RELIGION, DIVERSITY AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL: THE CHALLENGE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE U.S.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the significance of religious diversity and the conflict it often causes for teacher education. It briefly reviews both the U.S. and Philippine experience of the relationship between religion and public education and argues that teacher education in both countries must respond to this challenge by producing teachers who are "prophetic pragmatists".

Introduction

At the beginning of the last century the eminent African-American sociologist and educator, W.E.B. DuBois, noted that "the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line" (1903, 210). While the racism that concerned DuBois—as well as other forms of bigotry like sexism and homophobia—continues to plague society, any even cursory survey of the contemporary world scene would strongly suggest that one of the major problems of the 21st century will be, to borrow DuBois' phrase, the problem of the "religion-line".[1] The recent terrorist attacks in the U.S., the horrific violence between Hindus and Muslims in India, tensions between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sudan, and the Philippines, and Muslim-Jewish tensions in the Middle East all remind us of the very real danger that religious differences, exacerbated by social, political and economic problems, can explode into ethno-religious conflict. While such conflicts typically involve far more than religious difference, religious affiliations frequently define the protagonists and often provide a major rationale for the conflicts.

There is more than a little irony in this sad fact given the confidence with which some 19th and 20th century philosophers predicted the retreat of religion before the steady march of scientific

progress and expanding education. Marx, of course, disparaged religion as the "opiate of the masses", while the great American philosopher of democracy, John Dewey, predicted that faith in supernatural religion would inevitably give way before a "common faith" in science as the "one sure road of access to truth—the road of patient, cooperative inquiry" (1934, 32-33). But religion has not gone away. In fact, it seems to be thriving, with what often seems to be the more conservative, other-worldly sects rising in prominence as traditionally mainstream denominations appear to wane in social influence (Finke & Stark, 1990; Kepel, 1994). Religion is resurgent in the former Soviet Union and survives repression in China. And around the world, from the U.S. to the Middle East to the Indian subcontinent, religious fundamentalisms vie for political influence and power (Marty & Appleby, 1992). As the African-American philosopher of religion, Cornel West, reminds us: "the culture of the wretched of the earth is deeply religious…yet…most of the progressive energies among the intelligentsia have shunned religious channels. And in these days of global religious revivals progressive forces are reaping the whirlwind." Ignoring this reality, he asserts, is "tantamount to political suicide" (1989, 234). Even the United States, that supposed bastion of modernity and secularism, has been described by at least one perceptive cultural critic as "religion mad, even religion-soaked" (Bloom, 1992, 35). In fact, international comparisons of levels of religiosity done in the early 1990s in twelve nations consistently ranked the U.S. and the Philippines at the top of almost every measure (Abad, 1995).

Clearly, then, religion continues to be a major cultural, political, and economic factor in both the Philippines and the United States in ways that are not necessarily true of other democratic states. In addition, both countries—as do many others—face a similar specific challenge in their relations with minority Muslim communities internally and with the larger Muslim world internationally. One must be careful, of course, not to overstate the similarities, for tensions between the Muslim minority and

Christian majority in the Philippines have a long and quite unique history that is in no way analogous to the U.S. experience with a growing, but relatively new Muslim community of converts and immigrants (Majul, 1973). Furthermore, tensions between the mainstream in both countries and political Islam have tended to be more international in the case of the U.S. and domestic in the case of the Philippines (George, 1980; Che Man, 1990; Vitug & Gloria, 2000). However, both countries are faced with the task of fostering more peaceful and tolerant relations with Muslim communities, a task that is illustrative of the larger challenge posed by religious diversity in multicultural democracies. In addition, one result of the profound impact of American imperialism on Philippine social and political institutions—particularly the educational system—is that there are sufficient similarities in history, aims, structures, and values (albeit manifested through quite different cultural filters) to make a comparative analysis of both countries' experience with education and religious diversity an informative exercise for educators in both countries (Pecson & Racelis, 1959; Gowing, 1983; Lardizabal, 1991; Suzuki, 1991).

If one of the roles of public education in a democracy is to prepare children to become intelligent participants in democratic society, then religious diversity and conflict are challenges that public education ignores at the risk of political suicide. And if religious diversity and conflict are a challenge for public education, then they ought to be important matters for reflection and action in the teacher education programs that serve our educational systems. In this essay I will argue that teacher education, and public education in general, has largely failed to adequately respond to the challenge posed by religious diversity in the U.S. and the Philippines. In doing so, our educational systems fall short of their democratic mission to foster equality of opportunity and civic participation for all citizens regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, or religion.

While I will not attempt to offer a specific agenda for change in teacher education—any such agenda must be worked out within

the specific political and cultural contexts of both countries—I will attempt in this paper to tentatively sketch conceptual shifts in the ways education and teacher education have been conceived and implemented in both countries that may make education more responsive to religious identity and diversity. This sketch will be offered, however, not as a recipe for immediate, concrete action but rather in the spirit of an Emersonian "provocation" to further reflection and dialogue on how teacher education might better respond to the problem of the "religion-line" in the 21st century (West, 1989, 25).

Religion and Public Education in American Experience

The relationship between religion and public education in the U.S. has changed considerably since its origins in the colonial period as an institution explicitly charged with inculcating the religious beliefs of the communities the schools served. The earliest ordinances, such as the "Ye Olde Deluder Satan Act," charged schools with teaching the basic literacy skills necessary to read and understand scripture (Fraser, 1999, 10). Throughout the 19th century white, Protestant religious, political, and cultural values continued to define the culture of the common schools by making activities such as daily prayer and Bible reading a common feature in most classrooms. Such practices, however, raised increasing protests from a growing population of Catholics in the U.S. who objected both to the Protestant bias of the schools and the fact that they were taxed to support such schools. Their demand for public funds to support their own schools on an equal basis with Protestant schools was met with anti-Catholic resistance and led educational leaders to de-emphasize religion in schools in order to make them less objectionable rather than allow funding to flow to Catholic schools (Fraser, 1999, 56-7). This unintended secularization of public education was accelerated in the latter half of the 19th century and into the 20th as educators sought to claim credibility for their profession by attempting to ground educational practice in scientific thought and principles (Hall, 1911;

Thorndike, 1923; Dewey, 1934; Gage, 1978; Gromko, 1995). This secularizing trend was reinforced in a series of landmark Supreme Court cases after World War II that interpreted the constitutional principle of separation of church and state to mean that common practices such as school prayer, Bible reading, and other vestiges of religious culture in schools violated the U.S. Constitution (Nord, 1995, 63-96). Thus, in many ways, contemporary American public schools have become highly secularized institutions.

This secularization of American education has not been without controversy, however. Over the past four decades fundamentalist and conservative evangelical Christian communities have grown in political prominence, inspired to a considerable degree by what they see as a public educational system that is hostile to them and which threatens the cultural and religious identity of their children (Gaddy, Hall & Marzano, 1996). Such groups have exercised a powerful influence on the composition and selection of textbooks, agitated for the inclusion of "creation science" as an alternative to the theory of evolution in science classrooms, and attempted to re-introduce school prayer as voluntary "moments of silence." But their criticisms go far beyond school prayer and evolution to include attacks on multicultural education for its alleged moral relativism and censure of the U.S. for its treatment of minorities. In this regard conservative Christians have often found common cause with less religious political conservatives who decry multiculturalism's emphasis on diversity as a threat to the unity and national identity of the country. In recent years, many such critics of public education have turned much of their energy to movements that would break up what they see as a government "monopoly" in education, arguing for vouchers or various "school choice" agendas that would supposedly facilitate parents' ability to select culturally and religiously conducive educational environments for their children.

While the agenda of the so-called "Religious Right" has generated considerable concern among secular educators, many

acknowledge that, in their efforts to avoid controversy and legal problems, many schools have gone too far toward creating the "religion free zones" their critics decry. This recognition has led in recent years to calls to re-think the relationship between religion and public education. Some educational reformers have attempted to clarify for teachers and administrators what is constitutionally permissible in public schools, thereby reducing the instances of schools infringing upon the legitimate religious expression of students or allowing illegitimate religious activity (Haynes & Thomas, 1998). Others have argued for the importance of studying about different religions and their contributions to history, the arts, and politics as a necessary component of a liberal education (Noddings, 1993). Still others have called for a more explicitly spiritual dimension to schooling as well as the acknowledgement of religious ways of knowing and being in the world as living, credible options to secular ways of understanding the world (Purpel, 1989; Yob, 1995; Nord, 1995). Some of these arguments have deployed the ethical and epistemological assumptions underpinning multicultural education to demand, in the name of moral and philosophical consistency, that public education become more responsive to religion and religious identity as one of the most important elements of individual and cultural identity (Milligan, 1996a, 1996b, 2000).

These educational reformers, however, have been moved to re-think the place of religion in the curricula of American schools by more than just the criticisms of the Religious Right. They recognize that the increasing religious diversity of U.S. society demands that school curricula and policies respect that diversity if they are to accurately reflect the reality of the societies in which American schoolchildren live. There are, for instance, six to seven million Jews in the U.S., representing approximately 3% of the total population of the country, hundreds of thousands of practicing Buddhists, and thousands of adherents of so-called "New Age" religions (Gaddy, Hall & Marzano, 1996, 158-68). Many Native Americans have revived the religious traditions of their different

tribal communities, sometimes incorporating beliefs and practices from other tribes or from Christianity (DeLoria, 1999, 275-89). And to the surprise of many Americans there are more than two million Arab Muslims in the U.S. with several million more Muslims of South Asian decent, African American Muslims, and others worshipping and studying at 2300 Islamic institutes. There are, in fact, more Muslims in the U.S. today than such "mainline" Protestant denominations as the Episcopalians and the Church of Christ. Moreover, Christianity itself is far from monolithic in the U.S., finding expression in a bewildering variety of denominations and languages (Gaddy, Hall & Marzano, 1996, 158-68). Given this diversity, as well as the continuing cultural and political influence of the Religious Right and Catholicism, the idea that one can adequately understand contemporary American society without taking religious diversity into account is absurd.

In the U.S. context, then, religion and religious diversity remain major factors in the political and cultural milieu in which American schools operate and to which they must respond, a challenge that comes in two related forms. First, there is the challenge of a relatively large segment of the population which feels alienated from and threatened by a public educational establishment whose values they see as inimical to their own and which is leading a serious political challenge to the very idea of public education as we have traditionally known it. Second, there is the challenge of rapidly increasing religious diversity in the U.S.—including a growing Muslim community as well as problematic relations with the Muslim world—for an educational establishment that, over the last century, had come to see religion as something irrelevant to the mission of public schools and which, therefore, had no place in educational deliberations. Both challenges require an attentiveness to religious identity and diversity that most public educators have not been professionally prepared to give. As such, they represent significant challenges to teacher education programs in the U.S. to adequately prepare teachers to negotiate such a complex and politically charged environment.

Religion and Public Education in Philippine Experience

Relations between religion and schooling in Philippine history are every bit as long and intimate as they have been in the United States, perhaps more so. As in the American colonial era, schools were, through much of the period of Spanish rule, seen as a mechanism for inculcating Catholic Christianity among Filipinos (Bazaco, 1953, 54; Estioko, 1994, 166). Consequently, when formal teacher education began in the 19th century as a result of the Educational Decree of 1863, it emphasized subjects like religion, morals, and sacred history, as well as pedagogy (Isidro, 1949, 15). When the United States colonized the Philippines after the brutal repression of Filipino independence forces at the beginning of the 20th century, American colonial officials brought with them not only the constitutional rhetoric of separation of church and state which they deployed to counter Catholic influence in the country, but also a long tradition of unexamined Protestant cultural and religious biases in public education. They also brought their experience with Native American education, in which schools had been used as a deliberate instrument of a policy of "civilization" whereby "savage" peoples were to be brought into a "civilized" world largely defined by white, western, Protestant values (Milligan, 2001). Thus education during the American occupation of the Philippines was ostensibly secular—influenced by U.S. constitutional principles as well as the rising prominence of the "science" of education—but still deeply colored by American religious biases as well as the deeply religious cultures of the Philippines (Pershing, 1913, 59).

Since the demise of overt American colonial rule after World War II, public education and educational policy have played a major role in the socio-economic development efforts of successive Philippine governments (Magculang, 1998). Thus Philippine education has taken on a much wider range of responsibilities in the education of informed, productive citizens of a modernizing democratic state. Many of these responsibilities are specifically addressed in the Philippine Constitution (1986),

which also states unequivocally that "the separation of Church and State shall be inviolable (Article II, Sec. 6). However, the Philippine Constitution interprets the meaning of church-state separation differently than have U.S. courts for it explicitly charges Philippine schools with strengthening the "spiritual values" of Filipino schoolchildren (Article XIV, Sec. 3(2)), a charge which the Philippine Department of Education, Culture and Sports has enacted in one of the goals of its Values Education Program to create citizens with an abiding faith in God (1997, 30). Such explicitly religious provisions in public education are no doubt more in keeping with Philippine history and culture than the American effort toward strict secularization and, moreover, quite practical given the prevalence of religious values in Philippine cultures and the dominance of religious—especially Catholic—schools, particularly at the higher levels (Dy, 1994; Estioko, 1994, 210).

It is, of course, no surprise that two different countries with different cultures, histories, and values would arrive at somewhat different conclusions regarding the appropriate relationship between religion and public education. However, the formulation of different approaches to the issue does not necessarily rescue either country or its schools from the challenge of religious identity and diversity. For the Philippines' troubled relationship with its Muslim minority is an educational and political challenge that has plagued the country throughout the 20th century and which continues to plague it in the 21st (Gaerlan & Stankovich, 2000). And while the Philippines' problems with its Muslim minority are quite different from the challenges of the Religious Right or religious diversity in the U.S., both contexts illustrate the challenges that public education in democratic, multicultural states face in dealing with diverse religious identities. Obviously responses that may work in one context will not necessarily work in the other; however, educators in both countries can learn from the efforts—failures and successes alike—of their counterparts in the other.

Since at least the beginning of the 20th century public education has been one of the primary mechanisms deployed by

successive Philippine governments to mitigate tensions between the Christian majority and Muslim minority. This approach to the so-called "Moro Problem" was introduced, along with military repression, from almost the beginning of American rule. Inspired by the new progressive faith in education as an instrument for conscious social change and reassured, in their own minds, by the racist ideology of social Darwinism that their colonization of the Philippines was for the Filipinos' benefit, American colonial officials reconceived the Moro Problem as a pedagogical problem analogous to the education of Native Americans in the American west (Saleeby, 1913/1983; Torrance, 1917; Jones, 1920, 609). This approach to the problem, however, was carried out within a social discourse of civilization that placed the various "levels of civilization" present in the Philippines on a continuum defined by "Moro savagery" on one end and white, male, American, Protestant "civilization" on the other (Bliss, 1909, 29-30). Thus, while the education of Muslim Filipinos was no doubt a better option than their extermination—an either-or choice contemplated by some officials (Saleeby, 1913/1983)—it established goals for that education that required Muslim Filipinos to surrender their cultural and religious identity as the price of integration in the Philippine mainstream of a marginalized and subordinated minority.

The stated purpose of direct American administration of Mindanao and Sulu until 1920 was to prepare both Muslim Filipinos and Christian Filipinos for Filipino Christian administration of the region; in short, the American schoolmaster was preparing his Filipino protégé to take over this classroom of "unruly" Moros. Thus American colonial officials bequeathed to subsequent Filipino administrations the idea of using education as a tool for integrating Muslim Filipinos into an ideal of civilization largely defined in western, Christian terms. This policy of integration via education continued well into the era of Philippine independence after World War II (Indin, 1960; Lacuesta, 1967; Clavel, 1969, 25). In this transition from American to Filipino rule of Muslim Mindanao and Sulu the overtly racist discourse of "civilization" and "savagery"

was largely subsumed into a discourse of "modernization" and "development" that, while perhaps superficially more palatable, nevertheless left largely undisturbed the assumption that the solution to the Moro Problem was for the Moro to stop being like a Moro and to become more like the "modern," westernized "mainstream." For instance, many well-intentioned calls for the development of "our Muslim brothers" is marred by a paternalism that fails to mask strong religious biases and that can only be insulting to Muslim Filipinos, while other attempts to locate the impediments to such development in Muslim values read as if they were written by American colonial officials in the 1910s (Santos, 1974; Isidro, 1979; Dy, 1994).

It is important to acknowledge that the provision of educational opportunities to Muslim Filipinos under the policy of integration did and does benefit many Muslim Filipinos. However, many resisted and continue to resist. Many Muslims refused to send their children to American schools and even burned half of the school buildings in Lanao in 1920 during a period of protests of the transition to Christian Filipino rule (Che Man, 1990, 53; Milligan, 2001). More recently, the phenomenal rise in the number of *madaris* in Mindanao since 1970, the rise of Islamic revivalist groups like the *tabligh*, and the continuation of political and military movements for autonomy, if not outright secession, strongly suggest that large segments of the Muslim Filipino community reject integration into a mainstream largely defined by western, Christian political, cultural, and religious values (Boransing, Magdalena & Lacar, 1987; Bauzon, 1991; Vitug & Gloria, 2000). They recognize that integration into an educational system and society dominated by alien cultural values enforced through a highly centralized educational bureaucracy is, in fact, assimilation. This definition of the civic center, of what it means to be modern and educated, inevitably privileges those with the good fortune to be born into this cultural center while it disempowers those—like Muslim Filipinos—who have the misfortune of being born into marginalized communities (Freire, 1990).

This definition of center and margins is perpetuated, in part through school curricula, particularly textbooks. Content analyses of textbooks in use in Philippine public schools have shown that Muslim Filipinos are barely acknowledged, where they are not entirely ignored, and when acknowledged are often portrayed in an erroneous or insulting fashion (Bula, 1989; Salic, 1990; Rodil, 1998). While recent textbook writers have endeavored to be more inclusive of Muslim Filipino history and culture (Gonzalez, 1999) at least one current, widely used textbook in Philippine History and Government portrays the Philippines as a Christian nation ordained by God to bring the Gospel to Asia (Zaide, 1999). As numerous critical theorists have demonstrated, school curricula represent "authorized knowledge" which is designed to shape the way children come to "divide the world" (Apple, 1990; Willinsky, 1998). Such a conception of the Philippines can leave little doubt for either a Muslim or a Christian child to know just who is in and who is out. Thus the Muslim child is in a predicament not unlike African Americans in the U.S. who, as DuBois (1903, 45) described them, were "born with a veil and gifted with second-sight...always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."

In recent years, the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and the subsequent devolution of some educational policy authority to a Regional Department of Education, Culture and Sports in the ARMM represents an important recognition of the principle of local involvement in educational decision making. Muslim Filipino educators in the ARMM have used their new authority to explore and attempt to implement educational practices that reflect the culture, history, and values of Muslim Filipinos (Tamano, 1996). These efforts have been severely hampered, however, by the larger political and budgetary problems of the ARMM. An important effort to rewrite textbooks for Muslim children, for instance, failed to produce books in anything like the quantity needed for ARMM schools (Tamano, 1999). Such

problems are exacerbated by the profound material poverty of the region, where teachers lack not only access to supplemental curricular material but also the training and authority to revise school curricula to better reflect the local cultures in which they work.[2]

While this new policy of autonomy is a necessary and important response to Muslim educational needs, it seems to imply—as did the policy of integration—that the Moro Problem is the Moro's problem. The idea, implicit in the policy of integration, that the problem of Muslim-Christian relations was largely a problem of Muslim ignorance and intransigence and not a problem of mainstream bigotry, is left undisturbed by a policy that turns over control of Muslim education to Muslim educators who have little or no say in the way Muslims are portrayed to non-Muslim schoolchildren. Thus the policy of autonomy runs the risk of exacerbating centrifugal tensions in Muslim-Christian relations. These tensions are manifested in many Muslim parents' choice of *madrasah* education for their children over public education—despite the fact that it provides little hope for success in mainstream society (Damonsong-Rodriguez, 1992)—and in the response of many middle class parents in opting for so-called "integrated *madaris*" that seek to preserve the religious identity of Muslim children while preserving some hope for social mobility within Philippine society (Panambulan, 2000). Autonomy fails to address the problem of Christian bias in school curricula and in the definition of the civic center into which Muslims are supposedly encouraged to integrate.

However, it is vital to acknowledge the extent to which important sectors of both the Muslim and Christian communities in the Philippines have recognized this problem. Ecumenical religious groups like the Bishops-Ulama Forum (1998) and others, as well as numerous grass roots cause-oriented groups have done important and courageous work in critiquing the social and cultural impediments to improved Muslim-Christian relations and struggling for positive improvements. In addition, there is a considerable and growing body of scholarly literature on the causes of Muslim-

Christian conflict in the Philippines (Majul, 1973; Tanggol, 1993; Muslim, 1994; McKenna, 1998; Kamlian, 1999; Gomez, 2000). Analyses of school curricula and interviews with teachers and scholars in the region suggest, however, that public education and teacher education lag far behind the important advances made by Filipino social scientists and grass roots activists (Rodil, 2000).

Philippine and U.S. experiences with religious diversity are quite different of course. Socio-political, cultural, and religious differences in the U.S. have never erupted into anything like the on-going war in Mindanao. These experiences nevertheless represent a common challenge to educators: How ought the public schools of a culturally diverse democracy respond to individual students and minority communities that define and express their identity in explicitly religious terms? While intra-religious dialogue may well be a common feature in theological circles, and the inculcation of tolerance is an explicit responsibility for Philippine schools articulated in the Philippine Constitution (Article XIV) and promoted in the multicultural education movement in the U.S., operationalizing the value of religious tolerance remains a profound problem for Philippine education and is largely ignored in American education. All too often majority religious or secular perspectives are privileged in schools in spite of legal and constitutional strictures at the expense of minority religious identities and, in the name of "separation of church and state" or "national identity," those who protest are often forced to the margins of civil society. This represents an important challenge for teacher education in both societies; therefore, the comparative analysis of both societies' efforts to address this and related issues of diversity could lead to new insights for teacher educators in both countries. How, then, might teacher education respond to this challenge in the Philippines and the U.S.?

Responding to Religious Diversity in Teacher Education

Taking religious identity and diversity seriously as important parts of the complex cultural milieu in which teachers function

suggests a number of changes in the way we think about education in general and teacher education in particular. One of these changes is an expansion of the conception of education as a profession grounded in science to a greater recognition of its aesthetic dimension as an activity informed by science but fundamentally creative and aesthetic. While much has been gained by the application of scientific thought to education, conceiving education as a science has tended—especially in the U.S.—to obscure the importance of culture and especially belief systems in shaping normative visions of the good life and risks reducing the art of teaching to simple transmission models and the role of the teacher to that of a mere technician employing "scientific" instructional methodologies.

While such scientific models of education have no doubt influenced Filipino teachers and educational scholars, their fundamentally different approach to understanding the appropriate relationship between religion and education has helped them to recognize the importance of religion in the culture of their students and to avoid the American obsession with separation that is so often interpreted as hostility to religion. However, the strong emphasis on the inculcation of a national identity through Philippine education (DECS, 1993, 4) is in some ways analogous to the hegemony of the scientific model of education in its effect for religious minorities, for where the curricula that comes to define this identity for Filipino children is written, in spite of the best intentions, from the dominant cultural perspective and disseminated by a centralized bureaucracy the result is a hegemonic ideal that empowers those closest to that ideal and disempowers those on the margins. Many teachers in Lanao del Sur, for example, implicitly recognize this problem when they say that local conditions reduce their teaching to merely "spoon feeding" a "cooked" curriculum that does not meet the needs of their students (Panambulan, 2000). This is, surely, an unacceptably impoverished conception of teaching and education. In the U.S. case, then, there exists an epistemic hegemony that marginalizes those who do not or cannot

fit the ideal. In the Philippine case, there exists a cultural hegemony that marginalizes those who do not or cannot fit the ideal. Either case represents a form of existential violence against those on the margins.

One alternative to such national and epistemic essentialism in education is to learn to negotiate diversity rather than control it, a lesson that is best approached through the conception of education as an art, as the creative fashioning of a just and meaningful life, for in art we are more likely to recognize and thus honor the historical contingency and cultural relativity of the values that shape the aesthetic sense of different communities. Thinking of education as an art preserves space for scientific contributions and the need to forge relations of solidarity between and among national communities. At the same time it correctly emphasizes the cultural and historical contingency of these normative visions and the necessity for creative participation by all parties in their formulation. Approaching education as art redefines the ends of education from epistemology or nationalism to aesthetics and ethics, emphasizing not merely the acquisition of bits of information or a single national identity but rather the creative fashioning of a good life, thus bringing education more in harmony with religion as an inhabited aesthetic even as it avoids becoming synonymous with it.

In order for teachers to prevent this aesthetic conception of public education as the creative fashioning of a meaningful life from being subsumed by the older and much deeper channels of religious approaches to this task, teachers must learn how to negotiate diversity rather than control it. Control of diversity is one of the primary objectives of essentialist conceptions of education—whether scientific, nationalistic, or religious—for each is concerned with correctness, whether of method, identity, or truth. Deviation in this context—difference—is error. As such, essentialist conceptions of education in public schools are inherently violent and oppressive. Negotiating diversity on the other hand entails respect for difference, respect that can avoid the

absolutism of essentialist education and the balkanizing tendencies of unfettered relativism by placing discussion and debate about national, cultural, religious, and epistemic ideals as well as the shared struggle for their realization at the heart of the educational enterprise.

Learning to negotiate diversity requires that teachers first learn to recognize their own biases. They must come to understand the cultural and historical contingency of their understanding of the world and how that contingency differs from and influences their interaction with the Other, for those who are convinced that they possess the truth are unable to really hear or respect the Other. When teachers recognize the contingency of their own understanding of the world they are then in a position to learn about and from the Other without seeing her in terms of error or deviation from an essentialized norm. Obviously, there are practical limitations to learning about and from others. There is such a bewildering diversity of cultures and religions in almost every society that even a superficial understanding of them would require lifetimes of study. However, the substantive study of at least one other culture and religion—Islam, for instance in the Philippines and U.S.—by all teachers, whether they will be encountering Muslim children or not, would go a long way to equipping prospective teachers with the skills necessary to negotiate cultural and religious diversity.

Learning to negotiate diversity need not mean surrendering one's own religious beliefs. The devout Muslim or Christian or confirmed atheist should have an equal right to teach in public schools. What they should not have the right to do is impose their religious or cultural identity on their students. This means that teachers must learn to distinguish between their personal philosophy and identity and the legitimate aims of the public school in a multicultural, religiously diverse democracy. The teacher as an individual may adhere to the absolutist claims of their faith or essentialist conceptions of cultural or national identity, but the public school and the teaching role in it must be governed by a philosophy

of pragmatism because democracy is premised upon inclusion and the participation of diverse voices in democratic deliberation on the organization and direction of society. Religious voices are full and legitimate participants in such democratic deliberations, and public schools, as the nurseries of democracy, should do a better job of ensuring their participation. They should not, however, allow any single voice—religious, scientific, or nationalistic—a monopoly on discourse in the public school.

Shifting our conception of education from scientific or nationalistic essentialism to that of an aesthetic social construct and thus eschewing simple transmission models of teaching will require greater flexibility and creativity from teachers and challenge teacher educators to equip them with these talents. Teachers' education should liberate them from their bondage to textbooks and "pre-cooked" curricular materials even as it teaches them to use such materials as part of an ensemble of materials including their own knowledge of the subject at hand, professional judgement, familiarity with local culture, and insight into the needs of individual students in a creative and flexible balance of individual needs, local conditions, and instructional goals. While most teacher education programs may claim to teach such skills and educational systems to value them, the practical consequences of essentialist conceptions of education and transmission models of teaching utterly belie those claims. And the prevalence of "banking methods" (Freire, 1990) in U.S. and Philippine schools bears this out. The art of teaching, therefore, should be approached more as a jazz performance rather than the mechanical, if faithful, reproduction of the authorized knowledge contained in textbooks and "cooked" curricula.

Negotiating religious identity and diversity will also require a different relationship between teachers and students. Teachers will have to learn to eschew the subject-object, master-slave relationship of the transmission model in favor of a subject-subject relationship governed by an ethic of love. By this I do not mean the sentimental and often shallow "love of children" that teachers

often claim as their motivation for teaching, nor do I mean the oppressive "love" that manifests itself in the impulse to shape the child's identity in conformity to some alien ideal "for their own good." I mean rather the love of individuals as inevitably imperfect beings endowed—by their Creator, if you like—with infinite worth and dignity and the ability to struggle toward the realization of ideals that they themselves have a hand in shaping. Such love requires more than support and encouragement, however. It also requires careful analysis and courageous critique of the forces—both within the individual and in her society—that impede the individual's realization of his or her fullest potential.

To reiterate, the reality of religious identity, diversity, and tension in the U.S. and the Philippines challenges teacher education in both societies to help teachers see their profession as an art in which students and others must participate, to learn to negotiate rather than control diversity, to recognize their own biases, to learn to see through others' eyes, to distinguish between personal and professional philosophies, to be creative and flexible, and to approach their task from within an ethic of love. In short, we must produce teachers who are, in Cornel West's (1989, 211-239) words, "prophetic pragmatists" (Milligan, 1997, 1998, 1999a). Such teachers will be deeply suspicious of the idolatry of essentialism in religion, science, or national identity as an adequate organizing principle for public schools in multicultural, religiously diverse democracies. They will be critical—and self-critical—of social and individual impediments to human flourishing. And they will be inspired and directed by ethical ideals—contingent and imperfectly understood as they may be—which flow from diverse religious, cultural, and secular sources. And finally, they will approach their task in the spirit of jazz as the creative, improvisational, yet disciplined composition of ethical, aesthetically pleasing, and meaningful lives by and with their students (West, 1993, 242; Milligan, 1999b). Such a conception of education and teaching constitutes a more open, tolerant, and creative response to the challenge of religious identity and diversity than

the essentialism of nationalism or scientific methodolatry, the vulgar pragmatism of functionalist approaches that simply perpetuate the inequalities of the status quo, or even the well-intended indoctrination of religious education.

In responding to this common challenge in their very different cultural and historical contexts, both Filipino and American teachers and teacher educators have developed insights that may be useful to one another. Philippine education's frank recognition of the unavoidable connections among religion, culture, and education is an insight American education should learn from if it is to avoid the infringement of children's rights of religious expression which often results from the misunderstanding and misapplication of the principle of separation. On the other hand, Philippine educators might also profit from the on-going struggle of many U.S. educators to identify and dismantle in themselves, their profession, and their society essentialist ideologies like racism, sexism, homophobia, and nationalism that impede individual human flourishing and democratic community. In learning from the successes and failures of both systems and exploring the practical implications of the re-conceptualization of education as art and teaching as jazz performance proposed here, teacher educators in both societies may better help the teachers they train understand and negotiate the challenge of religious identity and diversity in the U.S. and the Philippines.

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NOTES

[1] It is not the purpose of this paper to offer a definition of religion. As John Dewey (1934, 7-8) has noted, any such definition broad enough to encompass all that goes by the name "religion" is likely to be so vague as to be meaningless, while any more specific definition is likely to leave out much that calls itself religion. Moreover, any such definition represents a framework imposed on human experience by the individual doing the defining. I am using the term here in its common sense understanding as referring to religions, for instance Islam and Christianity, and/or to beliefs adherents describe as religious.

[2] These observations are based on interviews and fieldwork conducted among teachers in 15 high schools in Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Misamis Occidental between August 2000 and May 2001.

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