

Making Peace In and With the World

Making Peace In and With the World:
The Gülen Movement and Eco-Justice

Edited by

Heon Kim and John Raines

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2012

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-3567-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3567-1

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe my gratitude to many people who have made this volume possible.

My gratitude goes first to the contributors to this volume. With their specialties in diverse fields, they have created a rich and engaging dialogue which took place at the conference at Temple University, Philadelphia PA in November 2010, resulting in this volume. I also appreciate the patience they have shown during the editing process of this volume.

I am deeply grateful to Professor John Raines, the co-editor of this volume. I have been amazingly fortunate to have him as one of my professors and colleagues at Temple University. Just as his insightful guidance opened my intellectual eyes to religious phenomena, he guided this volume with his deep concern, pioneering work, and helpful suggestions.

I wish to mention with immense gratitude Dr. Naci Yazilioglu of the University of Pennsylvania. He has been greater than I could possibly thank him for. His never-failing encouragement did not allow me to be lazy. Particularly, he showed his trust in me to overcome many difficult situations from the preparation of the conference up to this point of the publication of this volume.

I am also indebted to the Department of Religion, Temple University, and Philadelphia Dialogue Forum, the co-sponsors of the conference. Particularly, I am grateful to Dr. Terry Rey, the Chair of the Department of Religion, and Dr. Ismail Kul, a professor of Widener University for their valuable support. Among many members of the Forum that I am indebted to are Dr. Mustafa Koksall, President of the Forum, and Mr. Gazi Ataseven, who never failed to support the publication of this volume.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude for our editors at Cambridge Scholars Publishing, particularly Carol Koulikourdi, Amanda Millar and Soucin Yip-Sou for their genuine supports and understanding throughout the project.

—Heon Kim
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, USA
November 1, 2011

PREFACE

Recently I was asked by a Belgian friend a somewhat sanctimonious question about how shameful it must sometimes feel to be an American: "First Reagan and now the Bush dynasty; given what your country does to the world, it must be very hard to be proud to be an American. Surely there is nothing that you are proud of as an American, right?" Resisting the temptation to say anything about the horrors of the Belgian Congo, I replied, "Well, actually there are things that I am proud of as an American, and none more so than the fact that my country is home to the most diverse Muslim population in the world." He didn't quite know what to say. It is indeed the case that there are Muslims of more national and ethnic backgrounds living in the United States than in any other nation on earth. Together they are a small minority in the US, to be sure, but numbering now several million, Muslims are an increasingly visible and important part of what America is and what America means.

What America means has, of course, always been a heatedly debated question, and the earliest attempts to answer it were crafted right here, in Philadelphia. For one of the most notable and in this case relevant examples, William Penn, a Quaker who had suffered religious persecution in his English homeland, founded the colony of Pennsylvania and its capital city of Philadelphia as a "holy experiment," a place where (white) peoples of diverse (Christian) denominations (Catholics initially excluded) would be free to practice their faiths and have their rights to do so protected by law. Though promoted by a man who himself owned slaves, and bankrolled by an economy fueled by the labor of enslaved Africans on Caribbean plantations, Penn's Philadelphia was the seedbed for the extraordinary religious diversity that we Americans celebrate and cherish today. It's unimaginable that the Quaker would have then foreseen that one of the fruits of his vision would be the extraordinary Islamic diversity of today's American religious mosaic. Yet, here we are today, in Philadelphia, an important center of Islam in North America, discussing the vision of another religious leader who also had to leave his own homeland and settle in Pennsylvania to practice his faith in peace, the influential Turkish Sufi Fethullah Gülen.

It is thus fitting that the impressive scholars represented in this volume gathered in November 2010 in Philadelphia to explore the implications of

Gülen's teachings for "making peace in the world and with the world." It is also fitting that the gathering took place at Temple University, where, especially in its Department of Religion, the study of Islam has enjoyed as long and productive a history as any other institution of higher learning in North America. Since the late 1960s, students from near and far have come here to study Islam, some of them going on to be counted among the leading authorities on the religion in the world today. Over the last five years, in my own classes that cover other topics, I have had Muslim students from Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Ghana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Turkey, Senegal, South Korea, Ukraine, and the United States (and surely I am missing some). Thus when it was proposed that a conference on one of the most influential Islamic thinkers in the world be held here, my reaction was, "Where else?"

Temple's founder, Baptist minister Russell Conwell, envisioned this university as a place where intellectual diamonds could be mined from the under-privileged neighborhoods surrounding its North Philadelphia campus. Arriving in Philadelphia exactly 200 years after Penn and establishing the university two years later, just as Penn probably did not foresee Muslims as part of his holy experiment, Conwell probably did not imagine that some of the diamonds passing through Temple's halls would be Muslims, some of them from North Philly, to be sure, but many others from every corner of the globe. Some of them read Fethullah Gülen in our classes, just as they read William Penn, Russell Conwell, Malcolm X, and Sonia Sanchez. One hopes that in placing their lessons in conversation with everything else that students learn at Temple and in Philadelphia, they leave here empowered, Inshallah, to contribute to peacemaking and to the realization of the university's mission "to create new knowledge that improves the human condition and uplifts the human spirit." That, at any rate, is a central purpose of the book that you are reading today.

—Terry Rey
Philadelphia, Palm Sunday 2011

INTRODUCTION

HEON KIM

Peace has become a key word today. The ongoing warfare and environmental problems alert us to our sustainability in this globalized world. We have observed the twentieth century as a century of war, which opened this millennium with the traumatic 9/11 and continued warfare in many parts of the world. We have also experienced the planetary environmental changes and ecological crisis from global warming to the recent oil spill in Gulf of Mexico and the nuclear crisis in Japan. A warning light of ‘the end of nature and humanity’ frames our global and local experience and leads us to seek peace today more than any time in history.

This volume cuts through these two problems, and correspondingly addresses two dimensions of peace - making peace between differing human communities and making peace between humanity and nature. The phrase ‘eco-justice’ in this volume signifies this dual reality, and thereby we hope to offer a unique view that justice in the world must go hand in hand with ecological justice if peace is to be made.¹

With its dual foci of peace, this volume participates in and adds to two connected academic fields. Social scientists of religion have focused great attention on the dynamics at play in the interaction between religion, human communities and nature, thereby forming a field of religious ecology. Since this volume explores such dynamics, it promises to cast light on religious ecology as well as to provide natural scientific works with considerable theoretical, philosophical and ethical implications. In effect, this volume amounts to the first multidisciplinary, multifocal discussion of the latest addition to Islamic ecology, a field that has been little examined despite the significant number of Muslims who comprise a fifth of the world’s population and compared to ecological studies in other religious traditions like Christianity, Buddhism, Daoism and Jainism. Along with religious ecology, this volume corresponds to studies in the

¹ For this idea, I am indebted to John Raines’ key note speech to the conference held at Temple University in November, 2010, with the title “Making Peace in and with the World: The Role of the Gülen Movement in the Task of Eco-Justice.”

interdisciplinary field of ‘war and peace.’ Since it deals centrally with the question of religion and eco-justice, this volume challenges assumptions of exclusivist religion, religion-oriented violence and the “Clash of Civilizations”²—all of which diminish religious values and realities while belittling their contributions to world peace.

Our authors of this volume take Gülen and the Gülen movement as the case study. Muhammad Fethullah Gülen (b. 1941) is a Turkish thinker and one of the most significant Islamic theologians in the contemporary world; the Gülen movement is the fastest growing Islamic civic movement worldwide. A recent survey, *The 500 Most Influential Muslims*, places Gülen as one of the top 50 influential Muslims today and the movement as a global Islamic network. It further names Gülen among those who “affect huge swathes of humanity,” and one who “has gone on to become a global phenomenon in his own right.”³ In fact, social scientists from diverse fields in the west as well as in Turkey have produced an accumulated body of studies on Gülen and the movement to form Gülen studies.⁴ The Gülen studies have thus far focused on the topics of tolerance, dialogue and education. Despite many implications of these topics, Gülen’s contributions to relevant issues of Eco-Justice and ecology were left untouched until the scholarly conference “Making Peace in and with the World: The Role of the Gülen Movement in the Task of Eco-Justice” held at Temple University in Philadelphia in November 2010.

This conference achieved its initial goal, which was to bring together a critical core of scholars from diverse academic fields to examine relevant paradigms and discourses on the theme of religion, peace and the environment with the foci of Gülen and the Gülen movement, and to chart new directions for future scholarly work. The conference proceedings have been carefully scrutinized and selected to produce this volume. The authors here approach related topics from their own academic disciplines

² By this term, I refer to Samuel Huntington’s theory of “Clash of Civilizations.” This theory suggests a religiously intrinsic incompatibility between western civilization and non-western civilizations, and foresees inevitable civilizational clashes and wars; see, Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993): 22-49.

³ John Esposito and İbrahim Kalin, eds., *The 500 Most Influential Muslims 2009* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009). Available online at <http://www.rissc.jo/muslim500v-1L.pdf>.

⁴ See Heon Kim, “The Nature and Role of Sufism in Contemporary Islam: A Case Study of the Life, Thought, and Teachings of Fethullah Gülen” (PhD diss., Temple University, 2008).

to provide readers with a cutting edge study on peace, Eco-Justice and ecology.

In chapter 1, “The Spiritual Crisis at the Heart of the Crisis of Eco-Justice,” John Raines provides a framework for this study. To him, Eco-Justice is necessary to save our earthly communities and the earth. Raines defines Eco-Justice as a dual task of global economic justice and global ecological justice, and argues that for that task, we need to begin reconsidering the human place with respect to the natural world and the human relationship to its material possessions. He speculates,

Too often in world religions the central concern and promise is the well being of the *Self*. Religious beliefs and practices offer this self “Salvation” or “Enlightenment.” Thereby the earth, this living environment that embraces and sustains us, is reduced to a material stage, a mere material backdrop upon which the “higher” religious drama of the self is played out. That way of looking at the world (and treating the world as it is looked at) is the spiritual brokenness that lies at the heart of the environmental crisis. The earth is reduced to dead stuff that we humans buy, use and throw away when, in fact, the earth is our home and mother. At its heart the double crisis of global economic justice and global environmental sustainability is a spiritual crisis. For too many of us, salvation becomes an escape from the material world and enlightenment means the cultivation of an elitist individualism. Both fail the task of Eco-Justice. We must find a new way forward.

For consideration of a new way, Raines proposes that research on Gülen’s thought and the Gülen movement would provide insight into the ways in which the material world is treated with respect and reverence.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 discuss what we need to do to make peace among differing human communities. In chapter 2, “Justice and Charity: Contrasting and Complementary Approaches to Creating the Ideal Society,” Joseph Stoutzenberger follows up Raines’ suggestion on the global economic justice. He underlines Gülen’s view that “at the present time half the world is living on two dollars a day, with a billion people surviving on even less.”⁵ In Gülen’s term, this is the “nightmare scenario” of injustices, and to Stoutzenberger, the task of justice is to overcome such injustices.

Chapter 3, “Violence and the Perception of the Other,” looks at another aspect of injustice that causes violence. Throughout this chapter, David Grafton argues that one’s perception of the other brings about violence. His own lived experience leads him to note religionist and nationalist

⁵ Fethullah Gülen, *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance* (Somerset, NJ: The Light, 2004), 236.

propaganda that construct images of the other as the “evil in our midst.” This sort of constructed images of the other results in violence, and unfortunately, this becomes a pervasive tendency within the human psyche that disrupts the identity and value of the other in order to situate and validate one’s own position. This tendency is exemplified by, what Grafton calls, the “nameless and faceless Jihadist,” who projects violent Islam. The presence of Jihadists and the consequently imagined violent Islam justify Gülen’s critique of violence in the name of Islam. Gülen acknowledges the other as part of God’s creation, who shares a common human identity with their names and faces. This perception of the other prevents violence and promotes intentional encounter and engagement with the other.

A desirable and fruitful way to engage with the other is in dialogue. As Grafton’s chapter indicates, a dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be held in order to maintain peace among closely-interconnected human communities in today’s globalized world. In chapter 4, “End Times for These Times: Eschatology and Dialogue for Peace,” Walter Wagner suggests a topic that can bring Christians and Muslims into dialogue. In his analysis, the eschatological concept of End Times, which is common to both Christianity and Islam, postulates preparation of the present for the future. It provides a dynamic that pushes present persons toward the future, and a perspective through which the future is anticipated in the present. Examining Gülen’s theology of dialogue, Wagner argues that “inter-religious dialogue is a necessity in the process of achieving the realm of peace in the present that anticipates the blessed Hereafter.” In this sense, the concept of End Times provides an essential piece of the foundation for Christian-Muslim dialogue and helps develop effective interreligious dialogue, cooperation and influences for justice and peace.

Concurring with Wagner, Karina Korostelina conceptualizes dialogue as a tool for the development of peaceful co-existence between different faith communities. In chapter 5, “Dialogue between religious communities: Gülen’s contribution to Eco-Justice,” she envisages a dialogue toward the creation of a common identity. A common identity is, in other words, an overarching identity which serves to “resolve contradictions between regions and makes attitudes toward other religious groups more positive, even if they had a long history of offences.” Based on this identity, Korostelina looks at our common goal of saving the earth. This goal can be a strong foundation for interfaith dialogue that leads different religions toward peaceful co-existence, and further creates a new common identity of “We-ness” as responsible inhabitants of our earth.

While these four chapters address peace in differing human communities, the remaining four chapters focus on peace between humanity and nature.

With their diverse approaches, the authors of these chapters offer considerable investigations on ecological crisis and religions. In recent decades, a series of scholarly discussions have revealed the contributions of world religions to ecological crisis.⁶ Quite contrary to a belief that monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - sanction humanity to dominate nature, the discussions have disclosed religious teachings on the interdependent relationship between humanity and nature. While corresponding to these discussions, our chapters uncover a new dimension from the perspective of peace and eco-justice.

Jon Pahl, in chapter 6, “Sacred Space and a Coming Religious Peace in the Thought of M. Fethullah Gülen, and in the Hizmet Movement,” introduces a concept of sacred space of nature. He marks Gülen’s teaching that “nature is much more than a heap of materiality or an accumulation of objects: It has a certain sacredness, for it is an arena in which God’s Beautiful Names are displayed.”⁷ In Pahl’s examination, this teaching has implanted a concept of sacred space of nature into the Gülen movement. Metaphors like light, water, planet, jihad and love, which Gülen uses to describe divine presence and the ideal relationships of different religious people to God and to one another, represent a nature-centered worldview. This worldview reserves the sense of nature as sacred space at the heart of the movement.

A compelling aspect of humanity’s interdependent relationship with nature is examined in chapter 7, “Fethulleh Gülen and Eco-Justice: From Genesis 1:28 and Qur’an 2:30 to Platonic *ergon* and Aristotelian *harmonia*.” In this chapter, Ori Soltes comparatively analyzes biblical and qur’anic passages regarding human-human and human-natural world relations from the perspective of eco-justice. A particular theological point that Soltes notes is a concept of vice-regent or stewardship over the earth. The qur’anic definition of humankind as being God’s appointed vice-regent on the earth is often interpreted as human dominion or subjection over nature. Opposing to this interpretation, Soltes discusses Gülen’s emphasis on “If humanity is the viceregent of God on earth... then the Divine Being that has sent humanity to this realm will have given us the right, permission and ability to discover the mysteries imbedded in the soul of the universe... to be the representatives of characteristics that belong to Him, such as knowledge, will and might.”⁸ This meaning of

⁶ See for instance, *The Religions of the World and Ecology* series published from 1997 to 2003 by Harvard University Press.

⁷ Gülen, *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance*, (Somerset, NJ: The Light, Inc., 2006), 313.

⁸ Ibid., 204.

human vice-regency necessitates the human act of caring for the world as opposed to humanity's free exploitation of the world.

Heon Kim takes up further the concept of vice-regency. In chapter 8, "Self in and with Others in Gülen's Thought: A Practice of Religious Ecology," he considers the human vice-regency relationship with nature as a central part of Islamic ecology. Kim first presents "the separation thesis between self and others." This thesis refers to otherization of nature, which sees nature not as an organic part of human self but as a mechanical other. Eventually it justifies human exploitation of nature as an object for human benefit. Attributing this thesis as a paradigmatic root of the ecological crisis, Kim parallels it with Gülen's thought, which defines humanity as a mutually interdependent unity of self and other and as an object of love, tolerance and dialogue. In this context, Kim discusses human relationship with nature, centering on the concept of human vice-regency. In Gülen's "love-centric worldview," the duty of humanity as God's vice-regent is to love and care for nature to preserve it as a divine book. Kim presents this view as an ontological basis and moral principle of the nature-human relationship for a discussion about peace in and with the world.

In chapter 9, "The Gülen Movement: Cultivating Eco-Justice Through Education and Self-Refashioning," Margaret Rausch examines to what extent Gülen's vision of peace is embodied in the Gülen movement. Her examination is based upon in-depth interviews with seven men and women affiliates of the movement in the US. The interviews lead Rausch to argue that through a self-refashioning process the affiliates have embodied such virtues as altruism, humility and compassion for humanity and all of creation, and these virtues in turn provide them a new mindset and systemic framework, in which their activities and practices promote dialogue, harmonious co-existence, and peace.

PART 1:

MAKING PEACE BETWEEN DIFFERING HUMAN COMMUNITIES

THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS AT THE HEART OF THE CRISIS OF ECO-JUSTICE

JOHN RAINES

What is Eco-Justice and why should we pursue it? To answer that question let me begin with a puzzle. What's wrong with saying, "we should take better care of the earth?" Because speaking that way we seem to be autonomous beings outside The Great Livingness that enfolds and supports us, as if we should "decide" as outsiders that we should take care of The Living World that at each moment is, in fact, already taking care of us.

Think what it means for us to breathe. We take in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. After these millions of years of animals breathing, how is there any oxygen left? It is because of photosynthesis—all those grassy and green things out there that take in our carbon dioxide and give us back oxygen. We humans breathe only because we are part of a living, breathing world. And that living environment was there with its oxygen millions of years before our species made its evolutionary entrance—awaiting us and ready to welcome us. It is the living environment that takes care of us, not we who take care of it! What we as a species owe the environment is justice—a just recognition of what we depend upon and therefore owe. And that is why in these essays we talk about ECO-JUSTICE.

There is a second reason. Everywhere in the world today, in every nation, and also between the nations of the global North and the global South, inequality is growing. Take for example the growing inequality within my own country. For the past forty years inequality of income and of wealth in the United States has vastly increased. According to Census data, the percentage of U.S. total income in 1976 that went to the top 1 percent of American households was 8.9 percent, but by 2007 that had increased to 23.5 percent. Between 1979 and 2008 the top 5 percent of American families saw their real income (adjusted to taxes and inflation) increase by 73 percent; while over the same period the bottom 20 percent saw a *decrease* in real income of 4.1 percent. If we talk about wealth (which besides income includes real estate, mutual funds, stocks and

bonds and retirement accounts), in 2007, according to the Federal Reserve Board, the richest 1 percent of U.S. households owned 33.8 percent of the nation's private wealth. That's more than the combined wealth of the bottom 90 percent! For forty years our country has become more and more divided into *those who have more* and *those who have less*. And what we are talking about here is not just income or wealth, we are talking about power and the use of that power to influence social legislation. Nowhere is this made more evident than in the Bush tax cuts (recently renewed by the Obama administration), where 25 percent of the tax money saved went to the top 1 percent of the tax payers.

Why is this happening? Why are the vast majority of our citizens losing out? Put simply, capitalism has gone global and abandoned its national base. We may call it "runaway capitalism!" First it ran away from the workers of the older industrial nations. For example, beginning in the 1970s American capitalism went global and invested heavily in the electronics and steel industries in Japan and South Korea. But here's the truth, as soon as workers in those countries demanded fair pay, runaway capitalism took those jobs to China (electronics) and Brazil (steel). Workers in America first, but then workers in Japan and South Korea saw their factories close.

This pattern of growing inequality within nations makes itself evident in places we often refer to as "modern miracles of development." Take China. The government there recently increased the minimum pay to \$175 per month. In terms of factory workers we find the average yearly income is \$3,200. Are there new millionaires, are there new and elegant shopping malls, are there traffic jams in Chinese cities—yes! But the average worker in China can't afford to buy the computers or television sets, or even the designer shoes and clothes that he or she is making. A vast abyss of inequality has opened. Nations of the world are becoming more and more unequal.

Then there is the growing inequality *between* nations, mostly of the global North and global South. Take the case of international debt. Today, each year more money pours out of Africa to the North in terms of debt repayments than flow from North to South as international aid. And there is an irony when the North (especially the U.S.) sends food aid to the starving populations of the global South. The irony is this: the end result is that our federally subsidized corn and wheat find a use but only by destroying the market position of local farmers in the global South, thus cementing in patterns of dependency.

Or take the case of oil-rich Nigeria which sells its oil to the energy voracious North at the expense of polluting its own coastal estuaries and

depleting the fish and fowl reserves local populations depend upon. Pesticides forbidden in Europe and North America because of the negative health effects on farm workers are used with abandon in Mexico, Brazil and Africa.¹

Here we see how economic injustice is tied intimately to ecological injustice. Put simply, runaway capitalism will run wherever it has to run to escape well paid workers but also to escape nations that enforce strong environmental protections laws, and that is why we talk about Eco-Justice. Both global economic justice and global ecological justice is what we talk about because they are two sides of the same coin.

Let me paint you a picture that illustrates this brave new world. In your mind's eye see this: global capitalism has wings but no feet, and we humans have feet but no wings—that is, we humans are confined to living in local communities. That is the only place we can live—in local tax systems, local school systems, local systems of water and waste disposal, local systems of electricity and housing production.

Let me translate that picture of wings and feet into the way in the contemporary world we grow and sell food in this new global system. In the global South in the past 40 years, millions of acres of land have been taken out of production for local appetites—food such as rice and maize, the only food the poor can afford—millions of acres have been transplanted with winter fruits and vegetables for people in the global North who can afford to pay more, and thus increase the profits of global food corporations. The logic which steered the production of food was for millennia the logic of local hunger. No longer! Today, food follows money and flies through the air or travels the oceans. The logic of food is not the hunger of humans but the hunger of corporations for profits. If you live in the United States today your average supper has traveled 1,300 miles to get to your table. We can and do pay for those miles; but those miles leave the poor and their hunger behind.

The result is that 1 billion and perhaps as many as 2 billion of us—almost 1/3rd of our human species—lives in what the United Nations calls “Absolute Poverty.” This is a New Kind of Starvation, a starvation not caused by natural disaster, a starvation not caused by inadequate food

¹ The best work on global inequality is by Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). See also Michael Yates, *Naming The System: Inequality and Work in the Global Economy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003). See also Jeffery Faux's *The Global Class War* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006). On global inequality and its causes see also Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 2006).

production. There is plenty of agricultural productive capacity to feed all six and a half billion of us and feed us well.² This new starvation is caused by the fact that poor people make poor customers for the corporate global food system. The result of that is vividly portrayed in our modern world so strangely divided, we could say grotesquely divided into the starved and the stuffed.

Let us return to that picture of wings and feet. Runaway capitalism not only runs away from well paid workers and nations that enforce strong environmental protection laws, it also runs away from the hungry poor of the global South. To address successfully this dual violation of Eco-Justice, what we need to do is to put “feet” back on global capitalism, slowing money down so it serves the well being of humans who necessarily live in local communities. How can we do that? The global instruments are already there. They are the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Right now they are driven by the logic of runaway capitalism. But as the crisis of Eco-Justice persists, a new politics will begin to appear, a new understanding of how we humans must construct a fundamentally new way to steer our future together on planet earth. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization are human creatures and humans can recreate them to serve higher moral purposes than the short term profits of private corporations. And there is a politics for that to happen as I will argue in a moment.

There are important resources in the moral reasoning of both Christianity and Islam for defining and defending such moral purposes. In Christian medieval thought and practice the taking of interest on loans (usury) was strictly forbidden because it put all the risk upon the borrower. Similarly in Islam, *riba* (taking interest on a loan) is prohibited. Both traditions recognize that economic activity needs to be held accountable for moral purposes that surpass private profit.

This heritage within Islamic thought bears directly upon the issue of Fethullah Gülen and his *hizmet* or “service” movement. In his teaching and writings, Gülen has addressed deeply and with insight how the material world is treated by Islam with respect and even reverence. There are generative roots in his thought for the task of Ecological Justice. This will be made clear in other essays in this collection. However, I am less aware of a systemic analysis of how power and privilege work in the capitalist world system to advance and protect elitist interests and advantages. Still

² These claims on the global food crisis are documented in The United Nations Food and Agricultural Commissions' report on “The New Food Insecurity,” August, 2008.

his insistence that religion needs science, just as science needs religion, opens the door to the critical social sciences and their structural analysis of Neoliberal Capitalist “Development.” This will help the Gülen Movement address that other side of the Eco-Justice Crisis, namely the crisis of economic justice in a world becoming ever more divided into a powerful international elite and the vast majority who do not belong to that elite and have their voice and interests erased from the discourse of international economic policy decisions.

There is an entrance into such a systemic analysis already in practice in the Gülen Movement. It is this: in 1996, members of the Movement established an interest-free bank (following the Islamic prohibition against *riba*) and in 2006 changed the name to Bank Asya. As of July 2007 that bank had 117 domestic branches, and states its two fundamental purposes “to develop new interest-free banking products” and “to take products that are already being offered at conventional banks and adapt them in such a way as to fit into the system of interest-free banking.”³ The implications of this practice upon the casino-like financial practices dominating global capitalism are indeed radical. That fact needs to be systematically explored by Muslim intellectuals and economists, which would add an important voice to those of us who, as Christians, are highly critical of the elitism and spreading inequality of global Capitalist “Development.”

I need to explain what I mean by “casino-like.” It adds a new feature to the older runaway capitalism. Today, the vast majority of international financial transactions have nothing to do with things made in factories or harvested from fields or rendered in services. Instead, money now mostly makes only more money. It creates no jobs, increases no productive capacity. It is dedicated to pure speculation—thus the word “casino.” Read this set of amazing statistics. In 2002 (and it has gotten worse since) worldwide speculative transactions hit an incredible 1,122.7 trillion US dollars. Yes, that’s right: one quadrillion, one hundred and twenty two trillion and 700 million dollars. Here’s what is crucial. That total was 34.76 times the 32.2 trillion dollars of transactions in goods and services—i.e., the real economy! (Stop. Read that again and think what it means.)⁴

³ Filiz Baskan, “The Political Economy of Islamic Finance in Turkey: the role of Fethullah Gülen in Asya Finans,” in *The Politics of Islamic Finance*, ed. Henry and Wilson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

⁴ These statistics are taken from the French Economist, Francois Morin, *Le Mur de l’Argent* (Sueil: The Wall of Money, 2006). Morin is a Professor of Economics at

The Western Christian moral tradition, whether Catholic or Protestant, argued that private property (including investment capital) was morally legitimate only because and in so far as it “served the common good.” But in casino capitalism financial transactions have been completely removed from the commons, from the real economy, and have instead been radically privatized. One way to begin to correct this is to create a new international tax on these speculative transactions and so begin to recover lost revenues for public purposes. Such revenues could become a source of what economist Joseph Stiglitz calls “global greenbacks,” a source of development investment for poorer countries independent of The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, dominated as they are by wealthy countries and their interests. In 2010, Spain and France suggested such a tax, but the idea has not generated widespread notice or support.⁵

Imposing such a tax would go a long way toward tipping the balance of international investments back toward local communities and the humans that necessarily live in such communities. It would begin to put “feet” back on global capitalism, bringing it down to earth where it belongs.

The idea that global capitalism could be morally disciplined to serve the well being of humans living in local communities seems farfetched. A sense of realism predicts that powerful interests will use their power to block that move. So let me make a rash prediction. As the global crisis of Eco-Justice persists and even deepens, and as the protest movements against those injustices continue to grow and become transnational in connections, at some point in all of that there will be a sudden change. CEOs and stock holders of major multinational corporations will begin to sense this change and say: “Okay, as long as there are effective international enforcements that disciplines my competition, forcing all of us to play by the new rules of Eco-Justice, then I am with you. Why? Because I have grandchildren and I want to leave to them a world that works!” When that happens, change that previously seemed impossible will come like an avalanche.

But for that happy day to come, there must be one other change, a change in our religious orientation. Yes, this double crisis of Eco-Justice draws us into a deeper dimension of crisis, because the crisis of Eco-Justice is at its heart a spiritual crisis.

the University of Toulouse and a member of The General Council of The Bank of France. He argues that 50 percent of the daily trading done in New York and London is done by hedge fund managers.

⁵ See <http://business.financialpost.com/2011/09/28/eu-proposes-transaction-tax/>

Too often in world religions the central concern and promise is the well being of the *Self*. Religious beliefs and practices offer this self “Salvation” or “Enlightenment.” Thereby the earth, this living environment that embraces and sustains us, is reduced to a material stage, a mere material backdrop upon which the “higher” religious drama of the self is played out. That way of looking at the world (and treating the world as it is looked at) is the spiritual brokenness that lies at the heart of the environmental crisis. The earth is reduced to dead stuff that we humans buy, use and throw away when, in fact, the earth is our home and mother. At its heart the double crisis of global economic justice and global environmental sustainability is a spiritual crisis. For too many of us, salvation becomes an escape from the material world and enlightenment means the cultivation of an elitist individualism. Both fail the task of Eco-Justice. We must find a new way forward.

I will speak only for my own tradition, Western Christianity. And I will ask, where do the steeples on our churches point us? And why do they point us there? Steeples point us up and away from the ground that holds them up. Steeples witness to a profound lack of connectedness, a lack of gratitude to the material creation that at every moment nurtures and sustains us. What are we fleeing from when we follow those steeples and in our hearts and minds flee the earth?

I think we fear and flee the mortality we share with all other living things. We fear and flee death.

But note this and note it well. Without death we humans as a species would never have evolved, would never have arrived here on planet earth. Without death we humans would not be.

Here, religiously speaking, is where we Christians must take our hearts and minds. God used and continues to use evolution to create and recreate life on earth. Yes, that is how it happened and is still happening even as you read these words. Beginning billions of years ago with simple one-celled life forms in the ocean depths, that is where the story began. Then, over vast time, life evolved to become more and more diverse and more and more complex in its organic base. In that story of life evolving, death is not some punishment. Death is not the opposite or the end of Life. Rather life and death are dance partners of evolution where life takes death into itself and keeps life alive, always changing and still evolving. It’s a different kind of Good Friday and Easter story, where life keeps itself alive by using death for the end and purposes of life-evolving.

Let me dare for a moment to do some theology. Creation, I wager, is not something that happened back then and now is finished. That would make the world dead. The Creator and Creation are in fact not separate,

one preceding the other, but should be seen and understood as one and the same, joined together as Cosmic Creativity. It is Spirit-filled Matter, star dust blown into the future universe some 14 billion years ago, a cosmic process that is still unfolding. And we humans are a part of all that, indeed a very special part.

If we imagine that story of 14 billion years of cosmic unfolding, if we imagine all that in terms of a bookcase and volumes in that bookcase, there would be 39 volumes. Each volume would have 400 pages, and each page would represent 1 million years. We humans would appear only in the last volume, on the last page and only in the last line. That seems like such a humiliation! But think again! The magic and wonder is that I can say what I just said, and you understood it!

The evolutionary biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky saw the meaning of it all. In his book *Mankind Evolving*, here is what he said:

“The most important point in Darwin’s teachings was, strangely enough, overlooked. Man [!] has not only evolved, he is evolving. This is a source of hope in the abyss of despair. In a way Darwin has healed the wound inflicted by Copernicus and Galileo. Man is not the center of the universe physically, but he may be the spiritual center. Man and man alone knows that the world evolves and that he evolves with it. By changing what he knows about the world man changes the world that he knows; and by changing the world in which he lives man changes himself. Changes may be deteriorations or improvements; the hope lies in the possibility that changes resulting from knowledge may also be directed by knowledge. Evolution need no longer be a destiny imposed from without; it may conceivably be controlled by man, in accordance with his wisdom and his values.”⁶

In these words we find hope for the future, but also terrible judgment if we fail to act upon what we know. Today, tomorrow and the day after we live without excuse.

How strange and wonderful that Cosmic Creativity should bring forth here on planet earth an autobiographer of Cosmic Process, a Story-Teller who begins to tell the Larger Story of which our human story is a part. Yes, we humans are becoming a place (we may hope there are many other such places in the universe) where God wants the Story of Cosmic Creativity to be told. And once we begin to tell that story well and accurately, we humans who are Christians will take our steeples and in our imagination turn them upside-down, and thereby return honor and

⁶ Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 226.

gratitude to planet earth which gives us life—in the place where God intended and prepared for us to find life. And when our imagination of hope turns back to earth, we can use our talent for cosmic story-telling to tell us what we need to do, and the knowledge of how to do it.

Life evolving, the life God intends for us, is always and everywhere a yeasty Community Of Life, an immensely complex and meaty interdependency—a vast organic WE. That story is told wrongly when it is told as a Story of Individual Escape, when it is told as a story of Salvation into some spiritual elsewhere, or of elitist Enlightenment and Liberation. The real story is a story of unfolding mutual interdependence—of humans needing and depending upon one another in a life that is always a *life-together*, and of all humans together depending upon the intimate embrace of the Living Environment that at every moment of our individual lives, but also of our collective lives, sustains and nurtures us.

Here, at the end of my reflections, let me return to the same idea as I began. Why is it a mistaken way of speaking to speak about “the environmental crisis?” Because the environment is in crisis only because we humans, and especially we well to do humans, are in crisis in relationship to the environment. The crisis is ours, we made it and we must undo it.

Confession, it is said, is “good for the soul.” So let me end my remarks with a confession.

My generation has failed.

We have failed to prevent the two great moral crises that haunt our era and threaten the future. One is the growing inequality within all nations and between the nations of the global North and the global South, and all that means for the precarious future of democratic governance. The second failure of my generation is our inability to discipline our lifestyles and our economic institutions to the task of environmental sustainability. My generation now puts this world into the hands of the younger generation. It is our bitter patrimony.

Still, as Abraham Lincoln once said to his generation, “We must disenthral ourselves, we must think anew and act anew” and thereby save the future. In the end, my generation shares the same destiny with you younger folks, for both of us, our unborn grandchildren and great grandchildren await our action or our inaction. And surely it is they, not we, who will have the final say and judgment about how we understood and lived our lives.

VIOLENCE AND THE PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER

DAVID D. GRAFTON

Using a personal experience as a victim of the 2004 Taba terrorist attack in Egypt, this chapter will explore how communal pressures to understand religious and national violence validates one's own status and position and disrupts our ability to see members of another faith community or nation as a creation of God. Constructing images of the Other has been an important part of religious and nationalist propaganda from time immemorial. Constructing an image of the "evil in our midst" is well documented and will be reviewed. Yet, it is also a pervasive tendency within the human psyche to make sense of communal discord and violence by creating easy categories and answers that disrupts the identity and value of another human being. Characterizations and falsification of members of other faith traditions become an easy way to explain actions and validate one's own position. Using Fethullah Gülen's critique of terror in the name of Islam, the chapter will argue that religionists must monitor their own personal, social, ethnic, and nationalist agendas through intentional encounter and engagement with the Other in order to recognize the Other as a creation of God.

Taba 2004

In October 2004, while living in Egypt where I was teaching, my family and I decided to take a short holiday to the Red Sea resort of Taba. Not only was it the term break for my children's school, but also it was the Sixth of October – one of the Egyptian National holidays. In addition, it was Succoth, the Jewish Festival of the Booths, and a National Holiday in Israel. Hundreds of Israeli tourists had crossed the border from Eilat into Taba. That particular weekend the Taba Hilton was packed with unsuspecting tourists.

After our first day of snorkeling on the Red Sea under the hot Egyptian sun of October, we had a memorable dinner of fish and rice before getting

our three small children up to our fifth story hotel room to bed. No sooner had we dropped off to sleep when an explosion abruptly awakened us. The large window next to our bed shattered and the frame blew over top of us. In what seemed like a frozen moment of time, the emergency lighting was diffused by dust and smoke that hung in the air.

After we determined that our children were alive, we quickly made our way through the rubble out of the room. In the dark hallway I turned left toward one of the two stairways at each end of the hotel. However, instead of a doorway leading to the stairs, I gazed out into the open night sky. There were no stairs, just a large gaping hole. The Taba Hilton and its guests had just been the victims of a car bomb explosion that killed at least 34 and wounded at least 105 innocents.¹ The dead included Egyptians, Russians, Britons, and Israelis. The perpetrators of this act of terrorism were later acknowledged as an unidentified Islamic Palestinian group.

Although my family and I made it out of the hotel alive, with only minor lacerations, my six-year-old daughter's leg was bleeding due to a wound she received from shrapnel in the explosion. It was several hours before we were evacuated from that site to another local hotel. All I remember from that time was my daughter being carried to a couch in the main lounge of that hotel where she was attended to by a young doctor who introduced himself as Ahmed, and assisted by a young couple that appeared out of nowhere. The young woman was a muhajibat, a veiled Muslim woman.

While that event was certainly life changing for my family and me, it was an event unfortunately like too many other religiously and politically motivated acts that afflicts our world. It is blind violence that seeks to depersonalize "the Other." I, as an American carrying my blue passport, was a nameless and faceless "Other" who was guilty by association of belonging to a government that, according to some, facilitates violent occupation and had just executed a violent invasion of Iraq. The perpetrators of that act were nameless and faceless "Others" who have been called terrorists. And yet, in this particular geo-political event in which I was caught, the only two people that I have any cognizant memory of are those who provided acts of kindness and mercy to me and my family; Ahmad and a nameless muhajibat. I know nothing more of them. I could choose to define Islam through the act of those terrorists who changed my life. Or, I could choose to define Islam through the acts of those two individuals who tended to my daughter.

¹ "Death Toll Rises," BBC News Service, October 9, 2004, accessed October 25, 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3728436.stm.