shall be abrogated or amended to accommodate and clarify grey areas, or iron out points of misunderstanding and vague interpretations, but whether or not the debate should encircle, highlight and dwell on the different points where contention will naturally occur between the two. It is also particular to note that SLB was able to contribute to democratization and nation-building by exploring grey areas that are venues for collaboration between the Church and the State. Given that these two entities vastly differ in nature, it is not unexpected that one might not behave according to the expectations of the other, as both have varied competencies. It is a given, and to me a necessary, pre-requisite of a democracy, for it enables dialogue, discussions, and clashes of opinion which transforms lumps of coal into gold, distilling points of dissent and contention into carefully negotiated common agreement and understanding. It enables informed actions and choices especially since democracy was not designed for purposes of efficiency but inclusion and majority rule. It lessens group-think but not to the extent where it undermines the value of collectivity and common consciousness, for it is, after all, these social attributes that allow for socially acceptable structures to exist. Moreover, given that each shares a common set of constituents, there will always be,

at a certain point, an implicit competition of interest between these two entities; such is normal. Each is a form of check for the other; each is a counter-balance for the other. Even so, given that each is a recognized source of authority for the same set of constituents, these two entities are co-equal in their worth in terms of opinion, stands, and assertion of its acknowledged authority, as they are confined within their own spheres of influence. Each has universalizing effects upon a set of people, and each has a divisive or isolative capacity, and this is where each could remind the other of its flaws or ineptitude. By doing this and accepting the checks, if not the corrective criticism, of the other, they validate each other as co-equal entities acknowledged and recognized in their own spheres of influence. But given that each entity (at least in the experience of this country) is a conscientious actor, it is therefore a validation of each one's respective authority that even with their competing interests, articulated in the forms of laws, rules, tenets, principles, or any structure which patterns the social decorum or behavior of people who might not necessarily subscribe to the authority of the other, each one is prudent enough to set limitations to the exercise and actualization of precepts and principles that mutually encourage subservience of its common constituents to each other.[36] Twin Tolerations explains just that. Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB), being a Church-affiliated organization, has been a specific example of this dynamic relationship. SLB was capacitated to advance or further its religious beliefs by the enabling conditions set forth by the State which are necessary for a democracy. While operating well within its sphere of influence and competence, SLB negotiates its space in the political community by furthering its deeply held principles and beliefs that are complementary with the enshrinement of the rule of law and fortification of democratic institutions. It does not wish to

[36]Examples of these are the Church's social teachings, specifically: "Members (of the Church) are encouraged to take full responsibility as citizens of a given nation"; "An authority is needed to put order in the political community"; "Political authority must be exercised within the limits of the moral order"; etc. Along with this, the bill of rights as enumerated in the 1987 Constitution specifies legal guarantees that assure freedoms to exercise and profess religious beliefs and inclinations.

supplant nor replace the omnifarious nature of the State; it merely seeks to remind and fill-in the gaps left unaddressed by the State in matters where the well-being of the marginalized is neglected and overlooked. In essence, the consequent interventions and engagements that SLB prods upon itself to address such issues and problems are but approximations of the latter's preferential option for the poor and the marginalized, and an extension of its deeply held religious values and beliefs. There could be variations as to how SLB wishes to accomplish these, one of which is its proactive and engaging manner in institutionalizing electoral reforms which target the marginalized and the poor. This in essence is a welcome collaborative effort which not only validates and buttresses the acceptability of the democratic regime SLB wishes to support, but also seeks to strengthen and enshrine it further. The point of collaboration between each entity is, in effect, a form of mutual validation and acceptability for each other which translates to voluntary subservience and obedience among its common constituents. Lastly, Twin Tolerations and the separation of Church and State do not make an exclusive arrangement between the Philippine government and the Catholic religion; these apply to all religions, regardless of number in membership. All religions hosted by an authentic democracy must be accorded opportunities for interaction and elbow room for advancement and representation if Twin Toleration must really exist as a justification for the healthy confluence of the Church and the State.

BIBILIOGRAPHY

Abueva, Jose V. *Philippine Democratization and the Consolidation of Democracy since the 1986 Revolution: An Overview of the Main Issues, Trends and Prospects*. Manila: 1997.

Andal, Ernald. *Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan: An Example of Electoral Engagement of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines* (Speech). Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2011.

Carroll, John. *Engaging Society: The Sociologist in a War Zone*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006.

Claver, Francisco F. *The Making of a Local Church*. Manila: Claretian Communications Foundation Inc. & Jesuit Communications Foundation Inc., 2009.

Commission on Human Rights. *Ensuring the Right to Electoral Participation, Giving Access to Vulnerable Sectors in 2010*. Manila: Commission on Human Rights, 2008.

"Guidelines for Registration of Persons with Disabilities." COMELEC Resolution No. 9220. Manila: Commission on Elections, 2012.

Kessler, Richard J. "Politics Philippine Style, Circa 1984." *Asian Survey* 24:12 (Dec. 1984): 1209–1228.

Lande, Carl H. *Leaders, Factions, and Parties: The Structure of Philippine Politics*. Southeast Asia Studies. New Haven: Yale University, 1965.

Linz, Juan J. & Alfred Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Moreno, Antonio F. *Church, State, and Civil Society in Postauthoritarian Philippines*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006.

———. "Dancing with the Philippine Electoral System: The Rise and Fall of the Church's Electoral Engagement." *Landas* 24:1 (2010): 105-119.

Rivera, Robert. "A Discerning Community: The Philippine Church and Electoral Politics. 1986–2010." In *Becoming a Church of the Poor: Philippine Catholicism after the Second Plenary Council*. Quezon City: John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues, 2011.

"Rules and Regulations for the Registration of Members of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/Indigenous Peoples (IPs)." COMELEC Resolution No. 9427. Manila: Commission on Elections, 2012.

"Rules and Regulations on Detainee Registration and Voting in Connection with the May 13, 2013 National and Local Elections and Subsequent Elections Thereafter." COMELEC Resolution No. 9371. Manila: Commission on Elections, 2012.

Sarmiento, Rene V. & Esmeralda Amora-Ladra. *Report on the Formation of an Inter-Agency and NGO Network on Empowering PWDs*. Manila: Commission on Elections, 2011.

Sarmiento, Rene V. *Championing PWDs: Government-NGO Initiatives to Provide Electoral Access to Persons with Disabilities*. Manila: Commission on Elections, 2012.

Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan. www.slb.ph.

———. *Ensuring the Right of Suffrage to Electoral Participation: Giving Access to Vulnerable Sectors in 2010*. Final Report. Quezon City: Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, 2010.

Stepan, Alfred. *The World's Religious System and Democracy: Crafting the Twin Tolerations*.

TASK FORCE 2010. *A Summary of Issues and Recommendations on the Right of Suffrage of Persons with Disabilities*. Quezon City: Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, 2009.

Tolosa, Benjamin T. "Framing the Challenges of Political Empowerment and Engagement: Ideational Interventions for Democratization since 2005." In *Agenda for Hope: Ideas on Building a Nation*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009.

Wui, Marlon A. *State-Civil Society Relations in Policy-Making*. Manila: Third World Studies Center, University of the Philippines, 1997.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dominador Bombongan, Jr., obtained licentiate and doctorate degrees in theology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). He has been with the Theology and Religious Education Department of De La Salle University-Manila, and is a member of DAKATEO (Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines).

Delfo Cortina Canceran, O.P., a member of the Dominican Province of the Philippines and assigned at the Provincialate House in Quezon City, completed his Ph.D.-S.T.D. in theology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) and his Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He teaches philosophy, theology and sociology at the University of Santo Tomas and De La Salle University-Manila. He founded the Philippine Center for Pastoral Formation, Inc., and is a member of DAKATEO (Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines), the Philippine Sociological Society, and Pilgrim for Peace.

Duke Thomas G. Dolorical completed his A.B. in Political Science at Ateneo de Naga University in 2004 and taught there afterwards. He is currently taking an M.A. in Political Science (major in Global Politics) at the Ateneo de Manila University. He has worked for non-governmental organizations committed to good governance, and advocated for the inclusion of detainees, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities in the electoral process. As political officer for Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, he co-authored the Pinoy Big Voter (PBV) voters' education manual for the 2013 elections.

Juhn Chris P. Espia is an Instructor in Political Science at the College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines-Visayas. He finished his B.A. (Political Science-History) degree in U.P. Visayas and is currently pursuing his M.A. in Political Science (major in Global Politics) degree at the Department of Political Science,

Ateneo de Manila University. His areas of interest include disaster studies, religious and feminist movements, and globalization.

Helen R. Graham, M.M., has been teaching biblical studies and publishing scholarly essays for many decades. She obtained a master's degree in sacred theology (S.T.M.) from the Jesuit School of Theology (Berkeley) and a doctorate in theology (Ph.D.) from the Ateneo de Manila University (through Loyola School of Theology). Whether set in academic institutions such as LST and the Institute for Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS), or in the less formal settings of bible study groups, her teaching is characterized by sharpness of insight, clarity of expression, and dedication to students. Her book, *Sing O Barren One … and Other Essays on Biblical Themes* (2007), received the *Gintong Aklat* (Golden Book) award from the Book Development Association of the Philippines and the Cardinal Sin Catholic Book award from the Asian Catholic Communicators. Her many essays appear in local and international journals.

Norlan H. Julia, S.J., recently completed a doctorate in theology from Heythrop College, University of London. He obtained his M.A. in Theological Studies from the Ateneo de Manila University (through Loyola School of Theology), and taught systematic theology at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro City.

Mirasol C. Navidad, R.S.C.J., teaches theology at De La Salle University (Manila). She obtained her M.A. in Religious Education from Maryhill School of Theology and is currently completing her doctorate in theology from LST.

Randy J. C. Odchigue is an ordained minister of the diocese of Butuan (Mindanao) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Fr. Saturnino Urios University, Butuan City. He completed his doctorate in sacred theology at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) with a dissertation on "The Local Church in the Diverse

Islands of Cultures: Towards a Filipino Ecclesiological Perspective" (2009). Among his publications are "The Radical Kenotocism of Gianni Vattimo and Interreligious Dialogue," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 16:2 (2006) and "Bibo, Ergo Sum: Theo-social Reflections of the Taguibo Watershed Advocacy," *Hapag: Journal of Interdisciplinary Theological Research* 7:1 (2010).