



POSTCOLONIAL PRACTICE OF INTERFAITH WITH- NESS

Christian Expropriations from India

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Abstract

An attempt to develop the postcolonial practice of interfaith with-ness as a means of radical protest and resistance against the religious fundamentalism and crony capitalism in India has enormous significance today. The postcolonial practice of interfaith with-ness is not only a theoretical postulation but also a radical with-ness (being with) shared with the religious others. The idea proposes a radical politics of recognition, politics of difference, and politics of creative dialogue, rather than an apolitical “practice of tolerance” on which the traditional idea of interreligious dialogue is grounded. As a humble attempt, several Christian expropriations of the idea are being voiced in this essay with a spirit of religious confidentiality. And, the study uses empire criticism and intersectionality as the primary analytical tools.

Keywords: postcolonial, interfaith practice, interfaith intersectionality, with-ness, empire, India

Abstrak

Praktik poskolonial “kebersamaan-kesaksian” (*with-ness*) lintas-iman memiliki signifikansi besar saat ini sebagai sebuah cara protes yang radikal dan resistensi terhadap fundamentalisme agama serta kapitalisme berdasarkan sistem kroni di India. Praktik poskolonial kebersamaan-kesaksian ini bukanlah sekadar postulasi teori, melainkan juga sebuah kebersamaan (being with) radikal yang juga dijalani bersama dengan yang liyan secara religius. Ide ini menawarkan sebuah politik pengakuan, politik perbedaan, dan politik dialog kreatif yang radikal, ketimbang sebuah “praktik toleransi” yang apolitis, yang secara tradisional menjadi dasar bagi ide dialog lintas-iman. Sebagai sebuah upaya sederhana, beberapa adaptasi Kristen dari ide tersebut akan ditawarkan di dalam tulisan

ini dengan memerhatikan semangat kerahasiaan religius. Selain itu, studi ini juga menggunakan kritisisme imperium dan interseksionalitas sebagai alat-alat analitis utamanya.

Kata-kata Kunci: poskolonial, praktik lintas-iman, interseksionalitas lintas iman, kebersamaan-kesaksian (with-ness), imperium, India

Erasure of memory, jettisoning of episteme,
othering of cultures and bodies,
demonizing of gods and ancestors
are some of the key elements of colonialism.
De-colonizing entails exhuming subjugated knowledge
and liberating marginalized epistemes.¹
—Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí

Introduction

The social fabric of India is immensely affected by the semantics of fundamentalism, xenophobia, communalism, and religious bigotry today. The recent constitutional amendments,² political gimmicks, unjudicial practices of the judiciary, manipulation of communal feelings and sentiments, etc., reduced the nation-state into a state of the post-truth event. The Hindutva ideology has taken its monstrous form by intentionally assuming an imperial manifestation of a modern *Vamana*.³ The political program of communal violence has shown its long-lasting effect, as it changed the microfabric of community living. Religious sentiments are being manipulated and misrepresented by crony

¹ Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí, *What Gender Is Motherhood?: Changing Yorùbá Ideals of Power, Procreation, and Identity in the Age of Modernity* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 6.

² The best example for the recent constitutional amendments in India is the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 passed by the Parliament of India on December 11, 2019. It amended the Citizenship Act 1955 by providing a path to Indian citizenship for undocumented migrants of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian religious minorities, who had fled persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan before December 2014. Muslims from those countries were not given such eligibility. The act was the first time religion had been overtly used as a criterion for citizenship under Indian law. See “Understanding the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019,” December 16, 2019, *The Hindu*, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/specials/understanding-the-citizenship-amendment-bill-2019/article30283717.ece>.

³ The myth of *Mahabali* and *Vamana* is a famous cultural critique against the Brahmanical Hinduism. In the myth, Vamana appeared to Mahabali, a righteous indigenous King, and asked six feet of land. At the time of measuring six feet of land, Vamana has taken up a phantasmal body, and *Mahabali* failed to show the land for the full measure. Vamana put his sixth step on the head of *Mahabali* and subsumed *Bali* into the hell.

capitalism. In this historical juncture, telling the truth with power, creating new platforms of resistance, exhuming subjugated epistemes, and radical imagining/dreaming of the future are some of the meaningful way outs. In this essay, I attempt to expand the idea of the postcolonial practice of interfaith with-ness as a means of radical protest and resistance against the imperial structures and powers today.

The essay develops in three significant sections. The first section sets the ground by explaining the relevance of empire criticism in the particular context of India. The second section is a brief account of a critical perspective on the category “world religions” and postcolonial methods of contention. In the third section, the idea of Christian witness is re-imagined as a postcolonial practice of interfaith with-ness in a detailed way. The essay concludes by referring to some significant signposts for the postcolonial practice of interfaith with-ness.

The Return (?) of Colonialism: Empire and Exclusion

As Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí rightly observes, empire works through the intentional erasure of memory, jettisoning of episteme, the othering of cultures and bodies, demonizing of gods and ancestors.⁴ With the advent of the fascist government in India, the above-said elements of colonialism got reflected in the public square. By employing a strategy of intentional ethnic/racial omission and exclusion, the empire tries to homogenize Indian cultural and religious landscape, overwriting our rich little traditions and discourses. Empire, in its fascist form now in India, executes its project of exclusion mainly in three ways. Firstly through constant closures. The recent constitutional amendments are the best examples of legal closures towards religious minorities. Secondly, clichés, which means the continuous wrong profiling using media propaganda, and making the selected “others” as “demons or monsters,” thereby producing phobias. Thirdly by contracts. The Hindutva agenda is a kind of racial contract between the Brahminism and majoritarian politics in reproducing the colonial hegemony camouflaged in a Hindutva attire. Here the unholy alliance between capitalism and communalism cannot be overlooked. In this context, the notion of intersectionality⁵ will be

⁴ Oyěwùmí, *What Gender is Motherhood?*, 1, 6.

⁵ Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of one's social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, height etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination. In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” as a way to help explain the oppression of African-American women. The term gained prominence in the 1990s, particularly in the wake of the further development of Crenshaw's work in the writings of sociologist Patricia Hill Collins. In the Indian context, the intersectionality of caste, gender, ethnicity is taken seriously in the

taken as a critical analytical category in locating the empire in context.

Why a Postcolonial Optic?

For centuries, colonialism worked to suppress local languages, to disqualify “other” religions, and to subjugate colonized peoples. In the case of religious studies, the invention of “world religions” proposed by the colonial missionary anthropologists and comparative theologians was not politically neutral. Still, it was highly politically charged, and it sharply taxonomized religious traditions in a hierarchical order. Muthuraj Swamy vehemently criticizes the category “world religions” and its western enlightenment-backdrops. Swamy says, “the heavily western-, colonial, and enlightenment-influenced notions of religion as a distinct unit and of world religions....neglects how ordinary people understand and integrate religion with other aspects of their life and how they live with multiple identities among which religious identity is only one – also not always based on ‘world religions.’”⁶ Tomoko Masuzawa resonates with Swamy’s argument by commenting that the construction of Buddhism, Islam, Daoism, Confucianism, and Hinduism as “world religions” in nineteenth-century European thought was not out of the spirit of multiculturalism but birthed out of “European hegemony-formerly couched in the language of the universality of Christianity.”⁷

The generic term “religion” itself has colonial imprints. The category is an invention of the modern west and often being used as a normalizing category.⁸ Talal Asad observes that “there are dangers in employing it [religion] as a normalizing concept.”⁹ The etymology of the term is also often disputed. Whether the word religion derived from the Latin word *relegare* (to bind) or *relegere* (to gather) is not clear. The two possible meanings of the term are “bind” and “gather.” However, the critical question is, who is binding or gathering, and for what purpose? Jacques Derrida reminds us that when we use the word religion, we are already using

postcolonial critique of interfaith relations. See Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016); Anna Carastathis, *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

⁶ Muthuraj Swamy, *The Problem with Interreligious Dialogue: Plurality, Conflict and Elitism in Hindu-Christian-Muslim Relations* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), ix.

⁷ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism, Invention of World Religions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), xiv.

⁸ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 1.

⁹ Ibid.

the Latin language with much ideological baggage.¹⁰ In the words of Jacob Olupona, “the use of the term ‘religion’ is problematic when speaking of indigenous religious traditions, if one approaches the topic without questioning assumptions about what religion is, means, and does.”¹¹ Here in this essay, the term “religion” is used cautiously and self-reflexively to re-signify “autochthonous,” emplaced religious life.

The growing interest in postcolonial inquiry in the field of religious studies and the practice of ministry reflects a collective consciousness of the limitations of colonial Christianity and its models of ministry to address the needs in our world today. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have argued that “the old form of European imperial dominance has been replaced by a new form of Empire, with a new political power of globalization that knows no limits and boundaries.”¹² This new global order is dominated by multinational corporates and financial agencies controlled by a rising transnational capitalist class resulting in sharp economic disparity. In this unique global situation of imperialism, postcolonialism gifts us a new methodological lens to make sense of life, derive critical sensibilities, and figure out new way outs. As a theoretical device, postcolonialism problematizes issues of representation and power dynamics deep within and between religious phenomena.

Postcolonial Method of Contention

Postcolonial perspective in religious studies challenges the colonial presuppositions/assumptions and push beyond the artificially constructed colonial binaries, which favor some religions over others, such as “monotheistic” versus “polytheistic,” or “written traditions” versus “oral traditions,” or “rational religion” versus “religious feeling.” It strives first to recognize the good in one’s religious tradition and that of others, while at the same time acknowledging that all religious traditions have beauty, as well as limitations, because all are, at best, human interpretations of the Divine. In sum, decolonizing imperial religious misappropriation, i.e., fundamentalism, entails *politics of recognition*, *politics of difference*, and *politics of creative dialogue* deeply within and between religious traditions to create a more democratic space. This is accelerated by exhuming subjugated religious knowledge (including the Dalit and tribal religiosities) and liberating marginalized epistemes, as

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, “Religion,” eds., Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 29.

¹¹ Jacob K Olupona, *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

¹² Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 11.

Oyewumi observes.¹³ The postcolonial method in religious studies opens up a new space of contestation, which demands radical decolonization of the majoritarian “multireligionism” funded by the empire as practiced in India now. There are three significant areas of contestation in this regard;

- a. Epistemological: Re-visioning religious others as the significant others and neighbors and putting oneself as a self among other-selves. Moreover, thereby carrying the truth humbly and gently.
- b. Ontological: Consider each religious tradition as an autochthonous entity, and accentuate that no tradition can claim to possess the wholistic religious truth of humanity; therefore, a space for active mutual learning, de-learning, and re-learning is plausibly created.
- c. Axiological: Re-visiting and reviewing religious traditions within and between courageously from an ethical point of view, and re-imaging a religious other as the ethical other.

In this regard, we can find postcolonial theory valuable in offering insights, language, and analytical tools to critique the lingering colonial legacies and imperial imprints, as well as to envision new and emergent possibilities. First, postcolonial theory debunks rigid and binary constructions of the world, challenges religio-cultural essentialism, and confronts political and religious ideologies that legitimate the status quo. Second, postcolonial theory enables new theoretical connections to be made and encourages the interrogation of social identities and related systems of oppression or discrimination intersectionally. Third, postcolonial theory challenges colonial constructions of religious boundaries and stimulates scholars to find new models of interfaith learning and collaboration.

Postcolonial Practice of Interfaith Learning

Here I propose postcolonial interfaith learning to replace the celebrated model of interreligious dialogue. The problem with the traditional interreligious dialogue is its grounding on a “politics of tolerance.” For the sake of tolerance and respect, we restrain from asking tough questions like the questions regarding gender justice, sexual orientation issues, multiple forms of violence in a religious community, or religious cooptation with neo/imperialism. Namsoon Kang says, “each religion has its

¹³ Oyèwùmí, *What Gender Is Motherhood*, 6.

history of sin that has justified and perpetuated oppression and exclusion of certain groups of people through its religious teaching, doctrine, and practice.”¹⁴ Most often, interreligious dialogue has not challenged the fundamental issues of injustice practiced within and between religions. Therefore, postcolonial interfaith learning accentuates a politics of affirmation and transformation instead of politics of tolerance.

Interfaith learning helps the participants to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to interact, understand, and communicate with persons from diverse religious backgrounds, and to create a democratic space that facilitates the work for the common good. A key aspect of postcolonial interfaith learning, then, is about implementing strategies that stand against imperialism and critically address the colonial biases of religion, academia, and faith communities so they might become more receptive and empowering to global cultures and epistemologies. Power analysis and openness to structural equality and the redistribution of power among diverse groups are essential values and skills in interfaith learning. Shared leadership and facilitation are ideal in interreligious encounters, as is the need for democratic space and the expectation that learners are actively engaged in their learning. Interfaith learning is an antidote to negative conditioning about other religious traditions and lingering fear about religious differences. For example, many contemporary Buddhists welcome participation in their spiritual practice without encouraging persons to call themselves Buddhists. “We do not need more Buddhists,” said His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “what we need are more people practicing compassion.”¹⁵ Some concrete practices of postcolonial interfaith learning would be telling/listening to personal stories, postcolonial religious literacy, and forming just communities at ground level.

Postcolonial (Christian) Witness as Radical Interfaith With-ness: Selected Themes

For Christians engaged in the postcolonial practice of interfaith learning, a critical understanding of Christian mission is vital. Throughout centuries, “Christian mission has been part of the colonial project of destroying people’s culture and self-esteem,” writes Letty M. Russell, a Christian feminist theologian, “And yet, God’s mission of sharing God’s love and life calls us in this postcolonial time to witness to God’s justice and care in every place

¹⁴ Namsoon Kang, *Cosmopolitan Theology: Reconstituting Planetary Hospitality, Neighbor-Love, and Solidarity in an Uneven World* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2013), 104.

¹⁵ Tenzin Gyatso (Dalai Lama), *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 2001), 12.

and for all people.”¹⁶ Russell’s work also emphasizes that gender inequity and sexual control were part of colonial practices, and thus incompatible with God’s mission that is inclusive to all people. Here, the Christian mission should be re-imagined as a sensibility rather than a project. The question that we need to ask as Christians is this: how far are we prepared to “decolonize” ourselves and our ministries? To that end, Christian “witness” should be re-imagined as a radical “with-ness,” with the people of other faiths, in co-journeying in the path of justice and transformation, learning, re-learning and un-learning together towards life.

In the following parts, I will provide several selected themes for the sake of clarity.

With-ness as Interfaith Conviviality

Re-mending the micro-social fabric of our society needs attentive and careful relationship building. In the present context of India, this is possible only through reclaiming the democratic spaces deep within and between religions, starting from domestic space—a *choratic* space. Richard Kearney postulates *chora*¹⁷ as an open, vibrant, feminine space, where individualities collapse into in-difference and mutual indwelling. *Chora* is a liminal spacing/or a threshold spacing. The idea of *chora* demands a radical experience with-ness, that is of being-with-the-other. Being-with is an idea of conviviality. The lovely word conviviality derived from the Latin root for feast *convivia*, which means “to live with.” Without reducing the other as alien and without nullifying the uniqueness of the other, we imaginatively create a dialogical space in which the genuine conviviality is practiced. Therefore, postcolonial Christian witness demands a *radical with-ness* with the people of other faiths.

With-ness as Trans-Religious Solidarity

Furthermore, radical with-ness entails re-visiting, re-examining, re-challenging, and re-constructing the very foundations of each religious discourse and practice from the perspective of justice. In doing the interfaith practice of with-ness, the ultimate goal is to work for justice and betterment of the entire cosmos. This is what I define as trans religious solidarity. Working for trans-religious solidarity does not mean that everyone thinks in the same way. Instead, it begins when people of different faiths/religions have the confidence to disagree over issues because

¹⁶ Letty M Russell, “God, Gold, Glory and Gender: A Postcolonial View of Mission,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 93, No. 368 (2004): 41, 44, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2004.tb00440.x>.

¹⁷ Richard Kearney, “After God: Richard Kearney and the Religious Turn in Continental Philosophy,” eds., William John Richardson and John Panteleimon Manoussakis (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 10.

they believe in transformation for the betterment of the world, not merely in coming up with doctrinal common ground among different faiths and religious traditions. This trans-religious solidarity would maximize interaction, challenge, and transformation, rather than pursuing a neutral balance between different religions/faiths. This spirit of solidarity helps one to realize that cosmic/planetary community is much larger than a particular religious community and that we all belong to the cosmos that the Divine created and will continuously create, and that one's particular belonging to a religion does not have to be in contradiction with one's universal belonging to the cosmos. This trans-religious solidarity should be materialized in people's struggles.

With-ness as Religious Culture of Dissent

The radical with-ness aims to glean the spirituality of dissent for countering the empire. Kang puts religious cultures of dissent beautifully as “creating spaces for epistemological standpoints that are grounded in the value of justice.”¹⁸ To this end, I think one should listen to the voice of the subaltern religiosity in India, which has been jettisoned from the dominant interfaith discourses. Joshua Samuel focuses on the marginalized, subaltern religiosity in South India as a grounding for a new epistemological standpoint for interfaith engagements grounded in the value of justice. Samuel proposes “embodied interreligious learning,”¹⁹ to tap liberating potentialities of the subaltern religiosity. Embodied interreligious learning emphasizes moving beyond the sacred texts and moving with the embodied experiences of the people, especially that of the marginalized. For instance, Dalit Christian communities in South Indian villages practice multiple religious belonging (with-ness) as a way of discernment and dissent.²⁰ This spirit of discernment and dissent is embedded in the subaltern religious movements in India, ranging from the Sramana movement (Buddhism, Jainism, and Charvaka) to the modern subaltern renaissance initiatives of Narayana Guru, Ayyavazhi Vaikunda Swami, Ayyankali,²¹ and many others. However, the

¹⁸ Kang, *Cosmopolitan Theology*, 103.

¹⁹ Joshua Samuel, *Untouchable Bodies, Resistance, and Liberation: A Comparative Theology of Divine Possessions* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 239.

²⁰ Samuel, *Untouchable Bodies*, 5.

²¹ The whole history of India could be read as an epistemological, ethical, and cultural conflict and struggle between the dominant Vedic or Brahmanical spirituality and the dissident Sramana critiques and Bahujan resistance of the hegemonic spirituality of Hindu imperialism. This ethical conflict and political struggle are all the more evident and significant in the cultural contexts of Indian renaissance that changed society, culture, and polity in a drastic way in the first half of the 20th century. Buddhism has paved the foundations of egalitarianism and literacy in South India in 3rd century BCE,

critical question remains: can we keep our ears open to the unattended voices of the dissent?

With-ness to Form Communities & to Attempt the Impossible

The power of creating ground-level basic-communities of hope and care cannot be overlooked. Working at the grass-root level seems to be impossible, especially in a communally charged situation. Nevertheless, attempting the impossible is at the core of postcolonial interfaith with-ness. There are a few stories provided below as significant signposts for postcolonial interfaith with-ness.

- On December 18, 2020, the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) has spoken truth to the power that the recent infamous Citizenship Amendment Act polarized communities and breached the fundamental principles of the Indian constitution. Asserting that the council was firmly against religion-based citizenship, NCCI stated that any attempt to homogenize religion, culture, language and practices would polarize communities. The official statement of the council said that the exclusion of Muslims in the act was polarizing communities based on faith and creed. The council, which represents 30 churches and 14 million people, asked the government to “end any action of ‘othering’ of the minorities”²² to make sure that a peaceful atmosphere prevails in India. Here NCCI practiced Christian witness as a radical

which was unfortunately obliterated and erased by the Brahmanic conquest by the 7th or 8th century CE. The hegemony of caste and Brahmanism was challenged and egalitarian social change was initiated by dissident spiritual leaders like Narayana Guru, Ayya Vaikundhan, and Poykayil Appachan in late 19th century. Both of them used the religious and spiritual traditions as a platform to float radical and subversive democratic ideals. While Vaikundha Swamy used popular and rustic forms of Vaishnavism and Hindu spirituality to introduce his radical ideas of human equality and brotherhood among the Bahujans of south Travancore by establishing an egalitarian sect called Samatva Sangham, Narayana Guru initiated a new secular and democratic practical spirituality encompassing ethical teachings of all religions and emphasized the importance of the betterment of the human and the social. Both of them questioned caste and priestly mediation in spiritual practice and affected humane and democratic transformations in society. See P. Sanal Mohan, *Modernity of Slavery: Struggles against Caste Inequality in Colonial Kerala* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), 116-147.

²² See “National Council of Churches in India on Citizenship Amendment Act,” Global Ministries, accessed August 28, 2020, https://www.globalministries.org/nccindia_responds_to_caa.

with-ness with people by proclaiming that God's justice and care are in every place and for all people.

- The act of trans-religious solidarity and radical hospitality shown by the Sikh Community and various other religious groups, including Dalit Christian communities in North East Delhi, following the 2020 Delhi riots,²³ was an act of radical interfaith with-ness.²⁴ In one part of Delhi, a gurdwara opened its doors to Muslims and anyone who needs shelter. In some other parts of the city, Dalits blocked the roads against mobs, sheltered their Muslim neighbors. This trans-religious solidarity helped the religious communities to maximize their interaction with religious others and contributes to the transformation of the society rather than pursuing a neutral balance between different religions/faiths.
- Interfaith organizations, like India Peace Center²⁵ at the national level and OMNIA²⁶ at the global level, equip religious leaders and people of faith to counter religious extremism and religious-based oppression, domination, and violence. India Peace Center's focus on building life-affirming communities, whereas OMNIA's primary strategy is to build up Interfaith Peacemaker Teams (IPTs) at local levels. Intentional building up of basic interfaith communities at the ground level has a

²³ The 2020 Delhi riots, or North East Delhi riots, were multiple waves of bloodshed, property destruction, and rioting in North East Delhi, beginning on February 23 and caused chiefly by Hindu mobs attacking Muslims. Out of the 53 people killed, two-thirds were Muslims, who were shot, slashed with repeated blows, or set on fire. See Vikas Kumar and Radhika Chitkara, "Rescripting North-East Delhi Riots – and the Question of Justice," *The Hindu*, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/rescripting-north-east-delhi-riots-and-the-question-of-justice/article31597139.ece>.

²⁴ See "National Council of Churches Extends Help to Those in Need in Delhi's Violence-Affected Area," *National Herald*, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/india/national-council-of-churches-extends-help-to-those-in-need-in-delhis-violence-affected-area>.

²⁵ See "India Peace Centre," *India Peace Centre*, accessed August 28, 2020, https://indiapeacecentre.org/?paged=2&page_id=3616.

²⁶ For a detailed reference of OMNIA, see "Religious Extremism: Global, Local, and Dangerous," *OMNIA: Interfaith Peacemaker Teams*, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.omnialeadership.com/ipt>.

significant role in re-weaving the broken social fabric of the society imaginatively.

Conclusion

Empire has multifaceted, multilayered, and long-lasting effects in deforming the fundamental human ontology and also that of the communities. Micro and macro fabric of the religious-socio-cultural scape all over the globe are now replete with “hate-talks” funded by the imperialism. The “culture of the spectacle”²⁷ and the advent of infotech paved an easy way for the infiltration of extreme communal sentiments in our contemporary post-truth world. Now, there is no one single unique way to respond to this crisis. Instead, we have many creative ways to navigate through this imperial dilemma. The postcolonial practice of interfaith with-ness gives significant guidelines for reshaping the interfaith engagements today in a meaningful way, which include epistemological re-visioning of the religious others as the significant others, ontological re-defining of each religious tradition as unique entities, and axiological re-visiting of the religious traditions within and between confidently from an ethical point of view. In sum, postcolonial interfaith with-ness entails *politics of recognition*, *politics of difference*, and *politics of creative dialogue* deeply within and between the religious traditions to create a peaceful planet.

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²⁷ The cultural condition induced by crony capitalism in which the working class has been defeated, alienation-illusion of a lie that has become truth- has taken over social existence, turning it into a representation, the truth has been replaced by artificiality and falsehood. See; Mario Vargas Llosa, *Notes on the Death of Culture: Essays on Spectacle and Society* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 13.

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