

From the Editor

The current volume's four articles are dealing with problems that, for centuries, have brought trouble and suffering to people: group rivalries, exploitative traditions, male domination, and social exclusion. These are problems that constantly challenge the task of spreading the Gospel. The articles, in some ways, may help us to face our own entanglements with those oppressive conflicts.

The work of Thomas Mooren ("Prophecy and Holiness: From the Deathbed of Muhammad *Rasul Allah* to the Peaceful Valley of Ibrahim *Khalil Allah*") grapples with the identity of an ideal Muslim who must be a 'synthesis' between the two poles of 'prophecy and holiness'. While the death of the prophet Muhammad has divided the followers of Islam into two communities—the Shi'ites and the Sunnites—this split has reached its deepest level in the choice between prophecy and holiness. Mooren, claims that one cannot stand without the other. Prophecy cannot be deprived of the aspect of holiness; and holiness as imbued too with true prophecy. This prophecy-holiness synthesis is found in the person of Abraham (*Khalil Allah* [God's Friend]). Mooren's work gives much thought on Abraham's role as God's friend as an inspiration for interreligious dialogue, between Muslims, Jews, and Christians—a task that may involve encounters with group ascendancies and deadly rivalries.

"Midya: Imbakan at Daluyan ng mga Tradisyon" / "Media: Vessel and Channel of Traditions" is Ferdinand D. Dagmang's discussion on some issues raised through the process of correlating the various "then" and "now" media. He does this by 1) looking into the type of media in St. Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 2: 15) and 2) by comparing this with today's more

advanced-modern types of media. It is a process of analysis that leads to the discovery of interests and traditions fastened to every type of media that bridges every type of social interaction. Through this exercise, the study is able to bring into surface implicit information about media, society, and traditions—especially those exploitative and colonizing business traditions that stifle the flourishing of the Christian Tradition in urbanized communities.

Rica delos Reyes-Ancheta's "Interpreting Masculine Domination in Two Abortion Films: *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* and *Vera Drake*" is a hard look at masculine domination. Using the two films, *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* and *Vera Drake* as launching pads for analysis, her paper shows how a background check on society and culture's attachment to patriarchy could shed light on the different modes of masculine domination in the two films. It concludes with the re-imaging of female/male identities through a critical reading of the biblical Creation Story.

"The Pedicab Drivers' Daily Transgressions: Struggles for Provision and Care" by Ferdinand D. Dagmang and Dalmacito A. Cordero Jr. makes use of a series of interviews and direct observation of behavioral patterns and geographical settings to present three selected pedicab drivers' personal struggles and other experiences in life. The gathered data/narratives were 1) analyzed through the concepts of agency/motivation and structure and 2) further read in the light of some insights from *Gaudium et spes*. Learning about the pedicab drivers' narratives gave a more informed view not only about what they do (transgressions in order to survive), but also about social exclusion brought about by pre-established structures.

Ferdinand D. Dagmang

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**Prophecy and Holiness:
From the Deathbed of Muhammad *Rasul Allah* to
the Peaceful Valley of Ibrahim *Khalil Allah***

Thomas Mooren*

Abstract: This article explores the meaning of prophecy and holiness in Islam. The thesis of the author is that here, at the deathbed of Muhammad, certain options of understanding Islam, his revelation, the work, and the role of the person of Prophet Muhammad (and his family) in daily piety, etc., can already be detected *in nuce*. Historically, we will have to deal with the great “schism” between Sunnis and the Shia. Within this context what can be the role of Abraham, called by the Qur’an *Khalil Allah* (friend of God), in searching for a synthesis between holiness and prophecy? The death of the prophet Muhammad has split the followers of Islam into two communities—the Sunnites and the Shi’ites. It has been established that Muhammad was the seal of prophecy but not the seal of holiness. It seems that the split between the Sunnites and the Shi’ites has reached its deepest level and turned out to be a choice between prophecy and holiness. The author, however, claims that one cannot stand without the other. Prophecy cannot be deprived of the aspect of holiness and holiness as imbued too with true prophecy. For the author, the ideal Muslim must be a ‘synthesis’ between the two poles of ‘prophecy and holiness’. This prophet could be Ibrahim (Abraham). Finally, how can his role as God’s friend work as an inspiration for the contemporaneous interreligious dialogue, above all between Muslims, Jews, and Christians?

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The Death of a Prophet

When the Prophet Muhammad was dead (June 632¹), Umar, the future second Caliph of Islam (634-644), at the moment of the Prophet's death still a "simple" faithful, was convinced that this was not true, that the Prophet was not dead: "By God! He is not dead, but has gone to his Lord as Moses went!", so are we told by the *sirat an-nabi*, the biography of the Prophet by Ibn Ishaq.² Not dead (*ma mata*) but hidden by God from the eyes of the people for 40 days,³ Muhammad would then return,⁴ the same way Moses returned after 40 days to his people⁵ – return for which purpose? To "cut off the hands and feet of men who allege that he (the

This article is a reviewed and enlarged version of a talk given on January 27, 2017 at the conference in honor of Fr. Saturnino Urios, SJ by the Fr. Saturnino Urios University (FSUU) in collaboration with the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists (PACM) in Butuan City, Agusan Del Norte, Philippines.

¹ Sourdel and Sourdel, 596.

² "wa inna rasul Allah ma mata,wa lakinahu dhahaba ila rabbihi kama dhahaba Musa..." Ibn Ishaq, *sirat al-nabi* (redactor Ibn Hisham), vol. IV, Cairo, Muhammad Ali Sabih, al Azhar (eds), 1070; A. Guillaume, (intr., notes), *The Life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah* (Oxford 1955, Pakistan 1967), 682. The transcription of Arabic letters has been simplified. For the Suras of the Qur'an, with exceptions, see: *The Noble Qur'an*, English translation of the meanings and commentary, King Fahd complex for the printing of the Holy Qur'an, Madinah, K.S.A. – My gratitude goes to Nawel Hamidi for her interest and support regarding the sirat of the Prophet.

³ "faqad ghaba 'an qaumihi arba'in lailat..." Ibn Ishaq, *sirat al-nabi*, 1070, Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 682.

⁴ "thuma raja'a ilaihim...", Ibn Ishaq, 1070, Guillaume, 682.

⁵ "kama raja'a Musa...", Ibn Ishaq, 1070, Guillaume, 682.

rasul Allah) is dead.”⁶ This could mean, to get rid of all the enemies and to force them, to accept Islam. Hence oral tradition has it that the acceptance of the *rasul* and his creed implies just this: confessing that there “is no God but Allah” would procure to the believer “dominion over Arabs and non-Arabs.” Such was the promise the Prophet once made to the Quraysh, in order to convince them to embrace his religion.⁷

The cutting off of hands and legs also reminds us of Sura 5, 33:

The recompense of those who wage war against God and His messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides or be exiled from their land. That is their disgrace in this world and a great torment is theirs in the hereafter.

Such reminiscences do not come as a surprise, since the story about the death of the Prophet – its *historical* correctness is not the focus here – allows a wide range of traditions to surface. They are part of a widespread apocryphal network of the Orient, its mythological underbelly so to speak, where Elijah, Enoch, Moses,

⁶ “falinqata’anna aydya rijali wa arjalahum za’amu rasul.. mata...”, Ibn Ishaq. 1070, Guillaume, 682/3.

⁷ See for this F. McGraw Donner, *The Death of Abu Talib*, in: J.H. Marks & R.M. Good (ed), *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (Guilford CT 1987), 241, 243; see too L. Berger, *Die Entstehung des Islam. Die ersten hundert Jahre. Von Mohammed bis zum Weltreich der Kalifen* (München 2016), 277: “The submission... of the world under the rule of the One God was a religious commandment. That the fulfillment of this commandment entailed inner-worldly advantages, did not present a disadvantage.” (My translation, ThM). See furthermore *ibid.*, 130/1. – For the way, the process of Islamization really worked on the ground, see too *ibid.*, 150/1.

Jesus, and Muhammad are all united in the same “spiritual destiny” of divinely inspired people.⁸ These “underground stories”, if we can call them like this, inform us about the religious pulsation of the early Islamic community. About a time, when the dogma and what to believe, was not yet fixed, not yet cast into “theological concrete”.

Yet the future Caliph Umar too had to learn what the truth is. His predecessor, the future Caliph Abu Bakr (632-634) was quick to intervene and to put the pendulum right. In open opposition to Umar, who was still not willing to change his standpoint, Abu Bakr loudly declared to a crowd which was gathering around him: “O men! If one worships Muhammad, Muhammad is dead, if one worships God, God is alive, immortal!”⁹ And he added Sura 3, 144, which begins like this: “Muhammad is no more than a rasul, and, indeed, (many) messengers have passed away before him...” These strong words by Abu Bakr, combined with sura 3, 144, finally turned even Umar around. He later confessed: “By God! When I heard Abu Bakr recite these words, I was dumbfounded (“’uqirtu”, “wounded”), so that my legs would not bear me and I fell to the ground knowing that the apostle (rasul) was indeed dead.”¹⁰

The surprising story or stories around the death of the Prophet Muhammad are not only interesting

⁸ Cf. too R.H. Charles, W.J. Ferrar, & R.A. Gilbert, *The Apocalypse of Baruch and The Assumption of Moses* (Boston, MA 2006), 86. – Even still later a religious figure like the Jewish Messiah Sabbatai Sevi (1626-1676) was believed to come back 12 months after his death. Cf. T. Mooren, *Wenn Religionen sich begegnen. Glauben und anders glauben in einer globalen Welt* (Wien, Berlin 2014), 122.

⁹ “lahu man kana ya’budu muhammadan fainna muhammadan qad mata, wa man kana ya’budu Allah fainna Allah hayyun la mata.”, Ibn Ishaq, 107, Guillaume, 683.

¹⁰ Ibn Ishaq, 1070, Guillaume. 683.

because they touch the question of Umar's unbelief, or because of the persistence of the "archetypical preconception" about life and death of holy people in the ancient Orient. Rather they are important for our inquiry, hence what happened here, in the presence of the corpse of the Prophet, thanks to Abu Bakr's strong statement, is nothing less than the foundation, the laying of the ground of the dramatic future of Islam itself – its fracture into Shia (Shia Ali: from the Verb "to follow," i.e., the followers of Ali, son in law and cousin of the Prophet) and Sunnis (from sunna, tradition, claiming to embrace only the tradition(s) coming from the Prophet).¹¹

"Worshiping (ibada) Muhammad" serves as an abbreviation or theological marker for a spiritual attitude that eventually allows for the Prophet to take center stage in the devotional or prayer life of the faithful. Hence, in the Shia, the accrued religious importance of the family of the Prophet and his descendants via Ali, Hussein etc. A family with a specific divine gift bestowed upon it in the form of the "light of Muhammad" ("nur muhammadyya"), the promise of spiritual guidance and correctness also for future generations – in particular, when it comes to the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

Thus the *Imams* were born, those persons – to begin with Imam Ali¹² – through whose thoughts, words and

¹¹ See for this e.g. Mooren, *Wenn Religionen...*, 125-136; J. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam. Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge 2003), 130-140; S. Makaram, (ed., transl.), *The Shi'i Imanate. A Fatimid Interpretation. An Arabe edition and English translation of the Tathbit al-imama, attributed to the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Mansur* (London, New York 2013).

¹² In Makaram's translation of the Shia treaty on the imamate we can read: "You have asked me... about the confirmation of the imamate of the Prince of Believers 'Ali b. Abi Talib... and his right to

actions the guidance could take shape in time and history. And Imams are infallible! *This* religious process, strongly supported by popular piety as much as by sophisticated philosophico-theological speculation, did not lead to outright divinization of the Prophet and his descendants, the Imams (in particular Ali), but it *could* take that turn. It is a turn coined “Shia extremism” or “religious exaggeration”.¹³ And even if it did not go so far, Shia spirituality clearly directed the act of religious obedience of the faithful towards the living example of the Prophet’s family, the Prophet and his Imams. That is obviously the way in which the Shia claims Sura 4, 59 for its cause: “Oh you believers!” Obey Allah and obey the messenger (Muhammad) and those of you in authority (amr)!” the latter, naturally, being the Imams.

The net result consists in a move *away* from “sola scriptura” towards a daily life imbued with the striving for personal holiness (walaya), in strict imitation of the Imams. This in turn opens up the realm of religious inward experiences (mysticism). Hence also the kinship between Shia and Sufism, the Islamic spiritual movement. The spiritual gain of this approach consists in the

it [the immamate] *before anyone else* (wa istihqaqihi al-amra duna ghairihi)”, *The Shi’i Imanate*, 15 (arab. p. 1).

¹³ See e.g. the case of the extremist sect led by Abu al-Khattab Muhammad b. Abi Zaynab al-Asadi (d. ca AD 755 or 762), where light and divinization process come together. God was conceived as light that embodies itself into the Prophets family and the imams, transforming them into Gods: “... God had been in ‘Abd al-Mutallib, and then went to Abu Talib, who became God and sent Muhammad as his apostle; when Abu Talib died, the spirit (ruh) went on to settle in Muhammad, who became God, and Ali became his apostle, and so on down to Ja’far al-Sadiq and from him to ‘Abd al-Khattab himself.” (McGraw Donner, *The Death of Abu Talib*, 240). – A similar spirituality can be detected among the Druzes (darazyya) (see J. Sourdel and D. Sourdel, *Dictionnaire historique de l’Islam* (Paris 2004 [1966]), 253 and elsewhere.

elaboration of the in-depth-meaning (*batin*) of the scriptures, including their legal aspects. In this way one tries to *transcend* the scripture's external meaning (*zahir*). This might go so far that some Shi'ites, members of the Ismaili sect, considered it eventually right and necessary to proclaim the law's *abolition* in favour of its "inner" spiritual meaning!¹⁴

What I just outlined in some great strokes as a possible development of "worshipping Muhammad" is quite different from the spiritual potential that is unleashed by Abu Bakr's uncompromising statement: "Muhammad is dead! (Muhammad mata)"! If there could be any doubt in this matter, we only have to turn to Sura 3, 144 recited by the same Abu Bakr quasi as a comment to the death pronouncement of the Prophet, namely: Muhammad was/is a mortal man like you and I! Yes, he was a "rasul", but so other men also have been "messengers" and they too have passed away!

I think, what we can conclude from this is the following: in the long run, in particular as for the process of *revelation*, there will be no place or no *need* any more of the Prophet as a *person*! The question of how he received the revelation, the spiritual inner drama of his vocation in relationship to his *personal* life style and similar questions of this kind. Above all, the *enhancement* of his personal status to someone who is *more than mortal* is clearly blocked! Only the *result* of the revelation process counts, its final message, the proclamation of strict monotheism (*tauhid*); the Prophet himself being just a mouth piece, a "dictaphone" of God

¹⁴ Cf. Th. Mooren, " 'Your kingdom come'. Religious Exodus Movements and the Construction of the Endtime," *MST Review*, 17 (2015): 71-124, 99-101 (in particular 100, note 60), with regard to the the Ismaili proclamation of the Day of the "qiyama" (resurrection), coinciding with the *suspension* of the "law" under Hasan II of Alamaut (1162-1166).

almighty. All the spiritual energy is concentrated on the *literal* content of the text, truly a specific form of “*sola scriptura*” that, in addition, can be easily *legally* exploited.¹⁵

In the light of these reflections, the encounter with the Qur’an would not so much be animated by the desire to *transcend* the text in order to reach a realm “beyond the text” – in case we could find there the realm of holiness (*walaya*), the holiness of the Prophet, thanks to his supposed closeness to God, or to use another term: thanks to his supposed *friendship* with God. However, the “death of the Prophet”, taken as a spiritual statement in the way Abu Bakr uses it (the Prophet is only a mortal etc.), rather seems to privilege an approach, more legalistic in fact, where the relationship to the “Other” is reduced to a drama of *mere* obedience. The famous “Sunna” of the Prophet, the Prophet’s “tradition” – hence the name “Sunnites”¹⁶ – serves mainly to tell us, how to fulfill *correctly* the require-

¹⁵ That the *popular* perception of the Prophet as a superhuman being, quasi identical to Jesus obviously goes beyond the limits drawn by Abu Bakr’s statement does not invalidate our findings. Popular piety in all religions always goes its own ways, barely controlled by orthodoxy. For centuries Islamic orthodoxy was and still is in our own time at odds with popular Islam. – On the other hand it is not at all surprising that *modern reformers* of Islam for their part try to “break open” again the process of revelation by introducing an *active* role of the Prophet with regard to the constitution of the message. Any active participation of the mind of the Prophet in this matter would enable the interpreter to introduce a *historic* and thus *relative* dimension into the message. Unfortunately, the reformers’ efforts were mostly rewarded by banishment, exile, eviction from the academic life or death threats. – For details see Mooren, *Wenn Religionen...*, 133/4, 136 and R. Benzine, *Islam und Moderne. Die neuen Denker* (Berlin, 2012), [French: *Les nouveaux penseurs de l’islam*, Paris 2004], in particular 56-80 (for Abdolkarim Soroush) and 110-135 (for Fazlur Rahman).

¹⁶ Cf. T. Nagel, *Geschichte der islamischen Theologie. Von Mohammed bis zur Gegenwart* (München 1994), 69-77, 223-218.

ments the Qur'an puts forward as conditions to reach paradise. Among them, as number One, the absolute acknowledgment of God's Oneness (tauhid).¹⁷

In sum, we can only be amazed, how the small episode of the Caliph Umar's unwillingness to accept the Prophet's death – some lines among thousands of lines in Ibn Ishaq's biography of the Prophet – is capable, at least if read in a certain way, of unveiling the fundamental choice with which the young religion of Islam was struck. A choice that split Islam into two, Shia and Sunnism, a choice on its deepest level, as it turns out, between holiness and prophecy. It might not be exaggerated to call it the core drama of Islam itself and which is as such all too often avoided. Yet, it was established, once and forever, that Muhammad was the *seal* (hatam) of prophecy (Sura 33, 40), but the seal of holiness, he was not. That position, if we follow the great mystical tradition of al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. circa 932) or Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) was dedicated to no

¹⁷ In the word of the theologian and poet Amos Wilder it means: "to reduce the mystery of revelation to the category of the will." (A. Wilder, *Theopoetic. Theology and the Religious Imagination* [Eugene, Oregon: The Amos Wilder Library, 1976], 92). Something of this same spirit can still be found e.g. in the Second Vatican Council's text *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25: "In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent... This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff... that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will." www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/_vatican_council/document_s/vatii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_e. – Not for nothing the Catechismus Romanus, pars II, caput 7 calls bishops and priests not only "angels", but even "gods"! (See M. Theobald, "Über die Götter sollst du nicht schlecht reden!" Ex 22, 27 (=28 LXX) im Frühjudentum, im Neuen Testament und in der alten Kirche, in Tüch, *Monotheismus unter Gewaltverdacht*, 80/1, note 86).

one else than – Jesus!¹⁸

But can such a split last forever? The dangers of depriving prophecy of holiness are all too obvious.¹⁹ They render prophecy unprotected against all kind of ideological usurpations, over-politization, barbarization, brutalization, to name only a few items. Yet, also holiness has to be protected. Its quality can only survive if it does not fall into the trap of mere sentimentalism or emotionalism or the hypocrisy of self-boasting! To prevent this from happening, prophecy, even in the form of harsh criticism, as a *fact* finding, fact revealing capacity of the human mind over against self deception and intellectual laziness has a useful role to play.

Anyway, great spiritualities need both, prophecy and holiness.²⁰ The Imams of the Shia were certainly aware of this challenge. They answered on the basis of that special theological system that is theirs: the Imams had to embrace both, holiness and prophecy.²¹ To the

¹⁸ See H. Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique. I. Des origines jusqu'à la mort d'Averroes (1198)* (Paris 1964), 262-283; A. Schimmel, *Mystische Dimensionen des Islam. Die Geschichte des Sufismus* (Köln 1985; Chapel Hill, USA, 1975), 316/7; also W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge. Ibn al- 'Arabi's Metaphysic of Imagination* (Albany, NY 1989), furthermore Mooren, *Wenn Religionen...*, 135/6, in particular 136, note 184, and by the same author, "I do not adore what you adore!," *Theology and Philosophy in Islam* (Delhi 2001), 206-253 and *Purusa. Treading the Razor's Edge toward Selfhood. The Self and Self-Experience in Islamic and Hindu Mysticism* (Delhi 1997), 113-174.

¹⁹ These dangers are clearly denounced, e.g., in Hamed Abdel-Samad's inquiry, *Mohamed. Eine Abrechnung* (München 2015) ["Mohamed, A final balance" (dt.: Abrechnung)]. See too Mooren, *Wenn Religionen...*, 134-137.

²⁰ Or on a somewhat similar register: freedom and obedience. See Th. Mooren, *Freedom Through Subjugation: The Good Shepherd according to Foucault, the West, the Chinese and the Church - Human Sciences in Dialogue with Missiology* (Wien, Berlin, 2009).

²¹ "The primary allegiance (of a Shiite) is not merely to the message of the Prophet but to the Prophet himself, and that

Sunnites, who do not operate on the basis of the theological speculations of the Shia, naturally the vast hagiographical material, qur'anic and extra qur'anic talking about the prophets offers itself for inquiry. And what if we find therein, in the figure of one of the Prophets an answer to our question regarding prophecy and holiness, may be even a synthesis between these two poles laid bare by Abu Bakr's statement at the deathbed of the Prophet Muhammad? And finally, could this Prophet be Abraham?

Abraham – the Muslim

In recent times the interest in Abraham has been reignited thanks to the dramatic circumstances caused by Islamic terrorism, from al-Qaida to ISIS, Boko Haram to al-Nusra, from the desert of Timbuktu to the jungle of Mindanao, from the heart of Europe to the streets of Boston – to name only some milestones in a long list of places and organizations. Faced with the boundless brutality of this worldwide terror serious questions have arisen regarding the nature of what in the field of religions is commonly called “monotheism”. Thus, theologians in Islam, Christendom and Judaism

allegiance is due to his being ma'sum (protected from error and grave sin), a characteristic which he (the Prophet) *shares with Imams*.” (V.J. Schubel, *Religious Performance in Contemporary Islam. Shi'i Devotional Rituals in South Asia* (Columbia, S.C. 1993), 121; italics by ThM)). See too on the concept of 'ismat (being sin and error free!; see 'asama, to hold back, restrain, preserve; H. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Cowan, J. M., ed), Beirut, [London 1974], 617): “'ismat is a crucial concept in Shi'i thought because the authority of the *Prophet and the Imams* derive from the fact that they possess 'ismat and are thus ma'sum” (Schubel, *Religious Performance in Contemporary Islam*, 121; italics by ThM). See furthermore Corbin, *Histoire*, 43-151 and by the same author: *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques. I. Le shi'isme duodécimain* (Paris 1971); see too Mooren, *Wenn Religionen...*, 136, note 185.

have tried to find answers to some basic questions regarding the eventual links between monotheism and violence, be it violence on the battle field or violence propagated in the founding texts of either Judaism, Christianity, or Islam.²²

It is within this context that the figure of Ibrahim/ Abraham becomes important as a name and a program. As a name, since he is known to all three monotheistic religions. As a program, since Abraham's message sounds like a message of peace. Does God not say in Gen 12, 3b: "... in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"? Thus the hope to build in the name of Abraham a common firewall against the evils created in the name of religion in our time does not seem to be without foundation.

Yet in spite of the good will that such a perspective creates, some questions, nevertheless, have to be faced. And the first one is simply the following: are we dealing in Torah, New Testament, and Qur'an in spite of the same name, with the same person? And in case we have to face three "different" Abrahams, how great are these differences? Do they destroy a common cause or is a certain unity *within* diversity possible? With this in mind we will now proceed to have a closer look on Abraham in the Qur'an.

²² See e.g., J. Schnocks, *Das alte Testament und die Gewalt. Studien zur göttlichen und menschlichen Gewalt in alttestamentlichen Texten und ihren Rezeptionen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2014) [Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 136]; Th. Mooren, *War and Peace in monotheistic religions* (Delhi 2008); and by the same author, *Making the Earth a Human Dwelling Place. Essays in the philosophy and anthropology of culture and religion*, Lomé (Togo) s.d., Ed. Saint-Augustine Afrique (Würzburg, Altenberge 2000), 304-307; furthermore J.-H. Tück, (ed), *Monotheismus unter Gewaltverdacht. Zum Gespräch mit Jan Assmann* (Freiburg, Basel, Wien 2015); and in the same volume J. Assmann, "Ambivalenzen und Konflikte des monotheistischen Offenbarungsglaubens," 246-268 246-268 and numerous others.

There is no doubt that in the Qur'an Abraham plays a unique role, but a role, as we will see, that points toward the Prophet Muhammad and thus, at least for now, *away* from Jews and Christians. Indeed, in Sura 2, 140 we read:

Or say you that Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq, Ya'qub...
were Jews or Christians? Say: Do *you* know
better or God?

In other words, we are confronted here, seen from the Jewish and Christian perspective, with a “*de-confessionalized*” Abraham as also in Sura 3, 67: “Abraham was neither a Jew, nor a Christian...”! With this, Abraham was free to receive a new identity – he could become *islamized*! The result of this process is announced in the second part of Sura 3, 67, where Abraham receives three different “titles” or “denominators”. All three are theologically heavily loaded, cover a different theological field or background – but, as we will see, they all arrive at the same result. Thus, instead of being a Jew or a Christian, Abraham, according to the second part of 3, 67, was “a hanif, a muslim and not a mushrik” (wa lakin kana hanifan musliman wa ma kana min al-mushrikina).

To begin with: he was no “mushrik”. Mushrik designates a person who commits “shirk”. Shirk is often translated as “polytheism”, but “associationism” would be better, since shirk is not so much concerned with numbers (that there are *many* gods) but with the fact of power sharing! Shirk means, to have associates, partners in business or exercise of authority for example, and these partners are people a man is absolutely in need of. He simply is not capable to do certain things alone! If this were the case for God, if he were struck by this kind of “helplessness”, he would be

incapacitated not only to create, but to create *alone*, without a helper, a second “god”, let us say a wife, a child or children or any other entity, angelical, or human. For human beings, partnerships are of the essence, but exactly this is not so for God. His godhead, his being God defines itself by the fact that he is not in need of all that which is imperatively necessary for a human being to survive. (La ihtaja ilaihi: he does not need it!)

Accepting any kind of power sharing would be like falling into a *trap* – “sharak”, in Arabic.²³ This is especially true for any son, conceived as helper or support in life. God has nothing to do with it – “lam yalid wa lam yulad”, hence “he has not and was not begotten” (Sura 112, 3).²⁴ The sonlessness is the absolute necessary basis for God’s self sufficiency in all matters (huwa al-ghanyyu, Sura 10, 68²⁵), again in

²³ Shirk and sharak share the same root, sharika, to share, to participate (Cf. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 252). Shirk is also associated with lying or dirty language (qawla z-zur), as in Sura 22, 30; see R. Köbert, “On the meaning of the Three Final Words of Sura XXII,” 30-31, in Ibn Warraq (ed., transl.). *What the Koran really says. Language, Text, and Commentary* (Amherst, NY 2002), 300-310, 304. For shirk see furthermore Th. Mooren, “Monothéisme coranique et anthropologie,” *Anthropos* 76 (1981), 529-761, 529, 543, 547 and by the same author *Es gibt keinen Gott – außer Gott. Der Islam in der Welt der Religionen* (Würzburg, Altenberge 1996), 81/2, in particular 82, note 216; see also G. Lüling, *Über den Ur-Qur’an. Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion vor islamischer christlicher Strophelieder im Qur’an* (Erlangen 1974), 202/3. See too Y. Nevo and J. Koren, *Crossroads to Islam. The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State* (Amherst NY 2003), 277 on “shirk” as an “Arabic equivalent of the Greek *synthetos* – compounding the singleness of God” – the trinity being an example of such a God put together (out of three pieces), an all together “synthetic” God. (Cf. *ibid.*, 277).

²⁴ Cf. Mooren, “Monothéisme...,” 535, 544/5; cf. too sura 9, 30; 6,100 etc.

²⁵ For “ghannyu” see too Sura 31, 26; 22, 64; 4, 131. See too

particular in the matter of creation, the first one and the second one at the moment of final judgment.²⁶

By the way, wife and daughter(s) are especially discarded on purely anthropological grounds: daughters are a burden and man does not want them, while wives do not count, since no wife would be suitable for God: being created, while God is the creator, the social status of such a wife would always be below the status of Allah.²⁷

This is sufficient to demonstrate that shirk means above all power sharing. Yet, there is more to it. Hence these anthropological arguments are useful not only for the establishment of God's absolute self sufficiency. Rather, they also constitute the angle, under which qur'anic monotheism as *theological* dogma has to be approached. It is because of this anthropological background, that "classical" *Christian* orthodox trinity finds itself totally condemned! Rejected without any compromise. God's radical oneness conceived, humanly speaking, as God's total loneliness and God's unlimited power are one. Sura 112: "Say Muhammad: God is One. He is self sufficient (samad²⁸), he begets not nor is he begotten; there is none equal to Him" – which means, that anything different from this is pure *exaggeration*:

O people of the scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion (la taghlu fi dinikum) and say about God only the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary was a messenger (rasul) of God, His word (kalimatuhu) bestowed upon Mary and a spirit

Mooren, "Monothéisme...", 543-545.

²⁶ See e.g. Sura 2, 113-117; 22, 64; 10,68; Mooren, "Monothéisme...", 545, 549/50.

²⁷ For the daughters, see e.g. Sura 16, 57ss; 43, 17; 53, 21-23. For the wives see e.g. Sura 43, 15/6; 6, 100/1.

²⁸ For "samad" see Mooren, "Monothéisme...", 546.

from God (ruhun minhu). So believe God and His messenger (Muhammad) and do not say “Three” (trinity), stop it! That’s better for you. Since God is ONE. Glory to Him who is above having a son (walad). To Him belong what is in heaven and on earth. He is self sufficient and (everything’s and everybody’s) care taker (wakil).²⁹

Clearly, the status that remains for Jesus, the only one possible for him, is that of “son”, but a “son” in the “normal” sense of the word as in “son of Mary” (isa ibn Maryam), in sum, a simple “messenger”, nothing more!³⁰

Furthermore, we also learn from 4, 171 that the specific kind of shirk that the Qur’an has in mind here is not “paganism” in general, but the belief of the orthodox Christianity in the Trinity!³¹ To take mushrik and shirk for polytheism in general or polytheistic paganism represents in all probability a later development.³² We also have to take into account the

²⁹ See too, Mooren, “Monothéisme...”, 534.

³⁰ However, the same “son” Jesus is also called in the same breath “God’s word” (kalima) bestowed on Mary and a sprit (ruh) “from God” (minhu). It is obvious that these words invite further interpretation which could be “dangerous” for Islamic orthodoxy (These words clearly seem to be part of a Christian creed and look strange compared with the general thrust of the sura.) The official interpretation plays these words down (so the Saudi interpretation of the Qur’an in the *English translation of the meanings...*, ad hoc); others, like certain mystics might draw different consequences (See Mooren, *Wenn Religionen...*, 133 and Sura 3, 45). – Finally, it is of interest to note also Sura 43, 81: “If God had a son, I (Muhammad) would be the first (awwal) to adore him!”

³¹ See too Sura 5, 73: “Surely, unbelievers are those who said: ‘Allah is the third of three. But there is no God, but one.’” See too Mooren, “Monothéisme...”, 537.

³² For the accusation of shirk directed “in a polemical sense against fellow monotheists” see G.R. Hawting, “Two citations of the Qur’an in ‘historical’ sources for early Islam,” in Ibn Warraq (ed), *What the Koran really says*, 260-268, 263; see too Ibn Warraq,

influence of “Judeo-Christianity”. Judeo-Christians also believed in Jesus the Messiah, but rejected as pagan the terminology “son of God”. Instead, they applied to Jesus a complicated angelology, a speculation based upon the “angelic” nature of the Messiah. Indeed, there exist good reasons to believe that it was *this* brand of “Judeo-Christianity” that influenced the background or mother soil of the Prophet’s creed itself. At least we cannot exclude an acquaintance with, if not active sympathy for some forms of “Judeo-Christianity” on the side of the Prophet.³³

“Introduction to Raimund Köbert,” in Ibn Warraq (ed), *What the Koran really says*, 296-300, 297, quoting Hawting that “mushrikun were not simple polytheists”. Hawting’s quote is from his *The idea of idolatry and the Emergence of Islam. From Polemic to History*, Cambridge 1999, 20.— For Christians in Mecca as “mushriks”, see too R. Köbert, “Early and later Exegesis of the Koran: A supplement to Or 35,” in Ibn Warraq (ed), *What the Koran really says*, 311-315, in part. 311, 313. Lüling, *Über den Ur-Qur’an*, 203; Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 277.

³³ For Judeo-Christianity and possible links between Judeo-Christianity and the Prophet Muhammad see Mooren, *Es gibt keinen Gott...*, 91/2, note 244 and 84, note 222. Also H.-J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums* [Collected writings, section 1, vol. 2], (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 1998), f. ex 104/5, 108, 334/5, 339, 463; Lüling, *Über den Ur-Qur’an*, 65, 202; Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 190-199, 258-260, 363; *ibid.*, 259 on the Umayyad Caliph Abd-al-Malik (685-705) and Judeo Christians: “It is also possible that Abd-al-Malik adopted into the state religion, not the views of a community that currently existed (either in Jerusalem or elsewhere) but in the writings of a sect which had existed in the past (probably in Jerusalem or Mesopotamia).” At any case, as Nevo and Koren also state, the “Judeo-Christian view of Jesus was obviously well established in Arab monotheism; we consider it to be the earliest core of the new Arab religion” (235), and hence one should also not exclude the possibility that Muhammad’s strong stand against shirk has roots in his *family history*. Cf. G. Lüling, *Die Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muhammad. Eine Kritik des “christlichen” Abendlandes* (Erlangen 1981), 225; see Mooren, *Es gibt keinen Gott*, 84, note 222. For the general religious climate in the time of early Islam cf. too Berger, *Die Entstehung des Islam*, 104-

Yet, whatever the kind of shirk the Qur'an has in mind – it was not practised by Abraham. He was not one of the mushrikuna. A reason more, to make him the guide of humanity, hence God said to Abraham: "Verily, I am going to make you a leader for humankind." (Sura 2, 124).

Besides Abraham not being a mushrik, what other grounds for being a guide for humanity do there exist? The answer to this question leads us to Abraham the *hanif*. The term "hanif" is usually "translated" by the designation "monotheist". But this is pure interpretation. All we can guess is that hanif has to be something positive, since it is coupled with "no-mushrik" and "muslim". Yet, originally, if we take into account the neighboring languages of the Near East, also the Arabic "hanif" must have shared into some darker side of human behavior. Thus, the Syriac neighbor means "godless", "pagan", the Hebrew neighbor gives us "perverse", the Aramaic "deceitful", "haughty" and the Ugaritic neighbor "without piety".³⁴ The verdict is without appeal: the Qur'an has turned around something outright despicable into a positive qualification, even the most positive that there is – being a *monotheist*!³⁵ However, this amazing capacity of turning things around is part of the genius of Islam.

106; 275/6; furthermore C.-St. Popa's study on Giwargis I, *Giwargis I. (660-680). Ostsyrische Christologie in frühislamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden 2016).

³⁴ For details see Mooren, *Macht*, 32, 44, note 42; Mooren, "Unity in Diversity," 89, note 40.

³⁵ For the "puzzle" (Margoliouth) that is "hanif" see too D.S. Margoliouth, "Some Additions To Professor Jeffrey's Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an," in Ibn Warraq (ed), *What the Koran really says*, 193; A. Mingana, "Syriac Influence on the Style of the Koran," in Ibn Warraq (ed), 189/90. See too Calder, "Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir," 116, Berger, *Die Entstehung des Islam*, 104, 276.

Another example is the term “ummi” (as in Sura 7, 157/8), which later tradition rendered with “uncultivated, unable to read and to write”. If the Prophet was indeed this kind of “ummi”, that is an illiterate, then the miracle to be able to read the revelation offered to him by Gabriel in the form of a text (Sura 96, 1-5³⁶), is all the greater. However, if we take Sura 3, 20, “ummi” clearly points to the fact that the Prophet was considered to be a “pagan” (not an illiterate): “Say to those who were given the scripture and to the pagans (ummiyyina)...” In this sense it must have been applied to the Prophet during his discussions with the Jews. *They* must have simply disqualified Muhammad as Prophet, considering him only to be a Prophet for the “nations” (*ommot ha 'olam*), for the *massa damnata*, i.e., a prophet “ethnikos” and thus “heretical”.³⁷

Yet, as in the case of “hanif”, the disqualification is fully *assumed* by the Qur'an and turned into something positive. Yes, the Prophet is a Prophet “ethnikos”, a Prophet “ummi” (Sura 7, 158). But only to him and his people is the revelation revealed in perfect, pure Arabic (Sura 45, 2 and 16, 103)!

Back to “hanif”. In the Qur'an we find numerous examples for Abraham as “hanif”. In Sura 16, 120, 123 we read: “Ibrahim a hanif, who was not one of the polytheists (mushrikina)... Follow the faith (“milla”; religion) of Ibrahim the hanif.” The same 2, 125; 3, 95; 4, 125; 6, 161.³⁸ One of the most fascinating connections “hanif” assumes is the one that can be found in Sura 30,

³⁶ “1. Read! In the Name of your Lord... 3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. 4. Who has taught the writing by the pen. 5. He has taught man that which he knew not.”

³⁷ For Christians taking the “Muslims” for “pagans” see e.g. Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 233-235.

³⁸ Cf. too Mooren, “I do not adore...!”, 63.

30:

Set, Muhammad, your face towards Hanifism (lidini hanifan), which is God's original creation (fitra) with which he has created (fatara) humankind. There is no change (tabdil) in God's creation. This is the upright (qayyim) religion, but people do not know it (la ya'lamuna).

We are dealing here with the connection between the very first day of creation (of universe and humankind), the moment of the "fitra" *and* of monotheism. The "fitra" is the explosion of life, pure, unmitigated energy, which also is the very essence of humanity, i.e., *theologically* speaking, the essence of monotheism itself. The human being was created as a monotheist! Farther outwards the limits of monotheism could not be pushed. They are pushed towards Adam, first man and first Prophet and even beyond, towards an oath ("Ur-pact", "mithaq") humankind had already sworn in favor of monotheism. At the moment of this oath the humans were still unborn, yet already gathered in a state of preexistence in Adam's "loin" – a kind of platonic myth on qur'anic soil. Sura 7:

172. And remember, when your Lord brought forth from Adam's loin his offspring and made them testify against themselves: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify!", lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we have been unaware of this. 173 Or lest you should say: "It was only our fathers afortime who took others as partners in worship along with God...!"

In this way there are no excuses for not being a

monotheist once one is born, neither loss of memory with regard to the “mithaq”, nor the bad examples given by the “fathers”, i.e., by history, have any exculpating value!³⁹ What it also implies is this – that this grandiose picture of our Ur-time is captured or “embodied” on the mere human, daily, historical level by something that is called “din”, religion. It is the only religion that can withstand (qayyim) *unchanged* the storm of time and history – the religion of Abraham. His name is not mentioned here, but there is no doubt that turning one’s face towards God in a “hanifite” way (“hanifan”) means to act like Ibrahim/ Abraham, the *hanif*.

Abraham is the one capable of grounding, of mediating the “adamitic” religion of our mysterious beginnings into the reality of our own time and space. Only he could capture the primeval energy of creation and turn it into something historically concrete: the construction of a holy place (Mecca with its Kaaba), the settlement of a people at this very place (the Arabs), the teaching of rituals like the pilgrimage (hajj) and other rituals of prayer (salat) and norms and customs of daily life. And in doing so, in being the creator of the physical-spiritual complex that is Mecca, the “safe and peaceful valley green with plenty of fruit trees”, and via Ishmael being the father of the Arabs, Abraham the hanif and the “non-mushrik” also becomes Ibrahim, the *first muslim*. Sura 2, 125-127:

And remember when we (Allah) made the House
(the Kaaba) a resort for humankind and a safe
place... a place of prayer. And we commanded
Ibrahim and Ishmael that they should purify my

³⁹ See too Mooren, “Unity in Diversity: The ‘Prophets,’ Muhammad, Abraham and Jesus and the Islamo-Christian Dialogue,” *MST Review*, 6 (2004), 73-113, 94.

House for those who are circumambulating it, or staying or bowing or prostrating themselves. (125)

And remember when Ibrahim said: “My Lord! Make this city, (Makka), a place of security and provide its people with fruit...”. (126)

And remember, when Ibrahim and his son Ishmael were raising the foundation of the House... (127)⁴⁰

Obviously – to open a parenthesis – what is at stake here is not the “historical” or “objective” truth – a visit of Abraham in Mecca.⁴¹ Rather, the events of Mecca’s

⁴⁰ Ismael Ibn Kathir (circa 1300-1373), famous for his commentary of the Qur’an (tafsir al-Qur’an al-karim), embellishes the story like this: “God ordered Abraham to build him a House which would be for the people of the earth just like the angels had a place of worship in the heavens. Every day 70000 angels, never the same angel twice, worship God in the inhabited House in the heavens.” (Quoted after B.M. Wheeler, (selector, transl.), *Prophets in the Quran. An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* [London, New York 2002], 99). The same Ibn Kathir also provides more details regarding Mecca: “Abraham built the best of mosques in the best of locations, in a valley without cultivation, so he asked God to bless its inhabitants, to provide them with fruits because it had only little water and trees, crops or produce. He asked God to make it a sacred and secure place. God responded and gave him that for what he had asked...” (Quoted after Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran*, 101). – Something of this enthusiasm breaks through even in Sir Richard F. Burton’s description of Mecca – Burton was one of the rare Europeans who in the 19th century successfully could enter Mecca: “It was as if the poetical legends of the Arab spoke truth, and that the waving wings of angels, not the sweet breeze of morning, were agitating and swelling the black covering of the shrine. But, to confess humbling truth, theirs (my Arab travel companions) was the high feeling of religious enthusiasm, mine was the ecstasy of gratified pride.” (R.F. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Meccah*, vol. II, I. Burton ed., [New York: Dover Publications, 1964 {1893}], 169). Burton could proudly say: I have done it!

⁴¹ For this see too Mooren, “Unity in diversity,” 87 and in

foundation by Abraham are true, because and *only* because they are *told* to be true! The Mecca stories are not primarily “fact finding” stories in a scientific (archeological etc.) sense but function more like a code, delivering direction to the faithful, telling them how to conduct their lives⁴². And what more perfect examples of “Muslims” than Abraham and his sons, i.e., of people *submissive* to the will of God could there exist? Even the

particular 87, note 28, and by the same author “I do not adore what you adore..!”, 60. See too the “puzzle” of Sura 3, 96, where the first House of worship stands in *Bakka* and not in *Macca*. (See T. Holland, *In the Shadow of the Sword. The Birth of Islam and the Rise of the Global Arab Empire* [New York 2013], 328).

⁴² “Each assertion, description or narrative... can contain no element of fiction or fancy, invention or imagination. All is literally true. Men therefore hungered to probe every detail and nuances to save their immortal soul by deriving from the Qur’an a programme of impeccable belief and a code of unimpeachable conduct...” (J. Burton, *Law and Exegesis. The penalty for adultery in Islam*, in: Hawting, R., Abdul-Kader A. Shareef [eds], 269-284, 270). In spite of this sympathetic insight Burton’s final judgment comes down on the “rationalistic”, “scientific” side accusing the faithful to confuse, out of enthusiasm, “assumption with fact and to mistake exegesis for history.” (J. Burton, 171). – Needless to say, that this “confusion” is the lot of all religions. The Shia practises it with regard to the life of the Imams (see Schubel, *Religious Performance...*, 25-33, 121), Old and New Testament with regard to the Prophets and the life of Jesus; and about Chinese gods and goddesses in modern Chinese fiction e.g. we learn: “Deities exist because people believe they do, and fictional characters can thus be transformed into *real* gods, once they are conceived of as such by readers.” (M. Shahar, “Vernacular Fiction and the Transmission of Gods’ Cults in Late Imperial China,” in M. Shahar and R.P. Weller, *Unruly Gods. Divinity and Society in China* (Honolulu 1996), 184-211, 186; cf. too B. Baptandier, “The Lady Linshui. How a Woman became a Goddess,” in M. Shahar, and R.P. Weller, *Unruly Gods*, 105-149, 108). Perhaps it all comes down to the statement made by a philosopher in Dieter Wellershoff’s novel “Heaven is not a place”: “The fact that we make an experience should not be confounded with the reality (“Tatsächlichkeit”) of the content of this experience.” (Der Himmel ist kein Ort [Cologne 2009], 253; my transl.).

future is taken care of (Sura 2, 128), a future that clearly reaches out toward the Prophet Muhammad himself (Sura 2, 129):

O Lord! Make us (Ishmael and myself) submissive unto you (muslimaini laka) and of our offspring (min dzurritatina) a community (umma) submissive unto you and show us the rituals and accept our repentance. (128)⁴³
 Our Lord! Send amongst them a messenger of their own who shall recite unto them Your verses and instruct them in the Book (kitab; qur'an) and in *hikma* (the wisdom of prophethood)! (129)

Thus, Abraham and his sons are Muslims, the future will know Muslims, including, evidently, the Prophet Muhammad. Yet, what should not get unnoticed is the fact that, when it comes to the term “muslim”, we can play with *two* connotations: once the literal meaning “to be submissive” and secondly “muslim” as description of someone who follows the religious “denomination” (Hegel: a *positive* religion) of *Islam*. In the second sense Abraham was a “Muslim” *avant la lettre*, still before “Islam” was constituted as a “religion” on its own different from other religions like Christianity and Judaism.⁴⁴ Hence we see the Prophet in Sura 2, 129

⁴³ Obviously, the *unbelievers* among the offspring are not included into the promise. *They*, in the end, will see “the Fire and worst indeed is that destination” (Sura 2, 126).

⁴⁴ According to Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 234, the latter did not happen before the 690s: “The term ‘Islam’ was first used by ‘Abd al-Malik in the Dome of the Rock, 691.” And for the technical term “Muslim” we learn, that it does not appear in any pre-‘Abbasid Arabic texts, i.e., before 750, “including official inscriptions, popular graffiti, coins, and protocols.” (Ibid., 234). However saying that still in late 7th century terms like *Muslims* and *Islam* “were not yet used by the Arabs themselves, let alone by onlookers” (Ibid., 234)

acting like a second Abraham, when *he*, Muhammad, grounded *his* Islam in time and space on Arabian soil by “instructing people in the Book”! On the other side, if we take “muslim” in the first, the literal meaning, *everyone* submitted to God’s will would act like a “muslim” – which allows to speak of “anonymous Muslims” in a somehow similar way some Christian theologians coined the term “anonymous Christians”.

The latter, indeed, might be an interesting thought regarding the possibilities of contemporary inter-religious dialogue. Yet the Qur’an draws above all from the Abraham-Muhammad relationship far reaching consequences with regard to the “validity” or “truthfulness” of the Islamic revelation! It does not only underline the continuity of the message of the Prophets throughout time and history – that all the Prophets preached the same truth, namely the tauhid (strict monotheism)⁴⁵, in which way the message of Abraham is linked to the message of Adam, the first Prophet on the level of creation (seen in Sura 30, 30). Rather, because

does not mean in my opinion that there was not a group of “submissive” people around somewhere in the Syro-Arabian desert, practising holy wars and venerating some (monotheistic) High God in some particular sanctuary. In other words, we open here the Pandoras box of the highly controversial question about the identity of the Prophet Muhammad, did such a one exist, what is the nature of the Qur’an and similar questions all hotly debated! See Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*; J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford 1977); P. Crone (and M. Cook), *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge 1977); Ibn Warraq (ed., transl.). *What the Koran really says*; H. Motzki (and N. Boekhoff-van der Voort, S.W. Anthony), *Analysing Muslim Traditions. Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith*, Leiden (Boston 2010); etc.

⁴⁵ Sura 21,25: “And we did not sent any messenger before you but we revealed to him, saying: la ilaha illa Ana (There is no God except Me, Allah), so worship Me!”. See too Th. Mooren, *Macht und Einsamkeit Gottes. Dialog mit dem islamischen Radikal Monotheismus* (Würzburg, Altenberge, 1991), 39.

Muhammad is qualified to act as “alter Abraham”⁴⁶ he is also qualified to authenticate *his own message as true*, since it *confirms* (musaddiq) all the messages proclaimed before him! Sura 5, 48: “We have sent down to you (Muhammad) the Book in truth confirming (musaddiq) that came before it...”. Or Sura 2, 136:

Say: oh Muslims! We believe in God and that what has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes (of Israel) and which has been given to Moses and Jesus and that which has been given to the prophets from the Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and to Him (God) we have submitted (nahnu lahu muslimuna).⁴⁷

We are here in presence of a chain of transmission that resembles very much the theory of the “seven chairs” (hapta styloi) of the Judeo-Christians. There it is the “pneuma” that runs through a list of Prophets, e.g. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses – to finally rest upon Jesus.⁴⁸ Obviously, in Islam the final resting place for the “spirit of prophecy” is the *second* Abraham, the Prophet Muhammad himself, who consequently is not sent to any particular tribe or culture but to humankind itself, to all people (an-nas): “Say (Muhammad) to *humankind*: I am sent *to you all* as

⁴⁶ Sura 3, 65: “Oh people of the scripture (Jews and Christians)! Why do you dispute about Ibrahim while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have you then no sense?”

⁴⁷ See too Sura 2, 140; 2, 285; 4, 54. See too Mooren, *Es gibt keinen Gott*, 81/2 and by the same author, “Unity in diversity,” 91.

⁴⁸ See Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte...*, 105, and also *ibid.*, 104-114, 335. – It is interesting that Mani too has a series that runs like this: Adam, Seth, Noah, Jesus, Buddha, Zarathustra, Mani. See *Ibid.*, 335.

rasul Allah...” (Sura 7, 158)⁴⁹

Once it has been established that Muhammad’s “Book” is the very last, definitive confirmation of all the previous prophecies, the Qur’an can even concede to Jesus a role similar to the one the Prophet himself plays at the end of the chain of transmission, namely that the Gospel of Jesus confirms all previous messages. Yet it does this only for the Jews, to whom Jesus was sent. The Gospel was destined to confirm the Torah, so that Jews might become Christians. With the coming of Muhammad the gospel then receives the same treatment by Muhammad’s Book as the Torah had received by the Gospel:

... We sent ‘Isa (Jesus) son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him. And we gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah, that had come before the Gospel..”(Sura 5, 46)

However, it is important to keep in mind that the chain of transmission with mutual confirmation only works under the condition that the prophetic message of all times (“there is no change in religion”, Sura 30, 30) is the *same* – the tauhid, the strict radical monotheism as preached by the Qur’an. Nothing more, nothing less.⁵⁰ This, however, is not a question of historical research or critical exegesis, the result of painstaking comparison of texts and ideas, but a pure question of *faith*, namely of that faith that God has *revealed* (finally consigned in a

⁴⁹ No wonder, then, that Islam is *the best* of all possible communities (Sura 3, 110). See too Mooren, *Macht...*, 50/1.

⁵⁰ What does not conform with Tauhid must be the result of some *falsification*! Since Abraham’s appearance and work in Mecca this includes also the ritual complex, through which the intellectual content of Tauhid expresses itself on the physical/bodily level.

“Book”⁵¹) this, and for all times *only* this: that He is one (Allahu ahad)!

With faith (iman) we have reached the core of what “being a muslim” means, the cornerstone that keeps all the actions of Ibrahim/Abraham and of the Prophets together. What really animated Abraham the “non-mushrik”, the “hanif” and now the “muslim” is *iman*, faith. To live one’s faith *is* the “being submissive” of the Suras we have encountered above (2, 128/9, 136 etc.); it means to have reached *Islam*! And who would not know about this other striking example of faith/Islam, namely the sacrifice of Abraham’s son (Sura 37, 102-111⁵²)? In the end, Abraham is called for his deed “slave”: “He was one of our believing slaves” (innahu min ‘ibadina al-mu’minina, v. 111).⁵³

Yet, even if we translate “‘abd”/pl. “‘ibad” with “servant” instead of “slave” – the language and the image of this “Islam” remain harsh. They evoke, rightly or wrongly, the idea of *blind* obedience, of an unquestioning submissiveness and boundless authoritarianism. However, nothing is farther away from the truth, even if this “truth” is often times avoided by those in power who ask exactly for this kind of “obedience”, for this kind of authoritarian “Islam”.

Instead of pointing towards the “obedience” of a corpse, the term “Islam” itself, in fact, opens a different

⁵¹ The only “tool”, so to speak, of the revelation, and the only one Muhammad as “rasul” was in need of.

⁵² “Authority and tradition being more or less equally divided” on the question, whether the son was Ishmael or Isaac. (Cf. N. Calder, “Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir. Problems in the description of the genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham,” in G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef [eds], *Approaches to the Qur’an*, London [New York 1993], 101-140, 122).

⁵³ See too the begin of Sura 2, 124: “Remember, when the Lord of Ibrahim tried him with certain commands which he fulfilled...”

door.⁵⁴ It suggest that we submit only *after* having “run away” from something/someone *else*, broken with something/someone *else*, having turned the back away from a thing or a person, in order to submit *then* unto the intended goal. We are dealing with an act of “dissent”, of *reflective* conscious negation and rejection of something or someone we do not want any longer, and only in second instance are we dealing with an act of embracing/submitting unto whatever the desired goal is. Whoever wants to translate “Islam” with peace – it is peace after *conflict*, or peace still in the orbit of conflict.⁵⁵ It is exactly what happened to Abraham when he found *his* peace, *his* Islam, namely in a conscious break away from the world of idolatry and polytheism⁵⁶, including the spiritual world of his own father whom he could not persuade to convert, i.e., to accept only one God.⁵⁷ It is peace like hot lava, where glowing fire, the conflict can still be felt!

I call these courageous actions undertaken by Abraham “Exodus-gestures” as a reminder of the Ur-text of all Abraham stories, namely the Old Testament. Therein Abram’s/Abraham’s break away from his old

⁵⁴ “Islam” is the substantivated infinitive (Masdar) of “aslama” , “muslim” the part.pass. of “aslama”. “Aslama” itself represents the so-called causative form (IV form) of the root SLM (salima, to be safe and sound). Salima, however, if turned into the mentioned causative form “aslama”, puts the meaning of safety upside down. It gives us the choice between “to forsake, leave, desert, give up, betray!” (See Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 424/5).

⁵⁵ See too Mooren, “Unity in diversity,” 87/8 and: *Es gibt keinen Gott ...*, 84/5, note 224, furthermore “I do not adore...!”, 65.

⁵⁶ See Sura 21, 52-70. In reaction to Abraham’s action the unbelievers want to burn him, v. 70; cf. too Sura 37, 87-98.

⁵⁷ Cf. Sura 6, 74; 9, 114; 19, 42-48; 21, 51/2; 26, 69; 37, 85; 60, 4. – Abraham’s father tried to stone his son! (19, 46). The son tries to ask for forgiveness for his father (19, 47), but in vain! (9, 114; 19, 45). In the end, Abraham has to “free himself” from his father (“tabarra’a minhu, 60, 4).

world is described in a succinct but dramatic way (Gen 12, 1-4): “Yahweh said to Abram: ‘leave your country and family, and your father’s house for the land I will show you...’ So Abram went as Yahweh called him... Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.”⁵⁸

Obviously, many more stories could be told about the life of Abraham,⁵⁹ but the essential features of the fascinating character of the man Ibrahim have been revealed, above all how all three aspects, the non-mushrik, the Hanif and the Muslim constitute one organic whole. Yet this way we can also see why Abraham is interesting for our questioning the destiny of Islam as it was “decided” at the deathbed of Prophet Muhammad. The turn prophecy has taken in Sunnism in the wake of Abu Bakr’s “God is alive, but Muhammad is dead!” – this turn and its fruits seem to be obvious today.

⁵⁸ Quasi like an echo from far away, the collection “Stories of the Prophets” (qisas an-nabiyyina) has this to say about Abraham: “Abraham left his country behind and took leave of his father...” (wa haraja Ibrahim min baladi wa wadda’a walidahu). The goal of his “exodus”, however, is dictated by Islam: “and he took off for Makka.” (wa qasada Ibrahim makkata); Qisas, 22/3. – For the Exodus motive cf. too Mooren, “I do not adore...!”, 65/6; “Unity in diversity,” 87/88; “Your kingdom come!”, 92-94.

⁵⁹ Ibn Abbas (d. between 687-689), a companion of the Prophet, tells us how Abraham’s father, a maker of idols sent out his son to sell them. But he sold none, since he advertised them saying: “Who will buy that which harms him and does not benefit him?” (See Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran*, 89). – Ibn Ishaq embellishes the story of Sura 6, 74-79, how Abraham discovered the true One God after having mistaken him for a star, the moon and the sun successively. But when these celestial bodies vanished, Abraham’s faith in them vanished too. (Cf. Ibid., 85/6; also discussed from a metaphysical and dogmatic standpoint in Calder, “Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir,” 115-120). – See many more examples in *Qisas an-nabiyyina*, Ismailaga Sokak No. 10/2 Carsamba Fatih-Istanbul; Wheeler, etc. See also below the discussion of the three lies of Abraham).

Did the progressive disappearance of the person of the Prophet from the picture of the revelation⁶⁰ not produce an ever deeper stiffening of the message into an edifice of legalistic bricks and mortar, thus in turn facilitating a mere “ideologization”, politization and exploitation of Islam in favor of newly created Caliphs, Emirs, kings and Field Marshals?

Yet, there still exists the memory of Ibrahim, a true prophet, a true Nabi (Sura 19, 41), who is alive for us because of his unfading, unfaltering *faith*! A faith that courageously combines inner conviction and public action, prophecy *and* holiness – in the name of the ONE, who called him out, faithful to the Ur-model of Gen 12, 1-4! For this reason, and for this reason alone, Islam declared him rightly *khalil Allah*, God’s *intimate* friend! (Sura 4, 125: “wa ahadza Allah Ibrahim khalilan”, “God took Ibrahim as intimate friend”⁶¹!)

No other Prophet received a similar title!⁶² Moses is

⁶⁰ Again we are not dealing here with the different features of so-called “popular Islam” from Pakistan to Africa via Indonesia and India, but of Islam’s “orthodox” “scriptural” version!

⁶¹ In *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 252, Wehr gives for “khalil”: “friend, bosom friend, lover”. One can see which direction of intimacy the Verb “khalla” takes, hence “khalla” also means: “to salt”, “to cure with salt” – and the paramount importance of salt in the Orient (and elsewhere) is well known!

⁶² Some theologians, however, could not accept such great particular status for Abraham. Calder, “Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir,” 108-110, discusses the case of al-Qurtubi (d. 1272), lawyer, exegete and theologian born in Andalusia (Cordoba; see Sourdel and Sourdel, *Dictionnaire historique de l’Islam*, 694/5). At stake was the sinlessness of Prophets – and Abraham had lied three times in his life: thus “... he certainly compromised himself and betrayed to a degree his high status. From this Qurtubi infers that the status of *khalil* was not achieved in its perfect form by any prophet prior to the prophet Muhammad.” (Calder, 109). Thus, in the eyes of this theologian it could not be that khalil belonged exclusively to Abraham. – With regard to the “lies” of Abraham there circulated however the following hadith: “The Prophet of God said: ‘Abraham

called “kalimat Allah”, the Word of God; David God’s Representative (“khalif”); Jesus God’s Spirit (“ruh”) and Muhammad evidently God’s “rasul”, His final “Envoy”.⁶³ All theses “titles” are precious and express a specific uniqueness, in particular “rasul Allah” (not only any “nabi” or prophet, but the *final* one, sent to *all* humankind) – but none of them reaches the level of spiritual warmth and intimacy of a khalil, of an intimate *Friend!*

Conclusion

An honest religious thinker is like a tightrope walker. He almost looks as though he were walking on nothing but air. His support is the slenderest imaginable. And yet it really is possible to walk on it.

(Ludwig Wittgenstein,
Culture and Value)

did not lie, save three lies, two with respect to God (fi dhat Allah), namely saying “I am sick” and “This big one did it”; and one with respect to Sarah, namely his saying “She is my sister” ` (Calder 107). However, it turns out, that all three lies where of “tactical nature”. “I am sick” (Sura 37, 89) was said by Abraham in order to be left behind in a procession, i.e., to be left alone, so that he could better destroy the idols. Sura 21, 63 (“the big one did it”) refers to a big idol, which should have been able to defend itself against the accusation, uttered by Abraham, that he had broken the smaller idols into pieces. But the big one remained speechless, unable to defend itself and *that* was the proof Abraham needed to demonstrate the uselessness of idols! (See Sura 21, 57-70). The lie concerning Sarah refers to the well known story of Gen 20, 7, where Abraham saves his skin by declaring Sarah to be his sister. Had he said that Sarah was his wife, king Abimelech of Gerar would have killed Abraham, in order to be able to “take” his wife Sarah.

⁶³ For “khalil” see too “Khalil Allah”: <http://www.salahallah.com/english/15-ibrahim-friend-khalil-allah>; <http://www.answering-islam.org/Books/Wherry/Commentary2/ch4.htm>; <http://www.answering-islam.org/Gilchrist/Vol2/4a.html>; https://www.google.ca/?gws_rd=cr&ei=y78jWI3EJKHUjwSOqbzgBA#q=explanation+khalil+in+Koran+surah+4+vers+125&nfpr=1.

Intrigued by the possibility that the figure of Ibrahim/Abraham might reveal itself as a potential link between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we had to clarify who the Abraham of Islam really is. The question that now, after due investigation, arises is the following: is the thoroughly islamized Abraham the Qur'an presents us, nevertheless still capable to fulfill the role of a common link – or has he become too “strange” for being useful for any successful interreligious dialogue? What does the Abraham who constructs Mecca and institutes the rituals around the Kaaba has in common with the Abraham of the Old or the New Testament, in particular with the extremely complex theological speculation attached to his person e.g. in Paul's letter to the Romans? Seen under this angle the disparities between the different “Abrahams” seem almost too huge for functioning as a common “denominator”! We are reminded of Wittgenstein's question: “How do I know that two people mean the same when each says he believes in God?”⁶⁴

I hope, however, that a closer look is able to convince us of the contrary. Hence in all three traditions, the Jewish, the Christian and the Islamic version, Abraham is the “Father of Faith”! Faith understood as a *radical* trust in God. Faith concentrated in what I have called

⁶⁴ L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (ed. G.H. von Wright; H. Nyman), transl. Peter Winch, University of Chicago Press [German: *Vermischte Bemerkungen* 1977, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt/M], 85e. — For the Islam-Christian dialogue, by the way, Wittgenstein's question is of fundamental importance given the fact that at the bottom of each dialogue this one question is lying in waiting: whether (what is commonly called) “God” is really the “correct” equivalent to (the qur'anic) “Allah”. For example, should one say that the Qur'an is “God's” or “Allah's” word? The first statement settles the Qur'an into an *existential realm* (“Lebenswelt”) that is close to the Christian “religious feeling”; while the second does not.

the “Exodus-gesture” – in Islamic terms the “hijra”, the “haraja Ibrahim min baladihi”⁶⁵: the Abraham, who left behind his country, his father, his culture, the “polytheism” of his homeland. It is this “hijra” that all three “monotheistic” religions acknowledge in Abraham. The difference then lies in this: the theology of the Qur’an does not only invite us to *have faith* like Abraham, but also to have faith *like* Abraham, in the sense that we are invited to imitate *his* rituals, actions etc., at the places *he* has chosen.⁶⁶ The *initial ignition*, to use this term of the world of auto-motion, is comparable in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The *direction* this initial ignition entails each time is different.

We could say: for the Jews a *country* is waiting, for the Muslims a common *ritual complex*, the Hajj etc., and a country only in so far as a place, a religious space for this ritual complex is needed – and for the Christians no country at all is waiting, only that amount of land that is necessary to erect a cross!⁶⁷ Because of these differences any dialogue should concentrate on the initial ignition of the journey, the “explosion” of faith, so to speak, and less on the results of the journey in their often bewildering differences! For it is, in last analysis, only the authenticity, the power and authority of the initial ignition of faith that carries us through all adversities – everyone in a specific, unique way – to what I propose to be the one common goal: the *friendship with God!*

It is amazing how readily the Muslim commentator

⁶⁵ Qisas, 22.

⁶⁶ See for this Mooren, *Es gibt keinen Gott*, 90.

⁶⁷ That is, if we follow the Pauline justification theology which draws heavily on the “cross” as counterpart to Abraham’s “sola fide” (“faith alone”)! See for this Mooren, “I do not adore...!”, 50/1.

of Sura 4, 125 in the Internet⁶⁸ embraces this same goal. Firstly he states:

Musa (Moses) was a man who suffered great trials in life. Yet he remained faithful to Allah. And Musa was blessed to see Allah, the record says “face to face”. Musa was also a friend of Allah. (Taurat) Exodus, 33,11... Another man who was a Khalil of Allah was Daniel the Prophet... (Taurat) Daniel 10, 11... See also Daniel 9, 33; 10, 19. Then we have a man named “Enoch”. (Taurat) Genesis 5, 24: ‘And Enoch walked with God... and he was not; for God... took him.’ So close did Enoch walk with Allah that He finally took him to Himself.

By drawing exclusively his examples from the Old Testament the commentator easily increases the number of God’s friends – as if the closeness to God he invokes were in Islam a reality that goes without saying.⁶⁹ Secondly, he asks the decisive question: how does one become the friend of Allah? Answer:

Is this an impossible task? No, or else none of the human family would have been titled such. Therefore we ought to strive to be among the

⁶⁸ See <http://www.salahallah.com/english/15-ibrahim-friend-khalil-allah>.

⁶⁹ Remember only how hard some mystics in Islam had to fight for the “right” to have God as “friend”. See Mooren, *Macht*, 329-338. – The “closeness” that is easily acceptable in the Qur’an is related to God the Creator (Sura, 50, 16): “And indeed we have created man, and We know what his ownself whispers to him. And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.” Not for nothing the Saudi interpretation of the Qur’an adds “by Our knowledge”, meaning that we are close to God and he to us because he *knows* us – which is not the same as the closeness of the khalil Allah.

friends (khalil) of Allah. But how? We simply need to look into the lives of those who have gone before us to secure that title ‘khalil’ or ‘greatly beloved’.⁷⁰

If this is really so simple as the commentator makes it look like is another question. Yet the result of the commentator’s approach as far as dialogue is concerned is obvious. We certainly have immediately gained here a common platform of interest for all three “monotheistic” religions, namely *striving for God’s friendship*. The dialogue can thus concentrate on questions like these: what is the nature of God’s friendship with humanity? What is its “content”, so to speak; and if friendship is really an avenue that brings us closer to the mystery of God, what kind of striving is then requested of the human being?

Within this context it might be useful as for the Jewish angle of the question, that an Abraham, friend of God, can also be found in Qumran. The *Zadokite document* states:

Abraham, however, did not walk in this way (that of the sons of Noah who went astray). Therefore because he kept the commandments of God and did not prefer the desires of his own spirit, he was accounted the Friend of God and transmitted this status in turn to Isaac and Jacob.⁷¹

⁷⁰ See <http://www.salahallah.com/english/15-ibrahim-friend-khalil-allah>.

⁷¹ Quoted after E.R. Bishop, “The Qumran Scrolls and the Qur’an,” in Ibn Warraq, *What the Koran really says*, 251-167, 254. It is noteworthy that the Ishmael line of Abraham is not mentioned here.

That is not so far away from Sura 4, 125, although totally reformulated within the Islamic context:

And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face to God... and follows the religion of Abraham the Hanif. And God did take Abraham as friend.

Qumran and Islam insist that Abraham's friendship status includes not only the orthodoxy but equally embraces orthopraxy – as by the way does also the letter of James (not worthy to be part of the canon of the New Testament in the eyes of Luther) in 2:23-24: Abraham is God's friend because he is also a man of works and not of faith alone!

If we turn now to the Old Testament for Abraham as God's friend we are up for a surprise, if we follow the groundbreaking study by Goshen-Gottstein in this matter. The surprise lies in the fact that what is commonly translated by "friend" as in Is. 41, 8 should really be translated by *lover*!:

But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
the offspring of Abraham my friend...

Goshen-Gottstein comments: "We just have to face the statement that for the first time in the Bible one particular figure is termed God's *'ohebh*."⁷² Given the fact that we are dealing here with an active participle of the root "hb", "to love", the "*'ohebh*" as such "conveys the sense of relationship from actor to goal."⁷³ Hence it is Abraham who carries his love *towards* God, and it is

⁷² M. Goshen-Gottstein, "Abraham – Lover or Beloved of God," in Marks and Good, *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East*, 102.

⁷³ Ibid., 101.

“rather our own sense of language that prevents us from speaking of Abraham as the ‘lover of God’.”⁷⁴

In other words: “Perhaps *’ohebh* was largely neutralized already in biblical Hebrew, meaning little more than ‘friend’...”⁷⁵. Too strong is the idea, as also in Qur’an and Qumran, that the relationship God-man is always one of election with God taking the initiative, God taking Abraham as “friend”.

That the human being takes the initiative, the active role and expresses *its* yearning, caring, shortly *its* love for God seemed (and still seems) to break the canon, the rule and the norm! If Goshen-Gottstein’s study makes sense, then we are up for a totally new challenge as daughters and sons of Abraham – a challenge by the way entirely compatible with Jesus’ saying, that God is not the God of the dead but of he living *as God of Abraham*, Isaac and Jacob (cf. Mt 22, 32, Mk 12, 26, Lk 20, 38), i.e., the challenge not so much to preach and accept that God loves us, but whether *we are really ready to love God!*⁷⁶

Those who are of the opinion that there is too much of *Pelagius* in this position might consult the pleading in favor of *Pelagius* in Forthomme Nicholson’s *Celtic Theology*;⁷⁷ or we can go back to Aristotle’s view on the

⁷⁴ Ibid., 101.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁷⁶ Symbolically speaking, this would just be the counterpart, the opposite pole of the original meaning of the name “Abraham” in Akkadian language: ab(i)ram: my Father (God) loves, according to Akkadian “ramu/menu”, to love. Thus, the circle would be closed! – (For ab(i) ram see too Th. Mooren, *Paternité et Généalogie dans la pensée religieuse de l’ancien Proche-Orient. Le discours monothéiste du Prophète Mahomet face à l’Arabie préislamique, Ugarit, Israel et le christianisme* (Paris 1978), [Inst. Cath., thèse dactylogr.], 2vol., 40, 296).

⁷⁷ M. Forthomme Nicholson, “Celtic Theology: Pelagius,” in J.P. Mackey, (ed), *Introduction into Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh, 1989), 386-413.

superior delight of loving – “[f]or loving, *not* being loved, is the dream of the finest friend and the most energetic mother.”⁷⁸

God wants to be loved *by us* instead of being permanently accused because of wars, catastrophes, sickness, old age and death!⁷⁹ One result of our investigation into Abraham, the friend of God, would thus be a challenge addressed in our post-post modernist time to all three religions, to those who pretend to embrace the heritage of this extraordinary figure of the Near East: do we really care about God? Do we want him in our life? Do we really – in spite of wars, violence and the often hopeless outlook history prepares for us – still want to be God’s *friends* in the strong sense of God *lovers*?

Annex Criteria for the imamate

On the previous pages we have discussed among other things the possible synthesis or synergia between holiness and prophecy. At that occasion we were confronted with the Shi’ite requirements regarding their imams – going so far as including ismat, “sinlessness”. Yet, we have also seen that these spiritual “gifts” were

⁷⁸ According to the presentation of Aristotle’s view on love in D. Farell Krell, “A small number of houses in a universe of tragedy: notes on Aristotle’s *peri poietikes* and Hölderlin’s ‘Anmerkungen’,” in M. de Beistegui and S. Sparks (eds), *Philosophy and Tragedy* (London, New York 2000), 88-116, 94 (italics by ThM).

⁷⁹ See too within this context — which also does not turn away from what could be called God’s “weaknesses” — Ruhstorfer’s pleading for a *new theology*: “The God we need is the God that needs us”! (K Ruhstorfer, *Der Gott, den wir brauchen. Christsein in neuen Konstellationen*, in Ruhstorfer, K, (ed), *Das Ewige im Fluss der Zeit. Der Gott, den wir brauchen* [Freiburg, Basel, Wien 2016] (QD 280), 113-133, 120, my translation).

embedded into a complicated genealogical network.

However, human nature being what it is, it is by no means certain that genealogical criteria alone could produce the spiritual synthesis between mind and matter, body and spirit, or holiness and the conduct of daily life. In other words, if one had to choose between a good man or a bad man – what would be the prevailing attribute, external (genealogical) qualification – being a father, son or uncle etc. of a previous imam – or moral goodness?

In the following lines we witness a discussion that wrestles exactly with this question in the name *knowledge*. In case there are many candidates qualified by birth, can knowledge be the decisive factor in obtaining the imamate? Indeed, knowledge in itself, like being a well educated specialist of the law, is certainly a good thing, but how good is it when it comes to compete with other attributes that also qualify for the obtainment of the imamate? That is what we will see in the following discussion taken from the *Tathbit al-imama*, the “Establishment of the imamate”, text attributed to the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al- Mansur (946-953/H334-341).⁸⁰

The paragraph we have chosen begins with a question directed at the dialogue partners/opponents of the author of the *Tathbit*: “Tell us about the role of knowledge [ʿan al-fiqhi]!” — and this not in a general sense, but with regard to one specific question: “Is knowledge an attribute [min al-maʿani] thanks to which the right to the imamate, i.e., the claim to be entitled to the imamate [ʿadl al-imamat] could be sustained [yastahhiqu]?” What is, if the answer is affirmative?:

“And if they say ‘yes’ [qala naʿam], the next question

⁸⁰ See S. Makarem’s edition and translation, Arabic text p. 93 (Arabic counting), English text p. 94. For our translation, see text in quotation marks, the Arabic text being in brackets!

addressed to them should be: ‘Is it allowed to invest [yuwalli] a person of knowledge [faqih] that is *not* God-fearing [laisa biwari’i] with the imamate?’”

If the answer is “no” [la], meaning that is not possible, the next question should then be, why they think this is the case, given, on the other side, the adamant necessity of knowledge for obtaining the imamate: “If knowledge is the item thanks to which the imamate can be rightfully claimed [yastahhaqu] must it then not be transferred [tawliya] to the one *with* knowledge, even if that one is *not* God-fearing?”

One smells the trap. Thus it is time now, to present the opponent with an alternative. Let us take a candidate who indeed is not qualified for the obtainment of the imamate if one envisage the criterion of knowledge, i.e., a candidate *without* knowledge, who, however, on the other side, has all what is needed in the matter of *piety* – would he obtain the imamate? If so, that would prove one thing: piety is a more valuable asset than knowledge, namely *absolutely* indispensable! Here is what the text says:

Given that on the other hand it is religious piety through which a man can assert his claim to the imamate [kana al wara’a huwa alladhi yustahhaqu bihi al-imamat], should he not obtain it [falan yastahhiqu al-imamat] — regardless of another person *with* knowledge [faqih] but who is *not* God-fearing [laisa biwara’i]?

And here comes the conclusion: yes! Meaning: “It is established [thabata] that the pious/the God-fearing [wari’u] can claim the imamate whether he is a person with knowledge [faqih] *or* without it [ghaira faqihi].

This settles the question of *priority* among those ingredients necessary for the obtainment of the

imamate. However, with all respect for the paramount importance of piety versus knowledge, or religion versus reason – an imamate based upon piety alone would be far from being an ideal solution. Yes. It is true that “knowledge should not go for the imamate unless it is accompanied by religious piety [hatta yakun ma’ahu al-wara’u]”, but also piety should not go for it alone, since “the two, (piety *and* knowledge together), constitute a whole [walakin bihuma jamiran]”.

Therefore the best chance for obtaining the imamate, or the most fertile, reasonable ground for claiming it, lies in a combination of both: religion *and* reason, i.e., “when a religious person is also a person of knowledge [kana wari’an faqihan]”.

And this is how it should be in all sectors of life, and in particular when it comes to the interplay between prophecy and holiness!

Midya: Imbakan at Daluyan ng mga Tradisyon / *Media: Vessel and Channel of Traditions*

Ferdinand D. Dagmang*

Abstrak

Tinatalakay sa papel na ito ang mga bagay na lumilitaw sa proseso ng pag-uugnay ng “midya noon” at “midya ngayon”. Tinitingnan ang uri ng midya noong panahon ni San Pablo Apostol sa pamamagitan ng kanyang sulat, ang 2 Thess 2:15. Dito ay sinusuri 1) kung anong uri ng pakikipag-ugnayan o komunikasyon ang sinasaad ng teksto, 2) ang ilang uri ng midya, 3) ang hayag na mensahe, at 4) ang mga pahiwatig na nasa likod ng midya at sa likod ng mga tao/lipunan. Pagkatapos, ang mga aral na mapupulot sa 2 Thess 2:15 ay inilapit/inihambing sa mga uri ng midya sa ating panahon—kagaya ng *print*, radyo, TV, sine, at ang “new media.” Ang pag-uugnay ng “midya noon” at ng “midya ngayon” ay isang paghaharap ng dalawang kuwento na maaaring magsilbing mga “salamin” para sa ating panahon. Ang nananalaman sa gitna ng dalawang “salamin” ay mabibigyan ng pagkakataon na maaninag ang ilang mga bagay sa kanyang harapan at likuran—mga bagay na hindi natin masusulyapan kung wala ang mga “salamin.” Hindi lamang ito gawaing paghahambing; ito ay isang paraan ng pag-dalumat sa mga bagay-bagay noon at ngayon. Ang ganitong pamamaraan ay inaasahang makakapagbigay ng dagdag na kaalaman tungkol sa lipunan, tradisyon, at midya.

Mga susing salita: midya, San Pablo Apostol, tradisyon, lipunan, *adelphoi*

Abstract

This paper discusses some issues raised through the process of

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correlating the various “then” and “now” media. It does this by viewing the type of media in St. Paul’s time. Through his letter, 2 Thess 2:15, this study looks into 1) the kind of interaction or communication in the text; 2) the kinds of media found in the text; 3) the explicit message; and 4) the implicit message behind the media and behind the society of his time. Thereafter, the lessons learned in 2 Thess 2:15 are associated with the present-day media types—such as print, radio, TV, movie, and “new media.” The viewing of the “then” and “now” media is a way of recreating “mirrors” for our day. The reflections afforded by the two “mirrors” can provide opportunity to visualize some foreground and background elements—things that we cannot glimpse without these two “mirrors.” This is not just a comparative process; it is a way of analyzing things through the “then and now.” This methodology is expected to provide more knowledge about society, tradition, and media.

Keywords: media, St. Paul the Apostle, tradition, society, *adelphoi*

Panimula

Sa ating panahon, ang midya ay nauangkat kapag ang paksang pag-uusap at ugnayan (komunikasyon) ay tinatalakay. Bilang imbakan at daluyan ng impormasyon o kabatiran, ang midya ang nag-uugnay sa naghahatid (*sender*) ng mensahe at tumatanggap (*receiver*) nito. Kaya naman natatalakay sa usaping midya ang mga sumusunod: 1) ang mga uri ng pakikipag-ugnayan o komunikasyon, 2) ang ibat-ibang uri ng midya bilang imbakan at daluyan ng impormasyon, 3) ang hayag na impormasyon o nilalaman na mensahe ng komunikasyon, at 4) ang pahiwatig o di-hayag na mensahe na nasa likod ng midya at sa likod ng mga tao o institusyon na gumagamit ng midya.

Noong unang panahon (sa panahon ng pagsusulat ng mga Kristiyanong Kasulatan [mula 50 hanggang 150 CE]), simple lang ang usaping ugnayan na kung saan ang gamit ay ang mga payak na uri ng midya para sa proseso ng komunikasyon. Ang mga sulat ni San Pablo

Apostol ay puno ng mensahe, uri ng mensahe, at ng pakikipag-ugnayan na gamit ang ilang uri ng payak na midya. Sa mga sulat ay matutukoy ang mga bagay na gusto niyang iparating sa mga itinatag niyang *ekklesia* (nabuong pamayanang tumugon sa tawag ni Hesus) at ang ilang paraang gamit niya sa komunikasyon. Maari ding pag-usapan ang hindi gaanong hayag na mensahe kagaya ng mga nasa likod ng mga binabanggit niya at ang nasa likod ng mga uri ng midya na kanyang ginamit.

Sa pamamagitan ng 2 Thess 2:15, na naglalarawan ng ilang uri ng komunikasyon at pag-gamit ng midya ni San Pablo, tatalakayin ko sa papel na ito 1) kung anong klase ng pakikipag-ugnayan o komunikasyon ang sinasaad ng teksto, 2) ang ilang uri ng midya, 3) ang hayag na mensahe, at 4) ang mga pahiwatig na nasa likod ng midya at sa likod ng mga tao/lipunan sa panahon ni San Pablo Apostol. Sisikapin kong makabuo ng isang malawak na tingin sa mga paksang nabanggit. Sa ganitong paraan, ang pagtingin ng midya sa panahon ni San Pablo Apostol ay hindi nakahiwalay sa kanyang mundong ginagalawan.

Pagkatapos, ang mga aral na mapupulot sa 2 Thess 2:15 ay aking ilalapit/ihaharap sa mga uri ng midya sa ating panahon—kagaya ng print, radyo, TV, sine, at ang “new media” (bagong paraan ng komunikasyon na gamit ang mga digital na teknolohiya tulad ng Internet). Ang pag-uugnay ng midya “noon” at ng midya “ngayon” ay isang pag-uugnay ng dalawang kuwento na maaaring magiging mga “salamín” para sa atin. Ang nananalamin sa gitna ng dalawang “salamín” ay mabibigyan ng pagkakataon na maaninag ang ilang mga bagay sa kanyang harapan at likuran—mga bagay na hindi natin masusulyapan kung wala ang mga “salamín.” Sa gayon, ang bawat salamin ay magbibigay ng kanya-kanyang “aninag” sa midya “noon” at midya “ngayon”. Isa itong

proseso o gawain kagaya ng pag-kilala sa mga ninuno (noon) para lalong maintindihan ang mga kabataan (ngayon); at ang mas malalim na pagkakilala sa mga kabataan ay isang paraan din para lalong makilatis o mapahalagahan ang mga katangian ng mga ninuno. Hindi lamang ito gawaing paghahambing; ito ay isang paraan ng pag-dalumat sa mga bagay-bagay noon at ngayon. Ang ganitong metodolohiya ay inaasahang makakapagbigay ng dagdag na kaalaman tungkol sa Tradisyong Kristiyanismo at midya.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

Ang teksto ng 2 Thessalonians 2:15 ay naghahamon ng pagpapakatatag at naghahatid ng masidhing paalala/pangaral: na dapat ay panghawakan ng taga-Thessalonika ang mga *τάς παραδόσεις* (mga tradisyon) na itinuro nila San Pablo sa pamamagitan ng salita o ng sulat.

Ito ay napapaloob sa konteksto ng pagpapatibay ng pananampalataya at pagpapaalala ni San Pablo (sa kanyang mga tinatawag na mga “kapatid” na nasa sambayanang-Kristiyano ng Thessalonika) na huwag makinig sa mga nagpapaniwala sa agarang *parousia* (muling pagbabalik) ni Hesukristo. Sinabi niyang mas mahalaga ang maging matatag sa pagpapakabuti habang naghihintay ng “muling pagbabalik.” Ipinaramdam din ni San Pablo na mahalaga sila sa paningin ng Diyos na siyang magkakaloob ng tunay na σωτηρία (soteria; kagalingan, kalayaan, o katuparan ng buhay; *rescue, bailout, salvation*).

Sa orihinal na Griyego:

(¹³ Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου, ὅτι εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ληθείας, ¹⁴ εἰς ὃ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν, εἰς

περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.) ¹⁵ Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

Transliteration	Greek	English
<u>Ara</u>	Ἄρα	So
<u>oun</u>	οὖν	then,
<u>adelphoi</u>	ἀδελφοί	brothers,
<u>stēkete</u>	στήκετε	stand firm,
<u>kai</u>	καὶ	and
<u>krateite</u>	κρατεῖτε	hold fast
<u>tas</u>	τὰς	to the
<u>paradoseis</u>	παραδόσεις	Traditions
<u>has</u>	ἃς	which
<u>edidachthēte</u>	ἐδιδάχθητε	you were taught,
<u>eite</u>	εἴτε	whether
<u>dia</u>	διὰ	by
<u>logou</u>	λόγου	word,
<u>eite</u>	εἴτε	or
<u>di'</u>	δι'	by
<u>epistolēs</u>	ἐπιστολῆς	letter
<u>hēmōn</u>	ἡμῶν	from us.

Salin ng Griyego sa Ingles (*New American Bible*):
 (13But we are bound to always give thanks to God

for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth; ¹⁴to which he called you through our Good News, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.) ¹⁵**So then, brothers, stand firm, and hold the traditions which you were taught by us, whether by word, or by letter.**

Salin ng Griyego sa Tagalog (*Magandang Balita Bibliya*):

¹⁵**Kaya nga mga kapatid, manatili kayong matatag sa mga katotohanang itinuro namin sa inyo, maging sa salita o sa sulat.**

Ang salin sa Ingles ay mas matapat sa orihinal na Griyego kaysa sa salin sa Tagalog na nagpabago sa kahulugan ng κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις; sa halip na ang salin ay “panghawakan ang mga tradisyon”, ginawa itong “matatag sa mga katotohanan”—nawala ang salitang “panghawakan”. Mas malawak at masiksik naman ang ibig sabihin ng τὰς παραδόσεις kaysa salin na “katotohanan”. Tungkol sa usaping *midya*, nakasaad sa v. 15 ang dalawang paraan ng komunikasyon: sa salita (διὰ λόγου) at sa sulat (δι' ἐπιστολῆς).

Tatalakayin ko muna ang uri ng pakikipag-ugnayan na nasa likod ng teksto. Mahalaga ito upang mas maunawaan ang mundong ginagalawan ni San Pablo at ng taga-Thessalonika nang sa gayon ay maging mas malinaw sa atin ang kahulugang nakapaloob sa 2 Thess 2:15.

Ang Uri ng Pakikipag-ugnayan o Komunikasyon na nasa likod ng teksto

Sa panahon ni San Pablo Apostol (c.5–c.67 CE), ang mga paraan ng pakikipag-ugnayan o komunikasyon ay

ang harapang pakikipag-usap (pasalita; *orality*)¹ at pagsusulat (pasulat; *textuality*).² Ang harapang pakikipag-ugnayan ang *karaniwang* paraan para maiparating ang mga mensahe. Mabisa ito sa isang malapitan na pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga kausap (kapamilya, kapuso, kaibigan, kamag-anak, kaut-utang dila, kakilala, ka-debate, kalaro, kainuman, katsis-misan, atbp.) at ito rin ang paraan kung 1) ang pag-uusap ay di kailangan ng binabasang sulat, 2) kung ang mga kausap ay hindi pa marunong bumasa/ sumulat, 3) ang pinag-uusapan ay hindi pa naisusulat at bahagi pa ng *oral tradition*, at 4) nagkakaintindihan ang magka-usap. Noong nag-misyon si San Pablo sa mga *Jews* at *Gentiles* ay *harapan at pasalita* ang kanyang paraan; gamit din niya ang wika ng kanyang mga kausap.

Gumamit din si San Pablo ng sulat (ἐπιστολή; epistole) upang ang hindi niya kayang sabihin ng harapan ay maiparating niya sa mga malalayong sambayanang-Kristiyano. Sa ganitong pananaw, ang sulat ay isa sa mga midya na nagdudugtong (*extend*) sa kakayahan ng katawan o kakayahan ng tao. Dahil sa sulat bilang dugtong sa isipan at salita ay naiparating ni San Pablo sa taga-Thessalonika ang kanyang mensahe.³

Griyegong lengwahe ang gamit niya sa kanyang pagsusulat na ang isang ibig sabihin ay mataas ang pinag-aralan at malawak ang iniikutan ni San Pablo. Kahit na ang ibang mga kultura ay gumagamit pa rin ng mga *tablet* na gawa sa luwad (*clay*) o iba pang

¹ Tingnan, Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002).

² Tingnan, David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Seth L. Sanders, ed., *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006).

³ Tingnan, Joanna Dewey, ed., *Semeia 65: Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995).

material kagaya ng bato (*stele*), kahoy, dahon o kawayan, ang papel o *parchment* ay karaniwan nang gamit para sumulat si San Pablo sa kanyang mga kaibigan at kakilala. Malayo-layo na rin ang nararating ng mga mensahe niya kahit na mga sinaunang mensahero lang ang nagdadala ng sulat at hindi ang LBC o FedEx.

Samakatuwid, ang kahulugan ng midya sa panahon ni San Pablo ay lubhang payak o simple pa. Tumutukoy pa lamang ito sa gamit na salita/wika at sa papel/*parchment* na ang gamit panulat ay brutsa o panulat na yari sa tambo, balahibo, o sinulid. Ang direktang mensahe at ang mensaheng pahiwatig ng midya at ng mga gumagamit nito ay hindi pa rin gaano masalimuot.

Sa orality o harapang komunikasyon, ipinapalagay ang 1) ugnayan na malapitan, 2) ang dati nang kaugnayan ng magkausap (malayo man o malapit na kaugnayan), at 3) ang pagkakaintindihan/pagkakaunawaan ng nag-uusap.

Mas pangkaraniwan ang harapang komunikasyon na nagaganap sa magkakilala, magkaibigan, kapitbahay, kamag-anak, ka-kultura, o 'di kaya'y kasama sa isang asosasyon kagaya ng sa relihiyon. Ang midya na maaring tukuyin sa ganitong harapang komunikasyon ay ang wika o lengwahe ng magkausap. Kung tutuusin, walang ibang pumapagitna sa nag-uusap kundi ang kanilang wika o lengguwaheng nakasanayan. Sa ganitong pagtingin, ang wika ay isang uri ng midya—isang matandang uri ng midya na imbakan at daluyan din ng kamalayan o kaalaman.

Sa isang harapan at malapitang pag-uusap, walang gamit ng makabagong *dinesenyong-midya* na pumapagitna dahil hindi ito kailangan. May pagkakaunawaan ang nag-uusap at ang kanilang wika ay panlahat o pambayan at matatawag na *likas/katutubong-midya*.

Nagkakakitaan ang nagsasalita at ang nakikinig; ang mga emosyon, disposisyon, at gawi ng dalawa ay maaring alam at damdam nila pareho. Mas maraming naunawaan (dagdag na pang-unawa) sa mga salita kapag nakikita ang mukha o kumpas ng katawan at naririnig ang boses ng kausap. Sa mga Pilipino, ang isang paligoy-ligoy na paraan ay normal lang dahil may lugar ito sa usapan o ugnayan. Hindi ka pwedeng maging prangka kaagad kapag ikaw ay nangungutang ng pera dahil kailangan mong tantiyahin kung handa na o hindi pa handa ang iyong utang. Kaya naman, sa harapang pag-uusap ay kailangan ang dati nang pagkakaunawaan—na ang lengwahe at gawi ng nakikinig ay lengwahe rin at gawi ng nagsasalita. Kung wala o mahina ang basehan ng pagkakaunawan—kagaya ng dalawang taong magkaiba ang wika o kultura—ang komunikasyon ay magiging masalimuot, kahit na may katabi kang taga-salin o *interpreter*. Hindi naiintindihan ng mga prangkang Amerikano o umaas-tang Amerikano ang gawi nating paligoy-ligoy dahil hindi naman natin sila ka-kultura o hindi sila lubos na babad sa ating kaalamang bayan—para sa kanila, ang paligoy-ligoy ay isang kahinaan at hindi kakayahan. Sa parte ni San Pablo at ng mga Thessalonian, ang wikang Griyego at ang kulturang Griyego-Romano ang nama-mayani.⁴ Nagkakaunawaan sila dahil sa kanilang iisang lengwahe at kultura na saloobin din ni San Pablo.

Ang uri ng midya

Kung ang ibig sabihin ng midya ay imbakan at daluyan ng kamalayan o kaalaman para sa komunikasyon, ang wika—bilang imbakan din at

⁴ Tingnan, Ben Holdsworth, “The Thessalonian Letters: The Greco-Roman Context,” <https://spectrummagazine.org/article/benholdsworth/2012/07/17/thessalonian-letters-greco-roman-context>, accessed 6 January 2018.

daluyan ng kamalayan o kaalaman—ay masasabi nating isang uri din ng midya (nabanggit na ito sa itaas bilang *likas-midya*). Pero kung ang pagbabasehan ng midya ay ang modernong kahulugan bilang mga gamit ng komunikasyon, ang midya ay tumutukoy sa makabagong *dinesenyong-midya* kagaya ng print, radio, TV, sine, at “new media”.

Ang wika/lengguwahe bilang likas-katutubong-midya ay mga *signs* o tanda ng impormasyon na nakaimbak at dumadaloy sa dinesenyong-midya. Kaya kung pansinin natin, napapaloob din sa dinesenyong-midya ang mas matandang uri ng likas-midya na lengguwahe o signs (σημείο).

Hindi simple ang usaping midya dahil hindi na rin simple ang buhay at sitwasyon ng mga tao sa ating panahon. Sa isang makalumang panahon o sitwasyon na wala pang radyo o telepono, simple lang ang ugnayan at malimit ay magkaharap ang nag-uusap. Sa malayuang pakikipag-ugnayan ang kailangan naman ay isang pasabing-mensahe lang o 'di kaya'y sulat. Mahirap ding magpadala noon ng sulat. At kapag nagpapadala ng sulat, ang ibig sabihin ay marunong magbasa at magsulat ang nagpapadala at pinapadalhan.

Sa panahon ngayon, ang *midya* ay may kinalaman din sa mga gamit ng komunikasyon at sa mga tao o institusyon (kaharap man o hindi kaharap) na nais magbigay o magpalaganap ng mensahe gamit ang midya. Ang mensahe, ang gamit/midya, at gumagamit ay magka-ugnay; dapat ay makikita ang kabuuang kuwento ng mensahe-gamit-gumagamit kapag naririnig o nababasa natin ang katagang midya. Samakatuwid, sa bawat usaping midya, hindi dapat pinaghihiwalay ang kuwento sa likod ng midya at ang kabuuang kuwento ng tao o institusyong nagpaparating ng mensahe.

May tinatawag na “mass media” na binubuo ng titik, radyo, at TV para marating ang maraming tao at sa “new media” na ang karaniwang plataporma ay ang internet. Sa “mass media” at “new media” mapapansin ang mga makabagong gamit at daluyan ng mga impormasyon. Malimit ay hindi kaharap ang nagpaparating ng mensahe, naipaparating din ng mas mabilisan ang mensahe sa malalayong lugar. Sa “mass media,” ang mga tumatanggap ng mensahe ay malimit mga *consumers* at walang pagkakataong makausap ang mga lumikha ng *article* o kuwento sa radyo o TV. Sa “new media,” maraming pagkakataon na magbigay ng kanyang sariling opinyon ang mga nakakabasa ng mensahe; ang isang ibig sabihin din nito ay kaya niyang bumili ng computer, o iPad, o di kaya’y *smart phone*.

Ang hayag at di-hayag na mga mensahe ng 2 Thes 2:15

¹⁵Ἀρα οὖν ἀδελφοί στήκετε καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν. (¹⁵So then, brothers, stand firm, and hold the traditions which you were taught by us, whether by word, or by letter.)

May ilang hayag na mensahe sa v. 15. Una, ang tawag ni San Pablo sa mga ka-ugnay na Thessalonian ay mga ἀδελφοί (mga kapatid; singular, ἀδελφός); pangalawa, pinapalakas niya ang kanilang loob—“tumayo ng matatag” (στήκετε, *stekete*; pandiwa: στέκομαι); pangatlo, pinaalalahanan niya na panghawakan nila ang kanyang mga itinuro; pang-apat, ang mga itinuro niya ay mga τὰς παραδόσεις, at; panglima, nagturo siya sa kanila sa pamamagitan ng salita (likas-midya) at sulat (disenyong-midya). Bukod pa rito ay hayag din ang gamit na lengguwahe, ang Griyego.

Ang malapitang pakikipag-usap sa mga ἀδελφοί

(kapatid) ay di kailangan ng pang-malayuung disenyong-midya kagaya ng sine, radyo, at TV o *internet*. Ngunit kahit na nasa radyo o TV ka, kung mga αδελφοι ang kausap mo ay may halong init ng emosyon ang inyong ugnayan. Kumakaway ka o nagmumukhang-baliw kapag kapatid mo ang kaugnay gamit ang TV. Hindi ito kagaya ng nagbabalita ng *news* na dapat ay “poker face” ang lantad niyang mukha sa bayan na hindi niya mga αδελφοι. Hindi pwede ang “poker face” kapag nagkuwentuhan o nakikipag-ugnayan ka sa iyong mga αδελφοι. Parang hindi ka tunay na αδελφός kapag ang ipinapakita mo sa mga ka-*close* mo o malapit sa iyo ay mukhang bato o blangko. Puno ng likas-midya o emosyon kapag mga αδελφοι ang ating mga kausap. Hindi ito ibig sabihin na hindi maaring maging ka-*close* ang hindi kapatid. Malapit din tayo sa ating mga kaibigan; kung minsan nga ay mas malapit tayo sa kaibigan kaysa kapatid. Sa kapatid man o kaibigan, ang likas-midya (pasalita/orality) ang ating madalas na “gamit”. Ang disenyong-midya ay ginagamit natin upang maiparating ang salita kapag malayo ang kausap, kapag gusto nating magparating ng mas detalyadong impormasyon o di kaya ay bumabati tayo sa kanila. Ito ang ginawa ni San Pablo noong siya ay nagpadala sa mga Thessalonian ng sulat. Sa harapan man o sa malayuan, αδελφοι pa rin sila para kay San Pablo—mga kaputol ng pusod-pananampalataya o malalapit sa kanyang puso.

Ang mensahe na dumaloy sa midya para sa taga-Thessalonika ay ang τὰς παραδόσεις (mga tradisyon). Mas maging maliwanag ang ibig sabihin ng τὰς παραδόσεις kung balikan natin ang mga mensahe ni San Pablo sa 1 Thessalonians, ang iba niyang mga sulat, at ang iba pang teksto na bumabanggit sa katagang *paradosis*.

Bilang isang misyonero at kinikilalang pinuno, nagpapalakas ng loob si San Pablo sa kanyang mga

αδελφοί. Nagbigay siya ng mga mensaheng nagpapatibay ng paniniwala at nagpapaalala sa mga dapat nilang gawin bilang mga magkakapatid sa pananam-palataya (1 Thess). Nagtuturo din siya ng mga kaukulang τάς παραδόσεις na tumutukoy sa ibat-ibang pagtuturo tungkol sa buhay Kristiyano.

Ang παραδόσεις ay katagang ginamit din sa ibang bahagi ng Kristiyanong Bibliya (o Bagong Tipan). Mababasa ito sa mga sumusunod na teksto (pansinin na ang pangngalan ay παράδοση at ang pandiwang ugat ay παραδίδομαι; kapag binabanghay ito ay mag-iiba na ang baybay). Gamit ko ang Ingles na bersyon dahil ito ay salin mula sa orihinal na Griyegong Bibliya:

² “Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders (Διὰ τί οἱ μαθηταί σου παραβαίνουν τὴν **παράδοσιν** τῶν πρεσβυτέρων)? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” ³ And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition (διὰ τὴν **παράδοσιν** ὑμῶν)?” (Matthew 15:2-3)

⁶ he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated (ακυρώσει) the word of God for the sake of your tradition (τὴν **παράδοσιν**). (Matthew 15:6)

³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders (κρατοῦντες τὴν **παράδοσιν** τῶν); (Mark 7:3)

⁵ The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders (κατὰ τὴν **παράδοσιν** τῶν πρεσβυτέρων), but eat their bread with impure hands?” (Mark 7:5)

⁸ “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men (κρατεῖτε τὴν **παράδοσιν** τῶν ἀνθρώπων).” ⁹ He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition (ἵνα τὴν **παράδοσιν** ὑμῶν στήσητε).” (Mark 7:8-9)

¹³ thus invalidating (ακυρώσει) the word of God by your tradition which (θεοῦ τῇ **παραδόσει** ὑμῶν ἢ) you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.” (Mark 7:13)

² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions (ὁμῶν τὰς **παραδόσεις** κατέχετε), just as I delivered them to you. (1 Corinthians 11:2)

¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions (πατρικῶν μου **παραδόσεων**). (Galatians 1:14)

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men (κατὰ τὴν **παράδοσιν** τῶν ἀνθρώπων), according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (Colossians 2: 8)

⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us (κατὰ τὴν **παράδοσιν** ἣν παρελάβοσαν). (2 Thess 3:6)

For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers (πατροπαραδότου); (1 Peter 1:18)

Mula sa mga tekstong naihanay sa itaas, mayroon tayong mapapansin na tatlong uri ng paradosis: τὴν

παράδοσιν (ang tradisyon) ng mga matatandang nagtuturo (Scribes at Pharisees) sa panahon ni Hesus; την παράδοσιν ng mga karaniwang Hudyo; at ang τάς παραδόσεις (ang mga tradisyon) na pamana ni San Pablo sa mga αδελφοι. Iba-iba ang pagtatasa sa mga paradosis na ito. Negatibo ang kahulugan ng την παράδοσιν ng matatanda at ng mga karaniwang mamamayan kung ihambing ang positibong pagkilatis sa τάς παραδόσεις na pamana ng pananampalatayang Kristiyano ni San Pablo. Ang dalawang negatibong paradosis ay nagpapa-walang-bisa (ακυρώσει) sa salita o mensahe ng Diyos; ang τάς παραδόσεις ni San Pablo ay maipagkakapuri dahil ito ay mga tradisyon na nagdudulot ng σωτηρία (soteria—*rescue, bailout, salvation*) na galing sa Diyos.

Kung palawakin pa ang ibig sabihin ng pamanang paradosis ni San Pablo ay maidagdag natin ang lahat ng kanyang mga pagtuturo bilang kapuri-puring τάς παραδόσεις: mga turo ng pagpapakatao tungo sa kabutihang asal, pagtutulungan, at pag-iwas sa masama (1 & 2 Thes); mga turo tungkol sa pagmamahal (1 Cor 13);⁵ pagmamahalan (agape) at pagtulong sa mga

⁵ 1 Cor 13: 1-13: If I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but don't have love, I have become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but don't have love, I am nothing. ³If I dole out all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but don't have love, it profits me nothing. ⁴Love is patient and is kind; love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud, ⁵doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil; ⁶doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will be done away with. Where there are various languages, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be done away with. ⁹For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰but when that which is complete has come, then that which is partial will be done away with. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I

naapi at mahihirap (Gal 5) at ang lahat ng katotohanang tungkol sa Mabuting Balita ni Hesukristo. Samakatuwid, ang mga negatibong paradosis ay Masamang Balita; ang τὰς παραδόσεις ni San Pablo ay Mabuting Balita.

Ang mga pahiwatig na nasa likod ng midya at sa likod ng mga tao/lipunan sa panahon ni San Pablo Apostol

Mahalaga rin sa usaping midya ang *pahiwatig* na nakadikit sa gamit (pahiwatig ng gamit) at *pahiwatig* na nakadikit sa gumagamit (pahiwatig ng gumagamit). Kahit na hindi ito hayag, ang *pahiwatig* ay kasama din sa nilalaman ng mensahe.

Noong unang panahon, kapag ang nagsusulat ay gumagamit ng papel na gawa sa papyrus, may pahiwatig ito na kaya niyang bumili ng papel na gawa sa Ehipto. Kung ang gamit naman ay isang *parchment* na gawa sa balat ng tupa o kambing, sinasabing maaaring taga Europa ang gumagamit nito.⁶ Kapag listahan ng paninda at presyo ang nakasulat, ang ibig sabihin ay gawa ito ng isang nagtitinda. Sa ating panahon, ang isang mamahaling Parker pen ay nagpapahiwatig din ng yaman; kapag ginagamit ito ng isang estudyante, ang pahiwatig ay marami siyang pera

thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was also fully known. ¹³But now faith, hope, and love remain—these three. The greatest of these is love.

⁶ Tingnan: Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Tom Thatcher, et al., eds. "Parchments/Vellum," in *The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017); Richard R. Johnson, "Ancient and Medieval Accounts of the 'Invention' of Parchment," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 3 (1970): 115-122.

o anak siya ng isang mayaman o may kakaiba siyang panlasa pagdating sa gamit. Kapag ang isang *advertisement* naman ay pinalabas sa TV, alam natin na ang nag-aanunsiyo ay may kakayahang magbayad ng malaking halaga (halimbawa, 1 milyong piso bawat 30 segundo na *airtime*) — at ang halaga ng ibinayad ay isa nang pahiwatig na ang nag-aanunsiyo ay may *malaking interes* sa pera o di kaya’y sa isang posisyon na pinaglalaman sa darating na eleksyon.

Dahil napakapayak ng dinesenyong-midya sa panahon ni San Pablo, ang pahiwatig ng gamit ng sulat ay hindi gaano masalimuot. Sa pagsusulat ang karaniwang gamit ay papel na gawa sa papyrus (sa rehiyon ng Ehipto) o balat ng tupa [parchment] o calf [vellum] (sa may rehiyon ng Europa) o silk (sa Tsina at mga karatig lugar).⁷ Gumagamit din noon ng mga tablet na gawa sa luwad pero sa kaso ni San Pablo ay papel na ang gamit—maaring papel na gawa sa papyrus o sa balat ng hayop. Ginagamit ang mga materyales na ito kung may nililistang mahahalagang bagay (utang, pamanang ari-arian, panghuhula, kalendaryo, opisyal na komunikasyon ng mga pinuno, datos tungkol sa mga nasasakupan), kung may ipinaparating na mensahe sa ibat-ibang lugar (paalala, proklamasyon, balita, batas) o kapag nasa malayong lugar ang ka-ugnay (pagsusulatan).⁸ Sa pag-gamit ni San Pablo ng sulat, napasama siya sa kuwento ng sulat-midya na ginagamit sa ibat-ibang dahilan. Kung tutuusin, ang sulat-midya ay isa ring bahagi ng mga tradisyon ng kultura ng mga tao (o kaugalian na maaring maihambing sa *paradosis* ng mga matatanda: *patroparadosis*) sa kanyang panahon.

⁷ Tingnan si Seth L. Sanders, ed., *Margins of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

⁸ Tingnan si Steven Roger Fischer, *A History of Writing* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001)

Kakaiba nga lang ang layunin ng kanyang pag-gamit ng sulat.

Si San Pablo ay hindi kagaya ng mga manghuhula, ng mga nag-kakalendaryo, ng mga namamahala ng bayan, o ng mga mananakop. Ginamit niya ang midya para sa pag-imbak at pagdaloy ng mga tradisyon ng Magandang Balita (εὐαγγέλιον); ginamit din niya ito para lalong makatulong sa kanyang mga ἀδελφοί. Hindi siya nabihag ng mga taong iba ang layunin sa pag-gamit ng midya—mga taong walang balak makipag-ugnayan bilang mga ἀδελφοί kundi bilang mga taong nag-iimbak ng kayamanan o nagpaparating ng kanilang pansariling interes.

Pagpasok ng modernong panahon, naparaming gamit na ang sulat o pagsusulat (kasama na ang *print media*)—napakarami na ring pahiwatig ito na nakakabit sa mga tao o institusyon na gumagamit ng print-midya. Kung titingnan ang ating paligid ngayon, ang print midya ay nakakabit na nang husto sa isang napakalawak na kultura na maaring tawaging kultura ng negosyo at hanapbuhay. Dito, ang print-midya ay may malawakang-gamit para kumita ng pera (mang-gagawa ka man o negosyante). Samakatuwid ang print-midya (at ang iba pang modernong dinesenyong-midya kagaya ng radyo at TV) ay kasama sa mga paradosis ng mga tao (τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων) na maaring malayo o magpapawalang-bisa sa salita ng Diyos at Magandang Balita (εὐαγγέλιον) ni Hesus.

Dagdag pa rito ang sine (*motion picture*) na pinagtuunan din ng pansin ni Pope Pius XII sa kanyang ensiklikal para sa *mass communications*, ang *Miranda prorsus* (September 8, 1957). Ang sine, radio, at TV (bilang mga kahanga-hangang imbensyon) ay may katangiang mag-broadcast ng tunog at larawan sa malayuang distansya. Hiniwalay ang mga ito ni Pope Pius XII sa print midya dahil sa mga katangian nitong

gumamit ng mga mas makabagong imbensyon sa larangan ng komunikasyon. Malawakan (at malayuan) ang gamit ng lahat ng mga midya para sa mga negosyante at bahagi na ng παράδοσις ng negosyo.

Ang radio, TV, sine, at “new media,” ay may sarili ding kapangyarihang makapagbago ng ugali at galaw ng mga tao. Hindi lang ang mensahe na napapaloob sa midya ang mahalagang tingnan kundi ang midya na rin mismo dahil ito ay may sarili na ring pumapalong mensahe (*the medium is the message*). Sa pakikinig natin ng balita o panonood ng tele-nobela, hindi lamang ang laman ng balita o kuwento ng tele-nobela ang ating mapapansin—makikita rin natin ang epekto ng TV mismo sa pagpuputol (*amputate*) ng ating mga dating kaugalian o kakayahan na mag-bonding na walang kaharap na TV. Kapag *blackout* ay kapansin-pansin ang pagbabalik natin sa dating ugaling kuwentuhan na hindi ginagambala ng TV o internet. Sa pagpasok natin ngayon sa internet gamit ang ating mga *smart phones*, tablets, laptops, at iPads, nagkaroon tayo ng maraming pagkakataon na madugtungan ang ating pangangailangan ng pansariling komunikasyon sa ating mga mahal sa buhay o di kaya’y sa mga hindi kilalang tao. Kaya lang, dahil sa labis na paggamit nito ay nabawasan din ang ating likas na kakayahang makipag-ugnayan na wala ang *electronic networks*. Hindi na natin naibibigay ang 100% na atensiyon sa ating kausap; ang ating pakikinig ay nahati-hati na ng mga ibat-ibang puwersa ng networks o websites o apps; ang ugnayan sa loob at labas ng tahanan ay hinihila at binabaltak ng kanyakanyang hawak na cellphones, tablets, o laptops. Ang nagdudugtong ng kakayahan ay siya ring nagpuputol ng kakayahan.

Konklusyon

Ilang konklusyon at mga katanungan: paano natin

maiwasan ang tradisyon ng negosyo kung ang gamit nating midya ay panay pang *long-distance* ang gamit at malimit ay para sa negosyo? May kakayahan ba ang isang *long-distance* na pakikipag-usap kung walang harapang pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga αδελφοι na kagaya ng ginawa ni San Pablo? Maiiwasan ba natin ang hindi mabitag o mabihag ng negosyo kung tayo ay bibili ng radyo, TV, computer, tablet, iPad o di kaya’y manonood ng sine? Hindi ba’t nasa loob tayo ng mundong negosyo at lahat ng mga παράδοσις na nasa mundong ito ay *may kakayahang* magpapawalang-bisa sa ευαγγελιον ni Hesus at τὰς παραδόσεις ni San Pablo?

Tingnan na lang ang “new media” na kakaiba sa lahat: ito yong gamit ang internet at computer na kung saan nandoon ang Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Yahoo, Wikipedia, YouTube at marami pang iba. Lahat halos tayo na may kakayahang gumamit ng computer ay nagbabayad at gumagamit ng Google o Facebook. Baka hindi natin alam na bilyon-bilyong dolyares na negosyo ang mga ito at nagpapalaganap ng παράδοσις na dikit sa komersiyo at pansariling mga interes (na hindi pang-adelphoi). At ang malungkot ay gamit natin ito lagi para marating natin ang mga kaibigan o kapatid na malalayo ang distansya sa atin. Maraming beses din natin itong ginagamit na pamalit/panghalili para sa harapang pakikipag-ugnayan—ngunit hindi talaga possible sa midyang ito ang hawak-kamay na ugnayan. O ’di kaya’y ang midya na ang naging mas mahalaga para sa isang pakikipag-ugnayan at hindi na ang ating mukha, mga paa, kamay, braso, at dibdib na nakakapagbigay ng mas mainit na pakikipag-palagayang loob.

Para sa pagpapalawig pa ng ευαγγελιον ni Hesus at τὰς παραδόσεις ni San Pablo Apostol, alalahanin natin na ang ugnayan ng mga αδελφοι ang mahalaga—isang ugnayang harapan at hindi kailangan ang pang-

malayuang ugnayang-midya. Ang gamit ng sulat ay pumapangalawa lamang sa hakbang ni San Pablo—ang pangunahing ugnayan ay ang malapitan at harapan. Nag-misyon siya at bumuo ng mga sambayanang-Kristiyano—sa pamamagitan ng pangunahing puso-sa-pusong pakikipag-ugnayan. Kung hindi maiiwasan dahil maaring OFW ang kausap o magkalayo ang nag-uusap, nakakalungkot tingnan na ang midya ay isa nang gamit na nagtatanghal ng komunikasyong hindi harapan at hindi lubos ang puso-sa-pusong ugnayan.

Interpreting Masculine Domination in Two Abortion Films: *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* and *Vera Drake*

Rica delos Reyes-Ancheta*

Abstract: Cognizant that masculine domination is both an explicit and implicit datum in our lived world, this paper demonstrates that a narrative is better analyzed and understood if its implicit socio-cultural background is brought into view. Using the two films, *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* and *Vera Drake* as launching pads for analysis, this paper will show how a “face value” may have to be revised into its “true value” as soon as the implicit is disclosed. This exercise intends to uncover both the foreground and background modes of masculine domination in the two films. A re-imaging of female/male identities is done through a critical reading of the biblical Creation Story.

Keywords: masculine domination, patriarchy, implicit backgrounds, narrative analysis, socio-cultural codes

Introduction

Most of us are not critically aware of the many things that comprise as background of our feelings, thinking, and acting. These remain as invisible realities (facts) and are relegated to the backdrop even if working unrelentingly, albeit behind our backs. Background realities constitute the dense amount of data that make

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every experience meaningful or significant. Yet, because these are at the background, we seldom bring them out into the open and fail to harness their potential for decoding and interpretation. Background information, whether large or small, positive or negative, are very important interpretative tools. Without these wealth of information, stories are detached from their broader settings that make them more intelligible or meaningful. These backgrounds which ordinary everyday life may not have to grasp up front (otherwise, normal life becomes too cumbersome), are in fact precious components that can aid the task of academic analysis/interpretation.

Cognizant that masculine domination is both an explicit and implicit datum in our lived world, this paper attempts to demonstrate how necessary it is not to be limited and detained, or worse deceived, by what appears or shows explicitly. Using the two films, *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* and *Vera Drake* as launching pads for analysis, this work will show how a “face value” may have to be reworked toward its “depth value” as soon as the implicit is disclosed. Thus, this analysis will be aided by a conscious scrutiny of patriarchy playing at life’s backstage. This exercise pays deliberate attention to the two films’ broad “production designs” that evoke the problem of masculine domination.

The method of bringing the implicit into one’s consciousness—something which is not done in the many forms of interpreting personalities, identities, and behavior—hopes to expand the analytic and interpretive approaches to reading and viewing of narratives.

The varied levels of abstractions of patriarchy continue to stir contemporary feminists to rethink the impact of the concept of patriarchy. I argue in this film analysis that patriarchy cannot be properly grasped and decoded without delving into the implicit backgrounds

(as reconstructed culture or social scripts) of behavior or practices. Patriarchal practices are more invisible if we fail to undrape the world of the implicit—as a backdrop of any action or behavior. Rather than just locating patriarchy in biological determinism, theorizing of patriarchy should lead us to unearth a locus of abuse: the implicit drama scripted by personal, social and cultural habits.

4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days: Male Scheming through Pre-established Pathways

The film *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* chronicles the riveting story of Otilia Mihartescu and Gabriela “Găbița” Dragut, two university friends and roommates who looked out for each other and found themselves in a male trap. The protagonist, Otilia, cares for her friend and roommate, Găbița. When the latter becomes pregnant, she arranges a meeting with Mr. Bebe in a hotel, where he is to perform an illegal abortion.

Găbița’s naïveté has led her to enlist the service of a man who is a total stranger to her. Otilia, who is always in the aid of her friend, has managed to borrow money from her boyfriend who remains clueless about their planned abortion. Despite Adi’s request (Otilia’s boyfriend) to Otilia to attend his mother’s birthday celebration (which she does, after the procedure), the latter has chosen to assist Găbița and fulfill her requests: meet up with Mr. Bebe and get him to the hotel so she can get an abortion.

Otilia does as instructed and tries her best to haggle with the current rental rate of a room in a hotel but fails. When Mr. Bebe begins the procedure, he discovers that the pregnancy is not on the 2nd month as Găbița has told him. It is on its 4th month, thus, he demands an increased rate for him to do his job. Otilia’s pleadings and promises fall on deaf ear. Mr. Bebe ignores their

pleadings. He then requires both women to have sex with him as a marked up payment for the abortion. Pressed by the demand of Mr. Bebe and the urgency of Găbița's condition, Otilia, reluctantly gives in to have sex with Mr. Bebe. Găbița passively accepts her fate. After Mr. Bebe receives his 'full payment', he performs the abortion by injecting a probe and an unnamed fluid into Găbița's uterus, and gives Otilia instructions on how to dispose of the fetus when it is expelled.

Otilia goes back to the party to please Adi's family, but Otilia is worried about Găbița who is left alone in the hotel. She asks Adi about their relationship and informs him about her menstrual irregularity, insinuating she may be pregnant. She is uncertain about Adi's decision and tells him she cannot stay while Găbița is in the hotel. Adi dissuades her to go, but Otilia is convinced she has to see Găbița's condition. Otilia does return to the hotel, but does not find Găbița in her room. She scans the place and finds the fetus sprawled on the floor. Despite security risks, she disposes the aborted fetus.

The movie ends with the camera panning on the two friends who find themselves at the restaurant after the tragic ordeal and decides to keep the whole thing to themselves. The audience is left with more questions than answers and more confused about the possible pregnancy of Otilia by her boyfriend. Adi is oblivious of the events that transpired at the hotel.

Vera Drake: Care Condemned

Vera Drake is a 2004 British film about Vera Drake, a working-class woman who performs illegal abortions in 1950 London. She is portrayed as a devoted wife and mother, caring for her husband and children, her elderly mother, and an ailing neighbor. Her daughter, Ethel, works in a factory, and her son, Sid, is a tailor. The

husband, Stanley, is a car mechanic. A strong closeness tightly knits Vera and her family and Vera's kindness is felt by those close to her. This kindness even extends to people whom she encounters outside her home.

Vera works as a house cleaner but, unknown to her family, she also performs backroom abortion. She does not charge any compensation for this, believing it to be an act of charity and an assistance to distressed women.

Her illegal "acts of kindness" is discovered after one of her patients nearly dies. Vera is arrested by the police and tried for her misdeed. The family is shocked to discover Vera's wrongdoings. The son, in particular, is devastated by his mother's secret activities and tells his father that he does not think that he can forgive her.

She is sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment 'as a deterrent to others'. This affects all the people who depended on Vera's kindness. The film finally reveals that Vera learned to perform abortion after submitting herself to an abortion for an unwanted pregnancy. Her own suffering and "liberation" from this harrowing experience motivated her to help distraught women whom she thought are also victims of circumstance.

Contrasting Male and Female "Malevolence"

Both films are founded on stories of unwanted pregnancies; such stories are surrounded by the presence of masculine domination. In *4 Months...* male domination is more patent and personified in the male abortionist. In *Vera Drake*, male dominance is more subtle and could only be seen as a symbolic (implicit) form of domination most especially ritualized in the court sentencing Vera Drake's acts of mercy as illegal. The films, however, merely put the males who were responsible for the (terminated) pregnancies in *4 Months...* and *Vera Drake* as invisible individuals.

Anyone who watches *4 Months...* is transfixed by the glaring “reasons” of the male abortionist who must play both as a sexual aggressor and as “liberator” to Găbița and to Otilia. Masculine domination in the form of the abortionist’s cold-blooded extraction of sexual and monetary compensation directly assaults the sensibilities of every moviegoer. We know how terribly wrong it is and we feel the traumatizing experiences of the double sexual assault camouflaged as “fair compensation” for the abortion procedure.

The fair-deal language frames this extraction process and brings out a more “normal” than “abnormal” form of transaction. The commercial script (invented by males) forced on the two women hardly elicits a devious expression on the male character. He only needs to produce the fair-value card in order to extract the suit of consent from the two hapless women. This way, the social script of fair-compensation has reproduced a patriarchal drama imposed on Găbița and Otilia. This does not fail to evoke in the viewers of the film the sense of pity for the two women who would suffer the brunt of a male-twisted culture. The bigger social setting that paints an urban culture of painful gloomy anonymity, dark alleys, carceral inspections, and fragmented bonds loom larger—making the rape and pre-abortion scenes as the expected climax of a dark and disturbing narrative.

These revealing scenarios, however, are still incomplete. These must still be stitched together with the original story of Găbița’s unwanted pregnancy—another story of piercing male drive and passion—to make *4 Months...* a more compelling story of female subjection from beginning to end. The male’s advances come to mind, followed by Găbița’s “consent”. In this regard, one may interject the cultural bias of putting the burden on women and blaming her for failing to say “no”

to her boyfriend's advances. Nevertheless, one needs to exert much greater effort in trying to come up with the correlate accusation against the boyfriend for having been, in the first place, the aggressive initiating sexual partner. We are being reminded, to our consternation, that this cultural stereotyping bias has often been invoked resulting in the abuse of women's integrity and rights.¹ Why must we indeed always pass the "original sin" onto the female and accuse her for having "aroused" male drives?

Passing the blame on the woman is an explicit cultural bias that has long been instilled in people's psyche—even a primordial blame-passing story from Adam to Eve to the serpent. An intimate relationship that occurs between a male and a female does not exclude the male in the equation. As covert as male's intentions may be, his advances reveal much about his aggressive sexual desires.

In *Vera Drake*, the abortionist is not a male and the abortion procedure is not served with customary commercial and calculative exploitation. In fact, kindness and care extended to fellow women wrap the entire illegal activity. It is no coincidence that kindness and care could be present in abortion when the agent herself has suffered the same fate of having desperately

¹ See the Karen Vertido case where the Court invoked gender-based myths and stereotyping in acquitting the suspect charged of rape. The gender-biased myths/ stereotyping include 1) that a rape victim must try to escape at every opportunity, 2) that the victim must be timid or easily cowed, 3) that to conclude that a rape occurred by means of threat, there must be clear evidence of a direct threat, and 4) that the accused and the victim are "more than nodding acquaintances" makes the sex consensual. The Karen Vertido decision is in CEDAW/C/46/D/18/2008 and can be accessed at the website of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/jurisprudence.htm>. See also, Rica delos Reyes-Ancheta, "An Analysis of Gender Stereotyping in the Case of Karen Vertido," *Scientia* 6/2 (2017): 77-92.

submitted to the same dangerous procedure.

Vera Drake acted as a “wounded healer” who must help those women who succumb to male advances. Although her act of doing abortion is not justifiable, it calls our attention to the reasons why a female does an abortion. We are being asked here to again reconstruct in our minds the picture of males who are more than determined to resolve their sexual tensions at the expense of the female. Again, this original “male advances” scenario makes the whole movie more complete even as it does not dwell on it. We, as critical moviegoers, must supply this original and implicit patriarchal and androcentric scenario to be able to give a less fragmentary evaluation on the quality of Vera Drake’s illegal “acts of kindness”.

The process of abortion was indeed illegal and deemed unethical. Vera Drake’s solicitous character, however, makes her participation in this procedure less revolting than the abortionist of *4 Months....* Thus, when we bring in the original “male advances” factor to the whole equation, Vera Drake’s character becomes more of a symbol of female resistance to or negation of male prerogatives; a revolt and a vengeance against male aggression and dominance, including the court’s hold on the right to sentence her to imprisonment.

To make the two films more complete: we must make explicit the integral stories of possible male extractions of care and pleasure from women that result in unwanted pregnancy and abortion. The two films exclude these original stories or the backdrop of dominating male exploits; but by leaving it out, both films allow the creation of a more compelling background material that lurks behind every story of unwanted pregnancy and abortion. Indeed, male exploits already make up a more taken-for-granted and acceptable “normal” exercise of male nature. By making

this a part of the implicit world, the two films evoke forms of masculine domination as significant elements of every woman's woes in sex and in unwanted pregnancy.

The norms, which are handed down to every civilization by the males, are consistently reinforced by male reason. It is apparently acceptable that affection for the suffering cannot be allowed to undermine those pre-established norms. In *Vera Drake*, males are shown ignoring kindness and care; as a result, they have inadvertently made these as elements of Vera Drake's crime. They have allowed kindness and care to get condemned too. But, considering the circumstances in which a woman may find herself in, care could indeed attenuate the impact of androcentrism and question the principles that males have established for their own pursuits.

Patriarchy Embedded and Solidified

Patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men tend to subordinate, dominate, or abuse women, brought into play, in both films, the various sets of ideas that perpetuated, preserved and reinforced male domination that further solidify patriarchal thought patterns—creating a cyclical process of reproducing patriarchy in thought and behavior. Hence, patriarchal dispositions displayed in *4 Months...* (through the abortionist, the hotel's female clerk, Otilia's boyfriend) and in *Vera Drake* (through Vera Drake's family, the legal system, society's opinion) further fortify the concept and practice of masculine domination and legitimize or defend the traditional roles of women and children.²

As cultural predispositions, internalized patriarchal

² See Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, California: Stanford California Press, 2001).

ways of feeling, thinking, and acting are displayed in the two films, as already entrenched not only in minds and behavior, but also in behavior-inducing scenarios, in social institutions, and fields of human interaction or geographies (family, hotel, clinic, courtrooms, prison). In this sense, patriarchy is also a social habit, a disposition as well as a feature of built geographies, shared not only by men, but also by women who would unconsciously internalize patriarchy through their participation in the common affairs and pursuits of society. Since this process of internalization starts as early as infancy, patriarchy takes the form of a memory imprint—making it part of an individual’s second-nature. Patriarchy, thus, is as effective force as instinctual drives and as resistant to change as memory wounds or woundedness—trauma. Indeed, the two films shock the viewers with various scenarios driven by wounded beings.

Shulamith Firestone reckons that patriarchy is ‘an oppression which goes back beyond recorded history to the animal kingdom itself.’³ She posits that it is biological since it is inherent to the basic reproductive unit of male/female/infant. She claims that the subjugation of women is biologically-inherent because first, women are subjected to biological processes like menstruation, menopause, childbirth, wet nursing, and care of infants. These have made them dependent on males in the community and society-at-large. Second, that human infants’ process of growth is longer than animals. This necessitates a sense of dependence on adult males for physical survival. Third, that a basic mother/child interdependency has existed in some form in every society, past or present, and thus has shaped the psychology of every mature female and every infant.

³ Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, reprinted (Union Square West New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2013).

Fourth, that the natural reproductive difference between the sexes led directly to the first division of labor at the origins of class, as well as found the basic social stratification in society. Here, Firestone brings the biological into its cultural turn.

Whether it has been intended or not, the “patriarchal order” is as old as civilization itself. Thus, this implies that examining the pervading worldview necessarily requires a constant questioning and deconstructing of a paradigm that has long been made to appear acceptable and natural or essential for humanity.⁴

Even among social scientists, patriarchy has had a long history of usage. Weber used it to refer to a system of government in which males ruled societies. For Weber, patriarchy is the purest logical form of traditional authority. It is a conceptual form through which authority exists. It is also the historical seed of patrimonialism. Weber believes that patterns of governance in a ruler’s or chief’s family and household bring to the fore the authority of males. In one of Weber’s assertions he explained that “the woman is dependent because of the normal superiority of the physical and intellectual energies of the male...”⁵

This is especially interesting because Hartmann⁶ argues that patriarchy is a set of social relations between men through which they derive benefits to dominate women. Zillah Eisenstein⁷ refers to patriarchy

⁴ Claudio Naranjo *The End of Patriarchy and the Dawning of the Triune Society*, (USA: Amber Lotus, 1994).

⁵ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 1007.

⁶ Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism,” in Linda J. Nicholson, ed., *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, vol 1 (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 97-122.

⁷ Zillah Eisenstein, ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for*

as a sexual hierarchy in which woman is defined as a mother, domestic laborer, and consumer. Kate Millet utilized the concept of *Herrschaft* by Max Weber to denounce male domination of women and domination of younger males by older males.⁸

There is still a painstakingly slow change in the ways women are treated and valued, despite the rise of feminist thought and advocacies which have given avenues for women to come forward and assert their inherent dignity and rights. Generally, people's high valuation of male rational capacities, accomplishments, and contributions have the effect of further relegating women to second fiddle. Male dominance and superiority are thus embedded in society and solidified in culture.

Partriarchy and Masculine Ascendancy in the Scriptures

Masculine domination has become inscribed and patterned in the culture of patriarchy as a historically-socially conditioned belief that power is to be ascribed and assigned to the paternal/male head. The father, whose strength and power place him at the forefront of familial relationship, is a dominant figure in a household whose members (cf. *Vera Drake*) are subordinate. Primitive roles of males and females emerged from game-hunting of males and food gathering/domestic role of women, which eventually marked the disparity between the two sexes. Mothers are caring agents and children are participants in the mutually caring relationship. Typically, women were

Socialist Feminism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

⁸ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

deemed as mothers and carers—assigned as supportive roles.

Even in the home, decisions are contingent to their roles and thus, final executory decisions are prerogatives of the ‘father’—the master of domestic production. Marx alludes to this power-play as “the little workshop of the patriarchal master”.⁹ This domestic reality is evidently reflected in the public. The neighborhood as well as the broader public spaces of the market, legislature, judiciary, administrative, and religious halls mirror the dominant and prominent face of the father.

The dominant and prominent figure of the father has been closely associated with the Creation story in the Jewish Scriptures (Genesis 1:26). Although recent scholarship argues that this passage points out a relational link between male and female mirroring the same relationship with God, it is still a distinct passage that creates a binary thinking. Male is superior and female is inferior. The put-down of women has traces in the Garden of Eden.

The image of a woman who has brought sin into a picture of perfect bliss in the Creation shows a highly biased account that specifically denigrates women. Seen in this light, we find the beginnings of social roles and patriarchy’s aversion to Eve. Masculine domination is embedded in the Creation account even in the way it depicts a woman as a collaborator of serpent and the Temptress that caused the downfall of man. Such a picture warrants attention to the implicit reasons for such biases projected on the image of Eve.

The Judaeo-Christian religious heritage has chosen patriarchy over the potential possibility of a flourishing

⁹ See <http://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-3/karl-marx-and-fredrick-engels-on-industrial-capitalism/> accessed 4 April 2017.

of faith in a Mother Goddess.¹⁰ The Gnostic text, *On The Origin of the World* gives us a glimpse of the homage people give to the Mother of life in pre-historic times:

Sophia sent Zoe, her daughter, who is called “Eve (of Life),” as an instructor in order that she might raise up Adam, in whom there was no soul so that those whom he would beget might become vessels of the light.

[When] Eve saw her co-likeness cast down she pitied him, and she said, “Adam, live! Rise up on the earth!” Immediately her word became a deed. For when Adam rose up, immediately he opened his eyes. When he saw her, he said, “You will be called ‘the mother of the living’ because you are the one who gave me life.”¹¹

The Judaeo-Christian Creation account has countered an early civilization belief in a Woman goddess Sophia, Isis of Egypt, Inanna of Babylonia and Great Mother Goddess to give way to patriarchy’s Yahweh and perpetuate male supremacy. The Father-Creator has thus, fashioned a man; this man-maleness is premised as the primary standard of human qualities. Femaleness is just secondary, having been taken from the rib of a man, in the whole cosmic opus. Even if “rib” is interpreted as “close to the heart,” females are more identified as processed extracts from the male. This male construct has seeped through our consciousness and influenced concepts of domination and power.

Interpretations of such kind may have to be

¹⁰ Considering that the Greeks recognized *Pistis*, “faith,” as feminine and *Sophia*, feminine Greek for “wisdom.” See, Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹¹ Roberts, Richard, *From Eden to Eros: The Origins of Put-down of Women* (California: Vernal Equinox Press, 1985).

challenged by an alternative interpretation of the creation account. This will be explicitly reconstructed in this section in order to further assist us in dealing with a patriarchy-skewed understanding of the Creation account.

Woman-*tsela*: Re-imaging¹² Male-Female Identities

Respect, care, and compassion are qualities that find coherence in the identity of woman as described in the Book of Genesis' creation account—a narrative offering redemptive impulses for the male-directed characters and scenarios of *4 Months...* and *Vera Drake*. Woman in the Hebrew word is referred to as צֵלָה (*tsela*) for she is taken from the rib of a man – “...and He took one of his sides and He filled in the flesh in its place (Genesis 2:21-22).” This meaning, however, is expanded through the texts found in Exodus 25:12. In reference to the rings of gold on the Ark of the Covenant it says, “Two rings shall be on one side (*tselo*, a variant of *tsela*) and two rings on the other side.” Moreover, in Exodus 26, the Hebrew word *ul-tsela* is used, meaning, ‘for one side’ of the tabernacle. In both accounts, *tselo* or *ul-tsela* refers to an entire side.

An interesting facet to the meaning of *tsela* is *tsalim*. In 1 Kings 6:34 we see a description of folding doors consisting of two sides or panels (*tsalim* – the masculine

¹² The earliest use of the word refers to: The action or process of forming a new or different mental or pictorial image. In later use chiefly: the reforming or altering of the image of a person, company, etc. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/re-imaging>, accessed 11 January 2018. The term is also used in computer technology: “Reimage is the process of removing all software on a computer and reinstalling everything. A reimage is necessary if your operating system becomes damaged or corrupted. You may also need to reimage if your system is plagued with spyware problems. The word reinstall is often used in place of reimage.” <https://www.webopedia.com/TERM/R/reimage.html>, accessed 11 January 2018.

plural form). These two panels were identical, each comprising the half of the assembly. Therefore, it would be appropriate to render the word ‘side’ instead of rib as synonymous to the word, *tsela*. It is logical to think that God did not just take a tiny bone from Adam to create a woman for him. God literally divided Adam in half to form a woman.¹³ This act of dividing, a creative act of God, no longer suggests the one-sided dependence of woman on the man—by dividing Adam to produce a woman, God has also rendered a divided man into somebody profoundly vulnerable and dependent on woman.

An important interpretation then of *tsela* is not merely being drawn from the rib of a man. It is recognizing the place of a woman which is at the very heart of a man. This clearly suggests complete mutuality in a state of equality—a co-equal to Adam is Eve who completes the former in mutual union. Besides, *tsela* etymologically means, ‘the half of Adam.’ The Divine Creator fashioned a woman to be co-equal with man. She is thus, substantially as capable, intelligent, adept and qualified as Adam.

The biblical creation stories affirm woman as a partner of man who needs a woman (or a representation of woman) to complete himself. This interrelation of reciprocity is implicit in the Hebrew word, עֵזֶר כְּנָגְדוֹ (Genesis 2:18ff) meaning a ‘helpmate’. Just as a woman is a helpmate to a man so does a man must also regard himself as a helpmate to a woman. This is a significant shift: from the *patriarchal regard of woman serving man* toward the idea of *man-woman confluence*. This ‘help’ moves beyond the passive toward the active and mutually rewarding assistance. It lends credence into a woman’s help as something significant and substantial.

¹³ Wayne Simpson, “Adam’s Rib,” p.3, [www.jasher.com/ Adam’s Rib.htm](http://www.jasher.com/Adam'sRib.htm), accessed 11 April 2011.

Seen in this perspective a woman truly becomes man's other 'half'.

An equally important perspective is to treat woman as entirely different from a man. These differences are not divisive, but unitive. Human beings, male or female, must forge the idea of wholeness, which could only be achieved through partnership. This mutuality or reciprocity affirm differences and be celebrated rather than distinguished as disparity between the two sexes. This then, makes life more a celebration of richness in diversity.

Conclusion

Patriarchy has made an imprint on the psyche and cultural conscience, which turns many women into subordination and submission. Society and culture have defined women's "feminine" ways of feeling, thinking, and acting—even determining her natural ability to care as under patriarchal drive and order.

Women's experiences depicted in the two films, *4 Months...* and *Vera Drake*, are experiences of women whose stories have often been obscured and trivialized. Unless they are placed in a bigger picture of patriarchal backgrounds, women victimization by males is not fully grasped and understood. The uncovered implicit patriarchal backgrounds have shown how male drives, pursuits, and plans may be perpetuating a paradigm that tends toward women subjection and exploitation. Through the disclosed implicit patriarchy and androcentrism, we have further exposed the stories of masculine domination and exploitation, which challenge us to work toward a change of paradigm. It is more than apparent that male aggression, drives, and passion can harm women, even in the absence of malicious intents.

The Pedicab Drivers' Daily Transgressions: Struggles for Provision and Care

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Abstract: Through a series of interviews and direct observation of behavioral patterns and geographical setting, this paper presents three selected pedicab drivers' personal struggles and other experiences in life. The gathered data/narratives are 1) examined using the sociological concepts of agency/motivation and structure and 2) further read in the light of *Gaudium et spes*' understanding of the double effect of human creations. Learning about the pedicab drivers' narratives gives a more informed view about human behavior in the face of structures that work more for some but less for others.

Key Words: motivation, struggle, agency, structure, *Gaudium et spes*

Introduction

There are scores of drivers who steer their pedicabs along the Taft Avenue area, in front of the De La Salle University, Manila campus. At present, there is no

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updated number of pedicabs in Metro Manila roads and byways but in 1991, it was reported that a total number of 5,500 pedicabs are in operation.¹ This represents 5.2% of the total public transportation vehicles of that year. The figure must have increased to approximately 10,000 after almost 23 years. These pedicab drivers push their pedal-powered tricycles through Metro Manila roads and byways—serving thousands of commuters who have to hire them in the absence of jeepneys or the more expensive taxicabs or the Grab/Uber transport services.

The local government of the City of Manila has passed an ordinance declaring the pedicab transport as illegal. But, presumably, for lack of political will, police authorities have been inconsistent in enforcing this ordinance. The pedicab system and its drivers have persisted and are relatively unmolested by the police; apparently, their presence is tolerated for as long as they fulfill their “daily bribe” or when the police team is not pressured by supervisors to control them. Some members of the policing team wryly comment: “We just cannot totally remove them from the streets; they have no other source of income; they also have their families to feed.” The rule of law is thus somehow compromised by the rule of common sense or socio-cultural improvisations.

On June 9, 2014 the City of Manila has approved the City Ordinance No. 8291 or the Triwheel Code of 2013, that required tricycle and pedicab drivers to have their vehicles registered and to apply for a transport franchise to be allowed to operate. The ordinance also

¹ Brian Gozun and Marie Danielle V. Guillen. “Towards a Sustainable Transportation Environment: The Case of ‘Pedicabs’ and Cycling in the Philippines,” p. 5, <http://www.codatu.org/wp-content/uploads/Towards-a-sustainable-transportation-environment.-The-case-of-Pedicabs-and-cycling-in-the-Philippines-Brian-GOZUN-Marie-Danielle-GUILLEN.pdf>, accessed 4 January 2018.

bans them on 46 of the city's major thoroughfares. Failure to comply means they are operating illegally. It has been reported that only 30% of the drivers/operators are able to comply with the ordinance.²

Prior to Ordinance No. 8291, the pedicab system and pedicab driving were illegal and unregulated on various counts: absence of official registration, driving without license, unregulated fares, absence of terminals, violation of traffic rules (counter-flowing, road-obstructing), some abusive treatment of passengers, etc. Hence, there are plenty of reasons to stop the pedicabs from continued operation; there are scores of reasons³ for passengers to stop drivers from pestering them, and; there are compelling reasons why individuals should be discouraged from staying on as pedicab drivers.

This paper will try to discover some of the reasons why the pedicab drivers themselves insist on continuing their job even as they are considered as “illegal workers” or “scourge” of the streets.⁴ We know that they are not

² City Ordinance No. 8921 established the guidelines for the operation and registration of tricycles and pedicabs in Manila and included fees that drivers and operators must pay. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/613858/manila-trike-pedicab-drivers-protest-ordinance#ixzz53BhmU3u>, accessed 4 January 2017.

³ Based on the survey of feedbacks from the author's 208 students both in De La Salle University (DLSU) and De La Salle – College of St. Benilde (DLS-CSB) last July 2014, the following is the summary of their negative reactions: (1) they violate traffic rules since some of them used to counter-flow or beat the red light; (2) they add to the heavy traffic on the streets most especially when they are in groups and some of them are slow-moving; (3) some of them charge too much especially when one is not a regular passenger or unfamiliar with the fare rate; (4) some drivers are nasty and disrespectful most especially to female passengers; and (5) sometimes they are very annoying or irritating when they keep on asking and insisting the students to ride.

⁴ See the featured comments (overwhelmingly negative) in <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/613858/manila-trike-pedicab-drivers-protest-ordinance>, accessed 4 January 2017

schooled and they lack the skills to land another job; business firms would immediately exclude them for want of qualifications; the general public looks at them as one among informal workers who must endure some sort of negative-but-tolerated reputation suffered by similar workers like “barkers”, *habal-habal* motorists, unregulated street vendors, and the like. Nevertheless, we lack the details about why they are still determined to “suffer” from their lowly status and from the hard but despised labor typically identified with pedicab driving.

What actually motivates them despite the bad press that they earn from the public? From where do they get their strength to continue working like rickshaw slaves? Why are they still in the streets?

This paper will look into some aspects in the lives of selected informants. The aim is to discover a less-known quality of pedicab drivers: their determination, specifically their motivation to work despite the vehicular traffic, the legal, social and cultural hazards involved. This knowledge about our society's representatives of the marginal and excluded groups may help us to (1) understand the “dangerous” Others—thus gaining a more-informed assessment about their excluded status; (2) bring into light the otherwise absent stories of marginal individuals; (3) communicate the nature of suffering and oppression in a society which is partial to skilled and educated individuals; and (4) relate this matter with *Gaudium et spes*' understanding of the double effect of human creations.

The Transgressors and their Struggles

Our first informant is Mang Nonoy. The determined effort and the heavy push of Mang Nonoy's thin and seemingly weak legs on the pedicab's pedals translate into additional earnings to pay for the everyday expenses at home and provide for the schooling of his

only son. Next in the list is Mang Reynaldo. Every sweat flowing down his body would add to his capacity to buy a kilo of rice, instant noodles, and fish as well. That is enough food for a few days for his under-nourished four children. The third is the remarkable lady pedal-pusher, Ate Jo. Despite the pollutants that come out from the cars and trucks inhaled by the physically exhausted Ate Jo, she persists in the job in order to bring food to the table and earn smiles from the faces of her two children who know that their mother, who also takes the role of a father, has never failed to bring nourishment to their plates.



Fig. 1. Pedicab Driver, Mang Nonoy

Hangga't may lakas pa ako para mamasada, igagapang kita para makapagtapos ka ng pag-aaral. (Until my last ounce of strength, I will work hard for you to finish your studies.) This was the promise of the teary-eyed 59-year old Ricardo “Nonoy” Pilapil to his son whom he constantly reminds to be serious with his

schooling. Being a pedicab driver for almost six years, Mang Nonoy's only inspiration left is his 16-year old son who is in his 7th grade. He finds no luck in his marital relationships since he got separated twice. He had two children with his first wife but they left him; while his second wife, who became addicted to drugs, went on her own way. Thus, he decided to raise single-handedly their only child.

As early as 4 o'clock in the morning, Mang Nonoy gets up to start his day's work. He hopes no miracle of winning the lottery or finding a bag of dollar bills but simply to earn daily at least 300 pesos (6 US dollars) to shoulder the home budget and to meet his son's needs. At around 6 o'clock in the evening, he has to go home and find rest with his son, the one who motivates him to be courageous in life.



Fig. 2. Pedicab Driver, Mang Leon

At the age of 52, Leoncito Maylas, a pedicab driver

for almost 12 years and counting, also suffered Mang Nonoy's fate. His first wife left him and they had two children who were taken by their mother to the province of Negros Occidental. He got married to his second wife who now lives with him and their four children. With the higher cost of living, he had to exert greater effort to support the family since his wife does not have a stable job and had to take care of the children. During the interview, his eyes projected the sense of worry and pressure for being the sole breadwinner of the family. However, the same responsibility also brings smiles to Mang Reynaldo's face. *Mahirap talaga ang buhay, kailangan mo makipagsapalaran. Pero masaya pa rin dahil makita ko lang ang mga anak ko na naglalaro at nagtatawanan, nawawala lahat ng pagod ko.* (Life is really hard because you have to face many trials. But I'm still happy because just seeing my children laughing and playing with one another, my fatigue is gone.)



Fig. 3. Pedicab Driver, Ate Jo

Lastly, Jo Angeles, a lady pedicab driver. Walking along Leon Guinto Street, this dark-skinned jolly young lady caught my attention. It was quite daunting to talk to her since other pedicab drivers are also staring as one got closer to their muse. But nonetheless, the interview-plan was carried out and Ate Jo was generous with her time. In the course of the conversation, Ate Jo never hesitated to open up her private life. She is only 25 years old and with two kids, four and two years old. She volunteered about why she is the one driving the pedicab and not her husband. *Sanay na ako sa mahirap na buhay. Hindi ko na inaasahan ang asawa ko dahil pinakulong ko sya. Binubugbog nya kasi ako pag lasing sya, tapos adik pa. Kaya kahit babae ako, d na mahalaga yun, kaya ko ito para sa mga anak ko. Kailangan ko sila buhayin.* (I'm used to a hard life. I do not depend anymore on my husband for he is in jail. He repeatedly battered me when he's drunk and he's also a drug addict. Being a lady driver does not bother me, I have to do this for my children. I have to support and care for them.)

Mang Nonoy, Mang Reynaldo, and Ate Jo—these hardworking laborers have something in common. Aside from being in the same kind of work, these street characters fulfill their duties as responsible breadwinners and carers for their respective families. Their struggles and sentiments highlight these themes: motivation and commitment.

Motivation and Commitment

Motivation is the reason for one's desire to do things, while commitment is the dedication to continue to pursue a cause or activity. Together these result into resoluteness, determination, and constancy in one's endeavor.

Motivation can produce commitment. It is the reason why a person commits into doing something. However, simply having the desire to accomplish something is not sufficient. In motivation, achieving one's goal requires the ability to persist through obstacles and endurance to continue despite difficulties. We may agree that "motives related to the need to express one's agency or competency are typically assumed to be common to all individuals".⁵ This could also mean that we can express this agency through what we do for our loved ones, for their own benefit.

The children of our pedicab drivers have become our drivers' source of motivation. To bear difficult obligations everyday with the uncertainty of sufficient earning is never easy. The pedicab drivers have to endure the scorching heat of the sun and face downpours as they pedal along Taft Avenue and its side streets. Some students, who are their major clientele, see these pedicab drivers as truly hardworking breadwinners. They are amazed at the drivers' ability to penetrate through the flow of traffic and how they can find alternative ways to reach their destination. They are witnesses to the drivers' patience in waiting for passengers, even to stay and hold their queues for hours. They salute these drivers for appearing during heavy rains and not minding the cold or the possibility of getting sick.

There are other risks that the drivers constantly face. A risk is described as the presence of uncertainty about whether potentially significant and/or disappointing outcomes of decisions will be realized.⁶ The situation

⁵ Hazel R. Markus and Shinobu Kitayama. "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation." *Psychological Review* 98/2 (1991): 240

⁶ Todd Dewett, "Linking Intrinsic Motivation, Risk Taking, and Employee Creativity in an R&D Environment," *R&D Management*

of these drivers is in a way uncertain for there is the possibility of getting caught by the authorities; the risk of accidents since most pedicab drivers frequently violate traffic rules; the possibility of getting sick because of physical exhaustion and fatigue, most especially during heavy rains when it is considered to be an opportune time to earn a bit more; and lastly, the very risk of earning less than expected which involves belt-tightening for the whole family. Even with all these risks, these drivers are still deeply motivated. For them, what matters most is the good of their children. In fact, a few of the drivers get to the point of involving themselves in transactions related to prohibited drugs. This could be an easy source of money most especially when they are in urgent need for funds. Someone narrated about a driver who was once caught by a police agent for dealing drugs with a student. The student was able to bribe himself out. Both the student and the driver did not end up in prison.⁷ On the other hand, if we see them violating the law, there are also times that they can be as real heroes for others. Another incident narrated by Mang Nonoy was about a driver who was stabbed to death for helping a student who was victimized by snatchers/robbers.⁸ Some people may have

37/3 (2007): 199 [197-208]

⁷ The driver who had given his feedback, as well as the driver who had made the drug transaction, did not want their names mentioned. According to the driver, the buy-bust operation happened because one of the barangay councilors carried out a clean-up drive against drugs.

⁸ This incident was validated by the news report of Bernard Testa of *Interaksyon.com* dated June 29, 2013. Jonas Mateo is the name of the pedicab driver who died after he was stabbed chasing robbers at the De La Salle University. Aside from being a driver, he was also a member of the *barangay tanod* brigade—local watchmen who serve for crime prevention. According to the report of Testa, on a recent rainy evening, Mateo was waiting in queue to service DLSU passengers when he heard someone scream, "Snatcher! Snatcher!"

negatively-biased views about their presence; on the other hand, there are some who consider the drivers as contributors to the community.

The pedicab drivers may have been labeled as lawbreakers for violating some traffic rules and regulations, but they cannot be treated as criminals. Despite their lack of credentials, they are productive in their labor; and they respect the law *most of the time* (they *also* park on designated areas, follow the traffic signals, respect the rule of right of way, pay their bills, etc.). These are facts that cannot be ignored. True, pedicab drivers have, at times, compromised the law but, in many instances, their so-called transgressions are really avoidance of restrictive institutions (traffic ordinances). They proceed through restrictive spaces in pursuit of resources; and, in the process, they produce misdeeds. Their intention is to bring food to the table despite running through tight spaces. This is the character of their transgressions on the road: these are maneuvers through spaces that have not been built in their favor; to assure themselves of some limited resources, pedicab drivers produce unintended disruptions to a certain street flow that has not been established to include them.

In upholding their rational commitment to their families who, at the same time, are non-beneficiaries of social welfare, pedicab drivers are sometimes behaving against social and legal institutions or exposing other

He swung into action and used his pedicab to block the motorbike of two men riding in tandem, fleeing the scene. The duo fell, and one quickly stood up and ran. Mateo caught up with the other, tackled and managed to subdue him, even as security officers from the school were racing toward them, to help apprehend the suspect. Then tragedy struck. The other suspect went behind Mateo, and stuck a knife into the pedicab driver and that caused his death. See, <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/65204/humble-hero--pedicab-driver-dies-chasing-robbers>.

vehicles to forms of recklessness that could produce bruises and dents—but they really do not promote robbery or corruption of morals. The kinds of transgressions committed by the pedicab drivers are guided by reasons to provide and care for families and, thus, non-malicious—it is not done to harm people.

Pedicab drivers are *sometimes* pushed to violate traffic rules and regulations (countering traffic flow, crossing through pedestrian lanes, passing through sidewalks) if they hope to earn for their daily keep. Our city roads were meant to be filled by the West's automobiles and regulated by Western type of laws. Since such roads were not built with the intention to include the West's "unthinkable others", we are condemned to live with the annoying behavior of pedicab drivers. On the other hand, one could also think the other way—why should pedicabs strictly follow rules if this would result into deprivation of food for the table? This does not mean that we support lawlessness; this is to offer a different way of viewing pedicabs that habitually violate traffic rules meant for roads *not intended* for pedicabs. This would mean that Western-type roads that were built without the pedicabs in mind are continuously functioning just as if the pedicabs do not belong. Individuals who try and insist that they also belong in restricted *pre-established* geographies are thus either driven away or resentfully tolerated. Pedicab drivers suffer but are still motivated to maneuver through the structures that are disabling for their intentions to earn money and survive. We may be able to further enrich our understanding about their motivation-against-all-odds if we view it through the sociological concepts of agency and structure.

Agency and Structure: Moving Through the Interstices of Space

In sociology, the primacy of structure or agency in shaping the behavior of humans is one of the big debates. This issue is expressed by the question, “do social structures determine an individual's behavior or is it human agency?” A structure is said to be the “recurrent patterned arrangements that influence or limit the choices and opportunities available while an agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices.”⁹ This debate involves the contentions: 1) an individual person acts as a free agent, being independent from the social structures or 2) the social structures are the ones shaping human agency, thus, dependent on it. Agency as topping the social structures is explained below:

Agency approaches the individual as atomized, positing a voluntarist approach to human action. They argue that the context in which an individual lives is a pluralism; social power is spread between groups, and that no single group dominates. The way to analyze, therefore, is by looking at what the individual tells us - there is an onus on reflexivity; on the individual being able to account for and be aware of the reasons and implications of their actions. This approach also pays attention to time. History is taken to be the outcome of freely chosen choices and self-determined deeds: the “great man” view of history which sees Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Margaret Thatcher and Bush as figures that, through freewill and behavior, changed the course of history.¹⁰

⁹ Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 448.

¹⁰ Ben Aston, “What is structure and agency? How does this

On the other hand, Aston also points out that the primacy of structure over agency holds that “individuals are situated actors in place and embodiment. We are embodied physically, defining out health, opportunities, life possibilities, etc., and emplaced in terms of lifestyle, conditions, etc.”¹¹ Our actions therefore respond to the structures of one kind or another, in which we are situated. In short, social structures such as class, gender or race (or the geographies and the legal system operating in Taft Avenue) are seen as systems which are greatly spreading through time and space that individuals have no choice but to operate within or through or even against them.¹²

To reconcile the claim of both parties, British sociologist Anthony Giddens bridges the gap between agency and structures through his theory of *structuration*. He proposes that “structure and agency are a mutually constitutive duality. Thus social phenomena are not the product of either structure or agency, but of both.”¹³ Giddens here gives emphasis on the proposition that social structure is dependent on agency and this agency is at the same time dependent on structure. Human agents draw on social structures in their actions, and at the same time these actions serve to produce and reproduce social structure. This implies that they are reciprocal and inseparable. Agents are placed in the realm of social relationships (whether positive or negative) that define them and in the same way define the opportunities they face in their everyday

framework help us in political Analysis?,” *Academia.edu*. (n.d.): 3 [1-10], accessed 28 August 2014.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹² See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

¹³ Matthew R. Jones and Helena Karsten, “Giddens’s Structuration Theory and Information Systems Research,” *Mis Quarterly* 32/1 (2008): 129 [127-157].

life. The agents' repetition of thinking, acting, and interacting in various ways always constitute these social structures which are established. These can be traditions, institutions, moral codes, and other established ways of doing things. These can be changeable when agents begin to ignore them, replace them, or reproduce them in a different manner. According to Blackledge, quoting the words of Karl Marx, "men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."¹⁴ Putting it in a more vivid way, we are the creator of our own life and we write our personal story using the raw materials or resources available and, actually, within our reach. We make our own choices from the available resources. In this sense, freedom is always constrained. Absolute freedom is an invention of those who forget about the constraints of body, social body, language, clothes, food, tools, gravity, race, gender, geographies, etc.; the pedicab drivers, by the way, have a larger share of this limitation of freedom by virtue of lack or absence of availability and enjoyment of capital and other resources. Our decisions and choices are at the same time the products and influences of the structures which were present before we were born and which will persist after our death.

Putting it in the context of the pedicab drivers, one could consider them as the ones manifesting those efforts of agents going against structures. Drivers strive to emphasize their capacity to negotiate through the streets even as they violate traffic rules or the games of fairness. In fact, whatever they do, some people look at them as hindrance to a peaceful and orderly state of

¹⁴ Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 2.

affairs. What may be happening is that with their transgressive acts, they compensate for what social structures cannot give to them.

Through their sheer determination, despite being counted as illegal, pedicab drivers show why non-inclusive social structures could be outdone, to some extent, by motivated agency. In the situation of our pedicab drivers, they are motivated by their children who are on the brink of hunger, illiteracy, or homelessness, which are also conditions-products of a social system that fails to provide opportunities for the penniless and property-less. In other words, the drivers' motivation rises from their urge to deal with the pitiful and unfortunate condition of their loved ones. That is why they venture into the streets despite all the hazards of legal and social judgment. And after fulfilling this task, the pedicab drivers will now feel happy, fulfilled, and responsible because they are able to provide for their children's needs. Even for a short moment, they will savor these positive kinds of emotion. These will serve as fuel for greater motivation and commitment to labor and care within restrictions.

Thus, one may also consider that the counter-cultural behavior of these drivers is also a consequence of the imposition of structures that turn against their will to survive. They are restricted by what the structures dictate upon them. They become violators of the law because, first and foremost, society's regulations along Taft Avenue area are precisely those rules which do not allow them to realize and exploit the potential of earning income from pedicab driving; violating some rules is the opposite of their desire to become earners (thus, they continue to block lanes, counter the flow of traffic, and drive without legitimacy). Pedicab fares are only self-regulated (about PhP 40.00 per trip); however, they are tempted to abuse passengers by imposing

higher fares on rainy days because, as it often happens, this is one way of earning enough for their family's needs. In some exceptional cases, illegal activity like drug peddling has become an additional source of funds for a few drivers.

On the other hand, police authorities have their own version of countering or violating legal structures. Authorities who would catch a drug peddler may opt to settle the case for a demand of regular grease money. As a matter of fact, abusive police authorities collect PhP10.00 a day per pedicab driver as a sort of regular daily bribe (*lagay*; literally, something one puts in the pocket of the police).

Thus, one may look at the pedicab drivers not as simply the villains of the streets. They are both personally- and socially-driven and are pushed to a desperate corner where there are relatively few, if there are any, options for escape. In the same way, we may view them not as outcasts because they too are perceived to be helpful at times.¹⁵ Meaning, there is that

¹⁵ Taken from the same survey of feedbacks from DLSU and DLS-CSB students, these are their positive reactions: (1) they are very hardworking and persevering breadwinners of their family for they will do everything just to earn and provide for their needs; (2) the virtue of patience is very evident also since they can wait up to 2 hours in their respective terminals; (3) they are people with great sacrifice and dedication because they can bring their passengers to their destinations even in the scorching heat of the sun or during heavy rains, even in deep floods; (4) they are indeed helpful to the commuters, most especially to those old passengers and those who are tired of walking; (5) they are very creative also in searching for and passing through short-cut roads in comparison to jeepneys which cannot do the same; (6) they do not contribute much to the traffic since they are only few and smaller in size; (7) they contribute to the rich culture and innovative quality of Filipinos; (8) the pedicabs are environment friendly vehicles since they do not produce dark smoke/harmful gases; (9) lastly, some of the drivers are friendly and approachable for they do not snob any passenger who wants to ride but always standing by to render service.

duality that we can recognize in the behavior of these pedicab drivers. They want to assert themselves and at the same time, they are being influenced by pre-established structures as well as the lack of structures that promote well-being. By asserting their counter-cultural ways, they may also be thinking of themselves as persons with determination, responsible breadwinners of the family, or simply as human beings who find the meaning of existence in work and providing care. Being pressured by disabling structures could explain their need for enabling structures that welcome their desire to belong. There is always that need for humans for social acceptance and integration. City Ordinance 8921 may be the powerful's move to force them toward integration, but this law proved to be a burden and considered as counter-productive. Creating a more benevolent law may require the drivers' input and not solely determined by supervisory power.

The fact of "belongingness...is that human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships."¹⁶ The pedicab drivers may seem to be aggressive and reckless at times, but as one looks into their eyes as they air out their sentiments, they value their relationship so much; most especially with their families and the people around them. However, the roads and the laws—human creations—also restrict their desires and practices to bring support to their loved ones. To further develop this line of argument, let us now turn to *Gaudium et spes* and its teachings about human beings and their creations.

¹⁶ Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, "The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation," *Psychological Bulletin* 117/3 (1995): 497.

***Gaudium et spes* and Human Creations¹⁷**

In the section dealing with the “situation of human beings in the modern world,” *Gaudium et spes* presents a fundamental problem that has tormented humanity since time immemorial: the contradictions resulting from creative activities or production. Reading through this section, we get the impression that *Gaudium et spes* is whipping humanity with reminders about flaws that result from human creativity: “while man [sic] extends his power in every direction, he does not always succeed in subjecting it to his own welfare (GS 4).” *Gaudium et spes* methodically speaks about this human limitation: about every person’s ability to plumb into one’s depths as well as one’s inability to see the profundity of longings and afflictions; about humans who create things (like roads and laws) and produce either growth or decadence which, in turn, impact on everyone. Skimming through human history, we observe that modern or advance-modern time has no monopoly over this problem; premodern societies have had their share of contradictions. The overextraction of water (e.g., for aqueducts) in antiquity resulted in the desertification of vast lands; the cutting of trees for construction caused massive soil erosion; the financing of the construction of St. Peter’s Basilica triggered division in the Catholic Church—such creative projects were *intended* to benefit humans.

From *Gaudium et spes*, one could actually make this conclusion: that humans invent things but along the way or eventually they also produce contradictions—that while humans produce spaces like cities and roads,

¹⁷ Portions of this section appear in Ferdinand D. Dagmang, *Basic Ecclesial Communities: An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) in Ten Parishes in the Philippines* (Manila: under the auspices of missio-Munich, 2016), pp. xvii ff.

aiming to take control of themselves and their surroundings, they are unable to predict and take hold of various resources/forces which eventually gain power independent from their intentions. When Monsanto promised progress and development through their GMOs and herbicides, it also unwittingly brought misery to Punjab farmers.¹⁸ In creative achievements, various positive results and negative consequences come about—producing joys and hopes as well as griefs and anxieties.¹⁹

Our creations, like city roads, have intended functions with immediate and direct effects on us—effects which are usually visible and beneficial. Through time, some unintended (or initially invisible) effects become more visible. Both the immediate and more remote effects are then intertwined in the meaning and function of creations. Eventually, creations are not only viewed through their original intended function (intention as “spirit”), but also through their unintended effects (with its unintended “spirit”). Creativity and its double-edged spirit are thus implicated in the whole ambivalent stories of production and utilization.

TV sets, for example, bring about excitement and joy because of their entertainment value. Other creative outputs, like movies, variety shows, soap operas, and cartoons, also depend on the TV set. Because of these consummables, people find the TV as a source of relaxation and fun.

¹⁸ See G. Gruère and D. Sengupta, “Bt cotton and farmer suicides in India: An evidence-based assessment,” *The Journal of Development Studies*, 47/2 (2011): 316–337; see also the works of Ram Sarup Ankhi, a poet and novelist of Punjab who wrote about farmer suicide, indebtedness, and drug addiction.

¹⁹ See Ferdinand D. Dagmang, “Structures and Structural Sin,” *Hapag* 2/1 (2005): 77–112.

Through time, some other signs appear and could show the more deep-seated power of the TV not evident at the outset, like the way it would regularly disrupt or interrupt or intrude into meals which used to be a family's get-together, a **key** life-scenario for shared conversation and enjoyment of food. Nowadays, family members are drawn to the TV set while unconsciously ingesting food and not minding meal fellowship. We could even observe families unable to start their meals without *Eat Bulaga* or *Showtime*.²⁰ For them, the TV has become a mealtime apparatus. Visual and auditory fun may have compensated for what is lacking in their meals or conversation. TV viewing, in this sense, is a sign of surrender to routine or commodified fun; it could also be a sign of re-definition of having meals. This means that the traditional script for meals becomes forgotten or subordinated in favor of a newer script that will inscribe itself in the minds and bodies of those sharing TV-meals.

It is only when after some more signs are felt by people that we realize the long-term effects of things-practices. We need the help of time to teach us about hidden power and its consequences, like the loss of many opportunities for fellowship and appreciation of meals prepared by Mom. (The saying, "*Nasa huli ang pagsisisi*," reminds us about how lessons are painfully learned through time.) The lack of appreciation for a meal prepared by love could actually earn accumulations of subconscious displeasure from Mom. We need experience, a longer experience, to be able to know about the danger of TV-meals to memory and behavior. The longer the experience may seem better for our memory and bodies to keep those lessons.

²⁰ Popular TV shows: GMA Networks' *Eat Bulaga* and ABS-CBN's *Showtime*.

Some people, however, need reminders from others to learn and derive wisdom from experience. Other people's better insights about things are indispensable reminders about the hard lessons or facts of life. Some of these people have profound understanding of things, of reality, because of their long exposure and mindfulness to experience. Many of past religious and moral leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, showed courage, wisdom, and prophetic discernment necessary to bring their people to sustained moral struggle and liberation from things which ordinary people consider as necessary and indispensable. No less than Jesus' death by crucifixion has made his disciples realize the exceptionally powerful life-giving message of the Good News of the reign of God that goes beyond the ordinary human desire for and pursuits of money, prestige, exclusive solidarities, and power.

Producing TV sets, constructing buildings and building roads—these are considered necessary, but we do not normally acknowledge that these too are products of the human heart, something which *Gaudium et spes* belabors in its statement about humanity and the modern world being soaked in contradictions.

We are not saying that *Gaudium et spes* has emphasized the fact of concealment of the negative by what we see as positive—this is something which *Gaudium et spes* does not develop. In entering into the assumptions of *Gaudium et spes* about the human heart's contradictions, we are expanding here the analysis of what these contradictions could also do to the pedicab drivers' ways of pursuing their longings for bounty or survival within built spaces.

Gaudium et spes looks at modernity's situation in terms of imbalanced progress. The details that *Gaudium et spes* outlines are rather overwhelming: that in having produced economic abundance, moderns are

also experiencing the pain and cruelty of hunger and poverty; in having assumed autonomy and freedom, social and psychological slavery are freaking people out; in having achieved cooperation and solidarity, irreconcilable conflicts are dividing nations, leading them to violence or war; and in searching for a better world, humans are grappling with a life without spiritual advancement, dealing with a world produced by a heart that is not only creative but also restless and full of contradictions.

Gaudium et spes underscores humanity's achievements as reflections of the human heart—root of finitude and fallibility, the source of the lack of perfection and balance. It depicts a world where humanity is “at once the cause and the victim”—cause of creative productions, but victim of the negative outcomes and perverse consequences of the process, fruit, and enjoyment of fruit of production. For *Gaudium et spes*, it is through our creations, through work (not through coitus and reproduction), that the fruits of sin are multiplied. Pope Francis’ recent encyclical is also a lamentation over what the human heart could produce: “The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life” (*Laudato Si’* 2).

Nevertheless, *Gaudium et spes* is optimistic in view of humanity’s widespread longing: “persons and societies thirst for a full and free life worthy of man; one in which they can subject to their own welfare all that the modern world can offer them so abundantly. In addition, nations try harder every day to bring about a kind of universal community.” (GS 9) This optimism may have to rely on the positive direction of a heart cognizant of its limitations as well as its ability to rise above its downspiralling negative tendencies. In its

recognition of something higher than itself, the human heart also hopes to come up with achievements freed from its own imbalances and contradictions.

But, again this hope cannot be realized by the ordinary, all too human, heart alone. We need one which is no longer pulled down by contradictions. *Gaudium et spes* offers the way of Jesus and the Reign of God to transcend the ordinary human heart's ambivalence and captivity in the polarities and memory-depleting forces of the modern world.

Who would forget that scenario when Jesus broke the law as he healed people during the Sabbath? For Jesus it was a more appropriate time to bring his way of healing and message of hope to humanity than strict observance of the law, a human creation. On another occasion, the disciples walked through a field on the Sabbath day, picked handfuls of grain so they would have something to eat for they were very hungry. But the Pharisees insisted this was not lawful for they again broke the Sabbath. It was on this moment that Jesus gives the true purpose of the Sabbath: "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27 NIV). Jesus' point was that the Sabbath, the Law, was made to serve people. It serves, and not master, people. The Sabbath was a blessing, not a burden.

There are instances when one has to go against some created norms in favor of more noble reasons or high-level principles, like compassion. It is probably a more grievous sin for a father to let his children die of hunger than to cause a traffic disruption on the streets or sometimes overcharge passengers during heavy rains. Jesus calls the pedicab drivers to something more life-giving. The good news is that in the end, Jesus invites all to salvation, including those who would push pedicab drivers to desperately transgress the law.

Conclusion

The pedicab drivers represent the flock of manual laborers who are trying to find their place in the society. We saw them not simply as law violators on the streets but also as responsible breadwinners who try to socially belong, through productive work. Their loved ones' well-being push and inspire them in order to surpass whatever difficulties they encounter in their everyday routines. The object of their sacrifice is also the source of their motivation. This motivation originates from what is considered as a natural drive which they must satisfy in order to avoid hunger and insecurity. At the same time, they are also motivated because of the incentive or reward not only from monetary gain but also from the recognition of their own loved ones. The force of this motivation is a continuous phenomenon that originates from their homes and proceeds to the streets. There may be deficiency in total social integration but their family approval serves to bring in an essential factor, one that creates a balance between the serious social-structural lack and drivers' transgression.

The pedicab drivers may have been treated unfairly because others see them as the "villains" of the roads. It is true that they transgress structures, but the larger society itself tolerates them for either humanitarian reasons or bystanders' inaction. Their motivations, driving their anti-structural ways, may be seen as "mitigating" element for what we see as "sin". In short, they may not be seen as simply lawbreakers but significant members of the society who strive for a meaningful existence. Aside from the help and service that they can offer to commuters, we should also look into their commitment to provide for the needs of their loved ones.

The drivers' situation can be likened to the exclusion suffered by some individuals during Jesus' time. Social

and religious standards were imposed by the rulers and as a consequence, oppressive restrictions were suffered by the many who “did not belong”: the illiterate, the lepers, the tax collectors, children and women, the sinners, herdsmen, and non-Jews (all covered by the clause: the Poor and the Oppressed).²¹ They were negatively judged by those in power and presumably by the mainstream public, but Jesus announced to them the offer of greatest well-being. We are being reminded here about the liberating message and ministry of Jesus to those who are deemed excluded because of rules or prescriptions.

²¹ See Albert Nolan, *Jesus Before Christianity* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992).

Book Reviews

International Theological Commission, *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles, and Criteria*, Paulines, (Vatican Documents 105), Pasay City (Philippines), 2013, 92 p.

This document of the International Theological Commission has a long period of preparation. From 2004-2008, a sub-commission presided by Santiago del Cura Elena was working on it, without concrete results. Later, another sub-commission headed by Paul McPartlan, produced the present document approved by Cardinal Levada in 2011 and published in 2013. Even if the document is not so recent, it should be good to have a summary, especially for theological schools.

We observe in the document abundant quotations from the Scripture and from the documents of Vatican II, for which *Verbum Dei* has a place of honor. The other recent documents of the Magisterium are present: post-synodal exhortations, encyclicals and speeches of the Popes, until Benedict XVI. There are often allusions to the documents of this Theological Commission. Among other sources we find Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, but also some others like Thomas à Kempis, Cano, Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux, Johan Adam Möler, J. H. Newman, Yves Congar, and Henri de Lubac. However, in general, the document is discrete for the explicit quotations, and the affirmations are rather general. The structure is simple: Introduction, three chapters and Conclusion.

A short "Introduction" (pp. 7-10) shows the abundant theological production after Vatican II, and marks the "fragmentation" of this period. However, the document points to the unity and apostolicity of theology in order to understand correctly the plurality of theology.

The title of the first Chapter is “Listening to the Word of God”. It will give us the framework of the document. The source of Catholic Theology is the Word of God. In this sense, we find a distinction that became important in our time: “the Christian faith is not a “religion of the book”. In fact it arrives today to affirm that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are “religions of the book”.

“Christianity is the “religion of the word of God”, not of a “written and mute word, but of the incarnate and living Word” (*Verbum Domini* 7). The gospel of God is fundamentally testified by the sacred Scripture of both Old and New Testament” (cf. *Dei Verbum* 7, 11, 16). The Holy Spirit inspires not only the authors, but also the readers. A second important step is the Faith, as the response to God’s Word. The text insists: the “obedience of faith” (Rm 1: 5) is personal and involves the “full submission of the intellect and will to the God who reveals” (*Dei Verbum* 5). Faith is not “irrational”, but gives rise to the “spiritual worship” (Rm 12: 1-2: *logiké latreía*).

The document distinguishes the two classical aspects of faith: *fides qua* and *fides quae*. That means the act of belief or trust and also that which is believed or confessed. Faith is personal and communitarian, and is expressed in “creeds” since the origin of the Church.

“Heretical” interpretation of the faith is opposed to the Apostolic Tradition. Following the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the text underlines the “obstination” as the mark of the heretical.

Finally the chapter focuses on theology itself. The explanation is simple: theology is the understanding of the faith. We find the classical formulas of Augustine – “*intellectus fidei*” – and of Anselm – “*Fides quaerens intellectum*” –.

Chapter 2: “Abiding in the Communion of the

Church”. In the short introduction to the chapter, I appreciate the allusion to the classic work of Cano about the *loci theologici*. The document gives in footnote the ten *loci*, which is not common.

We underline here some aspects of the theology according to the document. First should be the conciliar affirmation that Scripture must be the “soul” of theology. We note here the allusions to the document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, from the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993) that is always very useful. The simple explanation of the “methods” in exegesis is correct, and the text includes the famous medieval synthesis: “*gesta, allegoria, moralis* and *anagogia*”. The study of Henri de Lubac on “Medieval Exegesis” is still very valuable. I think there is much to do in this sense in order to give biblical penetration in every treatise of Theology. We find here an allusion to the Prologue of the *Breviloquium* of Bonaventure and some clear quotations from Saint Thomas.

Another long paragraph deals with Apostolic Tradition. It is one of the major points of the Catholic Theology. The document extends the classical formula *lex orandi fiat lex credenda*, and adds *lex vivendi*. According to the vision of *Dei Verbum* (7-8), the Tradition presented like “something living and vital, an ongoing process in which the unity of faith finds expression in the variety of languages and the diversity of cultures. Tradition is growing in every generation.

There is a paragraph for the Fathers, whose importance for the theology was rediscovered by Vatican II. Patrology has entered more and more in the programs and manuals on it are not lacking.

The testimony of Councils, since the first apostolic gathering in Jerusalem (Act 15) is also essential. We note that the text gives the list of the first seven Councils, from Nicaea I to Nicaea II, which are the

commonly accepted Councils by Orient and Occident. Good orientation about the notion of “dogma”, necessary today to avoid misunderstanding of it.

The importance and use of the Magisterium appear in the core of this chapter. Because of the apostolicity of the Tradition and the ecclesiality of the theology, the link with the Magisterium, pontifical and episcopal appears essential. That should be a crucial aspect of the difference between Protestant and Catholic Theology, but the document avoids this kind of confrontations.

The text follows *Dei Verbum* 9. Another important paragraph deals with the subject of “Tradition and traditions”, according to the work of Congar. There is question of popular “traditions” and the criteria to accept or reject. In the footnote 68 there is allusion to the document “Scripture, Tradition and Traditions” of the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order (1964).

Another sensitive sub-chapter deals with the *sensus fidelium*. It is “the supernatural appreciation of the faith of the whole people”. Here the collaboration between theologians and pastors appears very suitable. (The document does not use the classical formula “infallibilitas in credendo”, but quotes Saint Augustine).

The relationship between theologians and Magisterium is sometimes a controversial point. The document alludes to other documents of the Commission and also of the Doctrine of the faith (*Donum Veritatis*). The text fosters the collaboration which is necessary in both senses. Following a suggestion of Thomas Aquinas, it is allusion to the “magisterium theologorum”, to be in coordination with the “magisterium episcoporum” and of the Pope. A true exegesis of the documents is necessary to understand the different levels of authority.

The document deals also with the delicate point of

“dissent” in theology, so important today¹. A radical “dissent” should be not Catholic, instead investigation and questioning could be a true collaboration with the Magisterium. Tensions will exist, and the document quotes Blessed Newman. The freedom of theologians is to integrate scientific and confessional theology in the horizon of the design of God.

Another original point of *Theology Today* is about “the company of theologians”. In fact, this is an evident aspect of the theological work in present times. Collaboration in research in publications, seminars and conferences strengthen awareness and appreciation of colleagues “should be cultivated”, even with specialists on non-theological matters. Other interesting aspects are: the increasing number of lay theologians, men and women, the modern possibilities of medieval *disputatio*, and the ecumenical dialogue. The text encourages the “dialogue with the world”, the “historicity” of the theology and the ongoing task of inculturation. However, there is not a direct paragraph on dialogue with other religions which seems one of the urgent tasks of theology today.

Chapter 3: “Giving an Account of the Truth of God”. This last chapter “considers essential aspects of theology as a rational human endeavor”, namely three: rationality of theology, unity of theology in a plurality of methods and disciplines, and science and wisdom.

The first sub-chapter considers some aspects of the history of theology. First, the scientific character of theology is explained in the light of the truth of Revelation. The document defends this scientific character against the “univocal view of science” we find in modern statements. (Anselm, Augustine and *Fides et*

¹ Remember the reactions to the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Paul VI. Criticism toward some Pope Francis’ position e.g. on *Amoris Laetitia*, is still very strong.

Ratio help us in this endeavor). The historical development, though short, is very interesting. The itinerary is instructive: the Fathers of the Church declaring the difference between faith and mythical and political theology; the Eastern Fathers affirming the truth of the *Logos*; the contribution of Boethius; the scholasticism with the massive use of Aristotle (Thomas Aquinas) but in spirit of *sacra pagina*; the reaction against the excessive rationalistic theology (Thomas à Kempis), the Catholic theology fighting against Reformation theologians (Trent and post-tridentine theology), the new attack of Enlightenment and the present post-modernism². There is however no allusion to the extraordinary flourishing of theology in all its specialties around Vatican II – Bible, Patristics, Systematic Theology, especially in its historical aspects, Moral, and Pastoral. The answer to the post-modernism is correct, but may be too short. The purpose should be “to revitalize an authentic metaphysics”. In general, the text points to *Fides et Ratio* like a good way for the present relationship between philosophy and theology.

“The unity of theology in a plurality of methods and disciplines” takes a great place in the document (10 pages). We find there some quotations of Aquinas, and the idea of “*Reductio ad Mysterium*” which is rather Franciscan (St. Bonaventure). It should be the Mystery of God and the Mystery of the History of Salvation. The unity of theology was very clear for the Fathers and Scholastics. In modern times, the different disciplines demanded different methods, and it appeared the plural “theologies” for the different authors, periods and cultures. The document does not try to do a classific-

² We think what is lacking is an allusion to the “positive theology” different from “scholastic theology” (cf. Petavius and Thomassin). The reaction against Enlightenment was not only apologetic (cf. J.A. Möller and M. Scheeben).

ation of the different “theologies” of today, but describes some factors to explain this phenomenon. However, to avoid the danger of relativism or heterodoxy it points to the necessity of emphasizing the nature of theology as *Scientia fidei* or *Scientia Dei*. In fact, there is a “common theological tradition” – “memory in theology”. Interdisciplinary collaboration is indispensable. Philosophy and human sciences can be used by theology but they cannot impose their “magisterium”. We observe also in philosophy today an evident fragmentation and pluralism. May be, to serve theology today, the more useful school could be “phenomenology” (cf. John Paul II as philosopher). There is also an interesting collaboration with the religious sciences and studies, beyond past controversies, in respect of different approaches. The presence of theology in public academic instances should be suitable.

The last sub-chapter is about “Science and Wisdom”³. Through the Bible, Old and New Testament, and Fathers, the text tries to explain the unifying Wisdom as the final goal of theology in relationship with spirituality. Nevertheless, there is distinction between “theological wisdom” and “mystical wisdom”, following Thomas Aquinas. “The intellectual contemplation which results from the rational labor of the theologian is truly a wisdom”. The “mystical wisdom” instead is “a gift of the Holy Spirit which comes from union with God in love”. Hence the celebrated expression of Pseudo-Dionysius: “*patis divina*” and other authors like Maximus the Confessor and Richard of St. Victor. We find in the document an interesting note about “private revelations” (n. 152), a case in which theology gives interpretation to the mystic phenomena. Teresa of Avila recommended this collaboration. There are interesting

³ Cf. the classical work of Maritain *Science et Sagesse*.

paragraphs on the spirituality of the theologian and his capacity to be in contact with other religious “wisdoms”; today, this is necessary⁴. It does not lack paragraphs on *negative* and *positive theology*, and on *ekstasis*, *kenosis* and *theosis*. We note that in the recent proclamation of doctors of the Church are women with mystical experience: Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux.

Finally, in conclusion we have a praise for the theological vocation and its character of doxology and thanksgiving.

We have in this document of the International Theological Commission *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* a simple presentation of the nature of theology as *Scientia fidei* and *scientia Dei*, so rich in the biblical references, very rooted in the tradition of the Church, and with a global vision of today’s situation. A detailed description of schools and persons, with reference to the institutions, is however avoided following the style of official documents.

What is lacking is a panorama of the theology that produced the documents of Vatican II, in a moment of abundant theologians of all specialties. Here, we note that the little document *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican II, has taken greater importance today: the contact with other religions demands a new theological reflection to understand them in the light of Revelation, and to insert their presence and meaning in the light of the History of Salvation in Christ. The crucial problems today come from the field of Moral Theology and Bioethics. This was not remarked enough in the text.

But the document is a valid instrument for Catholic theologians and a kind of synthesis of Fundamental

⁴ In Manila, the center of diffusion of Buddhism is called “Wisdom Park.”

Theology that can be used for the introductory courses to the theological studies.

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POPE FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, Paulines, Pasay City, 2016(7), 188 p.

Even if Pope Francis published the Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei* on 29 Jun 2013 we discover in it the background of Pope Benedict XVI in content and in quotations. So we can consider *Evangelii Gaudium* the first personal document of Pope Francis. In some sense it is also a heritage of the previous Pope, since it is the exhortation after the Episcopal Synod of 2012 on *The New Evangelization for the transmission of Christian Faith*, but style, quotations and orientations are quite from the present Pope. The document in addition is very consistent (188 pages). Even if the official edition is in Latin, we easily discover the Spanish original and of course the personal hand of the Argentinian Pope. We can consider it the true first document, a kind of “program for the Pontificate”. In comparison with other posterior documents, like *Laudato Si'* (2015) and *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) that are more specific, *Evangelii Gaudium* touches the core of the Christian Faith.

The matter is distributed in 5 chapters with an introduction. The titles are meaningful and give us the structure of the message: 1. “The Church's Missionary Transformation; 2. “Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment; 3. The Proclamation of the Gospel; 4. “The

Social Dimension of Evangelization”; 5. “Spirit-filled Evangelizers”.

About quotations, in addition to the Scriptural allusions, we find some Fathers of the Church – Irenaeus, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine... – and St. Thomas Aquinas, but also St. Francis, Isaac of Stella, à Kempis, Peter Faber, Thérèse of Lisieux, St. John of the Cross, Blessed Newman, Georges Bernanos, Henri de Lubac, and Guardini, who is a beloved author of Pope Francis. We find also authors from Latin America like I. Quiles SJ (note 183), V.M. Fernández (note 207), the document about Guadalupe – *Nican Mopoua* – and *Aparecida*, document of CELAM especially beloved by Pope Francis. We note of course the presence of Vatican II and the recent Popes. Among them the Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI is often quoted, but also different documents of St. John Paul II and so many of Benedict XVI. Pope Francis loves also to mention pastoral documents of the Conferences of Bishops of different countries.

About the content, we point to the original title of the Letter, i.e. *Evangelii Gaudium*. In fact, the Pope gives a synthesis of biblical references of the O.T. and the N.T. about “Joy”, based also on Paul VI and Benedict XVI. But he underlines also the joy of evangelizing and the eternal newness of the Gospel. Only in the paragraph 14 the Pope alludes to the “New Evangelization” that was the theme of the Synod. In fact we will find some allusions to the “propositions”, but in general the letter of Francis seems a little independent and looks like more personal, with acknowledgment of limitations. In this sense we want to quote some paragraphs that seem to me witness the way in which Francis conceives his papal magisterium:

“I have chosen not to explore these many questions which call for further reflection and study. Nor do I

believe that the papal magisterium should be expected to offer a definitive or complete word on every question which affects the Church and the world. It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. In this sense, I am conscious of the need to promote a sound “decentralization” (n. 16).

Francis intends to develop especially: the missionary outreach of the Church; the temptations of pastoral workers; the entire People of God which evangelizes; the homily; the poor in society; dialogue within the society and the spiritual motivation for mission (n. 17).

In the **first chapter**, Francis notes the missionary transformation of the Church – “state of mission” – and renews the missionary option for all categories of the People of God. He prevents the danger of distortion and following a suggestion of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (n. 11) he stresses the “heart” of the Gospel and the harmony of Christian message. In a very personal paragraph, Francis admits the “pluralism”, because of the social sciences, philosophy, theology and pastoral practices and adds:

“For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. But in fact such variety serves to bring out and develop different facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel” (n. 40).

The Pope quotes here St. Thomas Aquinas and recalls the famous discourse of opening of Vatican II of Pope John XXIII. Following these ideas, Francis exposes the possibility of misunderstanding a very orthodox discourse because of the cultural changes in the meaning of words and expressions. Anyway, we cannot forget a certain obscurity of the faith (n. 42).

The Pope likes to insist in the quality of the witness

and the reexamination of customs. Quoting Thomas and Augustine, he points to the “moderation” and in the way of accompaniment the souls toward the faith in Christ. That should be a “missionary heart”. That is the last paragraph of this first chapter and gives us the true vision of Francis. The Church must be “a Mother with an Open Heart” (n. 46-49). Let us underline the application the Pope notes about Eucharist: “The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak” (n. 47). We will find this principle in other documents of Francis. Hence, the openness to the poor and the sick and the warning against “false sense of security” in a kind of structural closeness.

With the **second chapter** – “Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment” – we enter in a kind of panorama of the present world according to the mind of the Pope. The depiction is not systematic. It should not be the task of the Pope (n. 51). So, we will focus only on some aspects of the present culture in the document.

In general, the context seems “overloaded”, hence the need for discernment in Spirit, and the scrutiny of the “signs of times” in order to discover the factors that weaken the missionary renewal and threaten the dignity of God’s people. Among them, and beyond the advances of our time, we find fear and desperation, violence and inequality, economy of exclusion, and marginalization. Francis attacks the optimism of “free market” and the “culture of prosperity”, with a new idolatry of the money (n. 55-56). He excludes a “financial system which rules rather than serves” and spawns violence, and denies the ideology of the “end of history”, (cf. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of the History*, 1992; n.59), and the career of arms. The Pope criticizes even a false proposal of “education” in a very personal

paragraph:

“Some simply content themselves with blaming the poor and the poorer countries themselves for their troubles; indulging in unwarranted generalizations, they claim that the solution is an “education” that would tranquilize them, making them tame and harmless. All this becomes more exasperating for the marginalized in the light of the widespread and deeply rooted corruption found in many countries – in their governments, businesses and institutions – whatever the political ideology of their leaders” (n. 60).

About “cultural challenges” Francis signals the reaction against all kinds of totalitarian Ideologies that lead to a subjective truth, but also the globalization as deterioration of cultural roots (Africa and Asia). The proliferation of “religious movements” is understandable in the context of the secularization of the faith. The Catholic Church by its doctrine and institutions – schools and universities – and through marriage and familiar life beyond “mere emotional satisfaction” is acting to overcome the wound of individualism of our postmodern era (n. 66-67).

For inculturation of the faith, the Pope uses an interesting expression, “Christian humanism” and the defense of “evangelized popular culture” in which we guess his Latin America experience. He promotes “new processes for evangelizing culture” taking the “popular piety” as the starting point. However, he recognizes a breakdown in the transmission of faith to the young, and gives a list of possible factors (n. 70).

A long section of this chapter is about “challenges from urban cultures”. In this sense, since several years the Pontifical Counsel for Culture has promoted the “Court of Gentiles”. Francis rejects radical pessimism – God is dwelling there -. “A completely new culture has come to life and continues to grow in the cities” (n. 73).

The description deserves to be meditated (n. 74-75). But Francis describes also the “temptations faced by Pastoral Workers” like individualism, inferiority complex, practical relativism, tiredness, illness, unrealistic projects, lack of patience, dream of immediate success and pragmatism. It is necessary to avoid spiritual worldliness, seeking for one’s glory, neopelagianism, authoritarian elitism, prestige, business mind, corruption, and clericalism as a false meaning of priesthood. It is not lacking a call for youth apostolate and vocations promotion.

After the context of evangelization today, the **third chapter**, “The Proclamation of the Gospel” is the center of the exhortation. The notion is taken from *Ecclesia in Asia* (n.19): “evangelization (is) the joyful, patient and progressive preaching of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” The salient points of the exposition are: evangelization is the task of the entire People of God; the true initiative comes from God; the Church is called to convoke all and “must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel” (n. 114).

Francis asserts in a positive way the diversity of cultures receiving the Gospel, their enrichment, and the new aspects of revelation that the cultures show. The original thought of the Pope is especially expressed in this paragraph:

“We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous. While it is true that some cultures have been closely associated with the preaching of the Gospel and the development of Christian thought, the revealed message is not identified with any of them, its content is transcultural. Hence in the evangelization of the new cultures, or cultures which have not received

the Christian message, it is not essential to impose a specific cultural form. No matter how beautiful or ancient it may be, together with the Gospel. The message that we proclaim always has a certain cultural dress, but we in the Church can sometimes fall into a needless hallowing of our culture, and thus show more fanaticism than true evangelizing zeal” (n. 117).

Hence Pope Francis recalls the *sensus fidei* of faithful and the *infallibilitas in credendo*, since the new evangelization must be not the exclusive task of professionals, but the part of each of the baptized. So “every Christian is a missionary” (n. 119-120). Therefore, the document explains the importance of popular piety and its task in the new evangelization. In all this section we observe abundant quotations of the exhortations of St. John Paul II after the continental Synods, and the document *Aparecida* of CELAM (2007). In fact, there is a “people’s mysticism” expressed in gestures with a powerful effect in evangelization.

The document alludes also to the “person to person” evangelization – informal conversations –, when testimony has special importance, without fixed formulations learned by heart, evangelization being a “slow process” of inculturation. It is necessary to remember the different ecclesial charisms of evangelization, in the unity of Spirit. Lastly, the Pope points to the “professional circles”, the “creative apologetics”, sciences, schools and universities as tools of evangelization.

We enter in a long section II of this chapter (135-144), consecrated to the **homily**. Here the long pastoral experience of Francis appears in an evident way. He would like to give concrete orientations to the preachers. Homily is the touchstone for a pastor but first of all “an intense and happy experience of the Spirit” (n. 135). The normal context is the “Eucharistic assembly”, and its aim is not a meditation or catechesis. It must be brief,

and not merely read. It is “a mother’s conversation”, as possible in mother tongue and culture with joy. Francis prolongs his considerations with another sub-chapter “Preparing to Preach”. It means: attention to the biblical text, reverence for the truth, study and patience to speak of the God whom we love and wishes to speak to us (n. 146). In a true biblical spirit, we must prevent “erroneous or partial interpretations which would contradict other teachings of the same Scriptures. But it does not mean that we can weaken the distinct and specific emphasis of a text which we are called to preach. One of the defects of a tedious and ineffectual preaching is precisely its inability to transmit the intrinsic power of the text which has been proclaimed” (n. 148). We have to personalize the Word with prayer, hence the famous formula of Thomas Aquinas: *Contemplata aliis tradere*. Therefore, the recommendation of *lectio divina* with an ear also to the people. Francis is nuanced in the use of ordinary human experience that he approves and the last news that are not suitable for the preaching. Among the “resources” Francis quotes Paul VI: “The faithful ... expect much from preaching, and will greatly benefit from it, provided that it is simple, clear, direct, and well-adapted” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 33), and to use ordinary language, logical progression, and general positive target.

The last sub-chapter is about “evangelization and the deeper understanding of the Kerygma”. This new step of evangelization should not be first in terms of doctrinal formation, but in a personal answer through commandments and virtues: a kind of “mystagogical catechesis” that includes moral life and liturgical signs. That should be the “way of beauty” (*via pulchritudinis*), in which all dimensions of the person are considered, with a “new language of parables” and the attrac-

tiveness of the ideal of a life of wisdom. Francis inserts here the “personal accompaniment in processes of growth”, with prudence and patience, listening the person, discovering his/her “contrary inclinations”, introducing “step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery” (John Paul II).

The last paragraph of this chapter comes back to the Scriptures as the true source of evangelization, hence the exhortation for a “serious, ongoing study of the Bible” (n. 175).

The **fourth chapter** is about “The Social Dimension of Evangelization”, and deals with the repercussions of the kerygma in the society. The Holy Spirit is the source of divine creativity for all problems. Benedict XVI gave the *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura* (2012) about the “service of charity” as a constituent element of the Church’s mission, in her universality: “Nothing human can be alien to it” (n.181). Francis recommends the study of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, and, with Paul VI, avoids to give solutions with universal validity. He restrains his purpose to these two points: the inclusion of the poor in society and peace and social dialogue. He recalls the biblical references of the liberation of the poor and insists in “solidarity”, to eliminate the structural causes of poverty, since all peoples should be artisans of their destiny. In a specific claim that means, education, access to health care and employment (n. 192). Quoting the document, Francis says: “Defenders of orthodoxy are sometimes accused of passivity, indulgence, or culpable complicity regarding the intolerable situations of injustice and the political regimes which prolong them” (n. 194). He offers a synthesis of biblical theology of almsgiving. However it is not “unruly activism”, since the true love is always “contemplative” (Thomas Aquinas). Another original observation of Francis is the lack of spiritual care as the

worse discrimination of the poor that deserves a “preferential religious care” (n. 200). He writes:

“No one must say that they cannot be close to the poor because their own lifestyle demands more attention to other areas. This is an excuse commonly heard in academic, business or professional, and even ecclesial circles. While it is quite true that the essential vocation and mission of the lay faithful is to strive that earthly realities and all human activity may be transformed by the Gospel, none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice: “Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbor, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty are required of everyone (*Libertatis Nuntius*, n. 18). I fear that these words may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call” (n. 201).

We have also some paragraphs on the economy and the distribution of income. We observe here a very personal style of the discourse. The Pope accuses many political and economic speeches of rhetoric, “lacking in perspectives or plans for true and integral development” (n. 203). But he praises the “vocation” of business men and politics and ask the Lord for a new political and economic mindset. He rejects the possible accusation of “populism” and apologizes for his words. To understand the background of this text, it should be good to follow the propositions of the World Economic Forum and see the main World Social Science Forum. View these words of Francis about migrants:

“I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis. How

beautiful are those cities which overcome paralyzing mistrust, integrate those who are different and make this very integration a new factor of development! How attractive are those cities which, even in their architectural design, are full of spaces which connect, relate and favor the recognition of others!" (n. 210).

Francis alludes to all the "victims" of our world: human trafficking and abortion. No "modernization" or "progress" against the dignity of human life. Finally, the Pope recalls the ecological conversion.

The third part of the chapter is consecrated to "The Common Good and Peace in Society." Behold the main concerns of the Pope: time is greater than space; to work slowly but surely; accept the tension between fullness and limitation; initiating processes rather than possessing spaces – Francis quotes here the work of R. Guardini *The End and of the Modern World* - ; unity prevails over conflict; communion amid disagreement; higher plan to preserves what is valid an useful on both sides – finally Christ -; the Spirit can harmonize every diversity; realities are more important than ideas; we will not want to reinvent the Gospel; the whole is greater than the part – polyhedron -; the genius of each people receives the entire Gospel, that has an intrinsic principle of totality.

The exhortation includes a section on "Social Dialogue as a Contribution to Peace": Dialogue between faith, reason and science; ecumenical dialogue; relations with Judaism; interreligious dialogue, which is not easy syncretism, and focus especially Islam, with a final paragraph on "Social dialogue in a context of religious freedom" with intellectuals and politicians, in a healthy pluralism. In this sense the Pope recalls the "new Areopagi" and the specific attempt of the "Court of the Gentiles" promoted by the Pontifical Council of Culture, under Cardinal Ravasi.

The **final short chapter** of this exhortation is on “Spirit-Filled Evangelizers”. It is a very personal chapter: “How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervor, joy generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction” (n. 261). So the Pope invoke the Holy Spirit. Following a proposition of the Synod, Francis says: “What is needed is the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity” (*Proposition 36*). For him, every period of history is marked by the presence of sin and its consequences, and present time is not worse, it is “different”. Let us imitate the saints who knew how to answer to their time obstacles. The first step was a “personal encounter with the saving love of Jesus”. Therefore, “we need to recover a contemplative spirit which can help us to realize ever anew that we have been entrusted with a treasure which makes us more human and helps us to lead a new life” (n. 264). We note a long quotation of the encyclical of John Paul II *Redemptoris Missio*, in which this saint Pope points to the unconscious expectation in individuals of knowing the truth about God. The missionary is convinced of responding to that expectation.

We guess the heart of Francis in these affirmations:

“It is impossible to persevere in a fervent evangelization unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, no the same thing to hear his word as not know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. It is not the same thing to try to build the world with his Gospel as to try to do so by our own lights” (n. 266).

First intention of evangelization should be always

the greater glory of the Father. We must be at the heart of the God's People. The Pope insists in the power of tenderness giving reasons for hope. The evangelizer has to preach the Gospel *sine glossa*, typical formula of St. Francis to avoid the complicated hermeneutics of the text. The mission must become our very self, and capable to see in every human being a person created by God and redeemed by the blood of his Son. That should be the perception of the "mysterious working of the risen Christ and his Spirit" against the empty selfishness and slow suicide, since "man cannot live without hope: life would become meaningless and unbearable" (*Assembly for Europe*). We are invited to discover and experience Christ, risen and glorified as the wellspring of our hope. Francis manifests also optimism even if he describes the "new difficulties" (n. 277) because in our world beauty is born anew and transforms the storms of history. "Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelize are instruments of that power" (n. 276).

It deserves to reproduce a nice paragraph about the "sense of mystery":

"Because we do not always see these seeds growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks: "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Co 4: 7). This certainty is often called "a sense of mystery". It involves knowing with certitude that all those who entrust themselves to God in love will bear good fruit (cf. Jo 15:5). This fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable. We can know quite well that our lives will be fruitful, without claiming to know how, or where, or when. We may be sure that none of our acts of love will be lost, nor any of our acts of sincere concern for the others" (n. 279).

That is why Francis adds that mission is not like a business, and so escapes all measurement. The Holy

Spirit “works as he wills, when he wills and where he wills (ibid.). We can feel ourselves “disoriented”. And the Pope adds: “I myself have frequently experienced this” (n. 280). His reaction is however a kind of “abandon”, “renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting the Spirit enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills” (ibid). An ulterior recommendation is about “the missionary power of intercessory prayer” (n. 281-283). Once again we underline the very personal character of the expressions of the Pope.

Like in other Church documents we have at the end some paragraphs consecrated to Mary called “Mother of Evangelization”. In the very well-constructed n. 286, the Pope recalls the evangelical moments of Marian interventions, and adds the allusion to the abundant shrines for her, because “Mary shares the history of each people which has received the Gospel and she becomes a part of their history. The example quoted by the Pope is especially touching. It is a sentence of the old document *Nican Mopohua*, the narration of the apparition of Mary to the Indian Juan Diego at the Tepeyac (Guadalupe), written in nahuatl language. So, for our new time, Mary can be called “Star of the new evangelization”. In the Church we follow the “Marian style of evangelization”: justice and tenderness, contemplation and concern, she is the model of evangelization. An inspired prayer to Mary concludes *Evangelii Gaudium*.

As final observations, we can say that Pope Francis seems critic rather about conservative positions and nostalgias. Instead, in a very personal way, alluding to his own experience, he insists in the strength of the Gospel of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. His exhortation is not a programmatic document following the “propositions” of the Synod, but a personal expression of his

passion for evangelization including some points like the poor, the popular religiosity and the importance of the means of evangelization, especially the homily.

We have in *Evangelii Gaudium* a very synthesis of the spirit of Francis and a kind of summary of the new times of evangelization of the World, fruit of faith and hope in the Lord and the intercession of Mary.

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HAZLETON Lesley, *After the Prophet. The Epic Story of the Shia-Sunni Split*, Anchor Books, New York, 2010, 239 p.

The author is a British born journalist of the Middle East. She is a master of the Arabic language and the ancient and modern history of this area of the world. Her book offers notes, sources and an Index of names, but it is not a scientific production, with the indication of each quotation. Therefore it is easy to read and becomes a kind of introduction to the Arabic world in the period of its formation.

The epoch of this story is well delimited: “After the Prophet”, that means after 632, until the death of Hussein the youngest son of Ali which is considered of the martyr hero of the Shia branch of Islam. We intend only to offer a simple synthesis of a research of a non-negligible interest in the present world situation.

The “Prologue” makes allusion to the massacre perpetrated on March 4, 2004, the Ashura day, in the city of Karbala (Iraq), in the great commemoration of Hussein, the grandson of Muhammad. The Sunni extremist group of Al Qaida in Iraq had calculated the attack with precision. Since 680, date of the massacre of Hussein, Karbala is the symbol of Shia group, and until

now the question is: “How can it come to this? (p. 2). The book tries to answer to this question, through three great parts: Muhammad, Ali, and Hussein.

First, we have to understand the problem of the death of Muhammad. After his famous wife Khadija, he had nine other wives, but no male child. Since the aristocracy of Mecca – the Quraysh – did not accept the message of Muhammad, in 622 he, with a small group of faithful, fled to Medina that becomes the City of the Prophet. After his victory on Meccans and his paradigmatic pilgrimage to the Kaaba – El Haj – he died in Medina in 632, assisted by the youngest of wives, Aisha.

Who will be the successor of the Prophet, the Calif? According to the Sunni, the community – the Ummah – guided by God. That was the idea of Aisha. According to the Shia, the successor should be Ali, the son of Abu Talib and the spouse of Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. We know the events through the tradition of Aisha and the historian Al-Tabari, who was a Sunni, but whose authority is recognized by all (39 volumes in English).

After a long discussion, Abu Bakr, the father of Aisha, was elected first Calif of Islam. The Prophet was buried in Aisha’s house. Abu Bakr designed Omar as second calif at his death. He put discipline and conquest Syria and Iraq. It is the time of decay of Persia and Byzantine Empire. He was assassinated by a Persian Christian slave. The six designated electors summoned Othman, who was in his seventies, and became the third calif. He lasted twelve years as the Deputy of God, and was assassinated. He belonged to the Umayyad family and promoted corruption and nepotism. The empire was extended until Egypt and Persia and Caspian Sea. The blood-stained shirt of Othman was sent to Damascus (Syria). In Medina, Ali was

proclaimed Imam and the 4th Calif. He was the husband of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. A very pious Muslim, he reached the unity of Islam. Aisha fled to Mecca, and accused Ali of the murder of Othman.

Later on, Aisha with Meccans arrived at Basra. The sons of Ali, Hasan and Hussein arrived from Kuffa (North Iraq). Ali uttered these prophetic words:

“To set things right is what I intend, so that the community may return to being brothers. If the Meccans give us allegiance, then we will have peace. But if they insist on fighting, this will be a split that cannot be repaired. So men, restrain yourselves. Remember that these people are your brothers. Be patient. Beware of rushing into anything without guidance, for if you win the argument today, you may lose it tomorrow” (p. 108).

The Battle of Camel took place at Bashra, Iraq on 7 November 656. Ali’s troops were victorious, but the split between Sunni – Aisha and Meccans and Syrians – and Shiite – Ali and Iraq and Iran – was in some sense pre-announced.

Muawiya, governor of Syria, did not pledge alliance to Ali as calif, who moved to the city of Kuffa (Iraq). On July 657 the two armies were at Siffin. Muawiya used the strategy to put a parchment of the Quran in the lances. So the battle had no place. Ali went back to Kuffa and Muawiya to Damascus. Meantime, a new group of Muslims appeared led by Abdullah ibn Wahb, the founder of fundamentalist Wahhabi sect “that today holds sway in Saudi Arabia and is the ideological backbone of Sunni extremism” (p. 141). Against Ali and Muawiya they shouted: “Judgment belongs to God alone!” (p. 142).

On Friday, January 26 of 661, Ali was assassinated in the mosque of Kuffa. “In time, a shrine would be built over Ali’s grave on that sandy rise, and the city of Najaf

would grow up around it” (p. 153).

After this detailed narration “after the Prophet”, the author gives still the story of the two sons of Ali: Hasan and Hussein, and at the same time she explains the story of Muawiya, who became the 5th calif during 19 years, and his son Yazid. With them the dynasty of Umayyad was installed in Damascus, and the Caliphate become hereditary. Both represent the Sunni trend, very political and military, and radically opposed to the Shia. Yazid sent Ziyad as governor of Kuffa. Muawiya was crowned Calif in Jerusalem, following the Byzantine model. In fact, many of his officials were Christians.

In fact, Hazelton clearly shows her preference for this line of Shiites that represents in some sense the pure and honest Islam. Hasan, the oldest son of Ali, had an attempt of assassination in Kufa. He was acclaimed as the second Imam. Intellectual and pious, he was buried at the cemetery of Medina.

Now we have a long description of the murder of Hussein, the youngest son of Ali, and the true hero of Shia. The fact occurred in Karbala. It became the holy city of Shia. Leaving Mecca for Iraq, he said: “What is fate is fated. And will happen whether I heed or not” (p. 174).

“He was not a warrior or a statesman. He was a revered scholar, honored since his brother’s death as the one who more than any man alive embodied the spirit of Muhammad” (p. 178).

He was conscious of his “sacrifice” (*Shahadat*). Ali Shariati, the intellectual head of the Iran revolution of 1979, presented Hussein as the model of a “new Islamic Humanism”.

In the book, the description of the death of Hussein, with many similitudes to Jesus’ death, is very thorough. It was on October 10, 680, at Karbala. After him, the

Shiites wait for the 12 Imam – “Al-Mahadi” - . In the Arab Empire, after Umayyad dynasty, we have Abbasids dynasty, with the capital in Baghdad, until the invasion of Mongols in 1258. Both however were officially Sunni.

Hazelton gives at the end a flash on the successive history of Sunni and Shia, which is very interesting in order to understand the present. So, for the readers not habituated to the history of Islam, the work is useful and can serve as an introduction to the many aspects of the Muslim situation in the world. In some sense, it prepares one for the prospect of Islam-Christian dialogue. [Hazleton’s book also offers a broad historical background for Thomas Mooren’s article “Prophecy and Holiness: From the Deathbed of Muhammad *Rasul Allah* to the Peaceful Valley of Ibrahim *Khalil Allah*,” in this current issue of *MST Review*, pp. 1-39, above.]

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