

# The Sword

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# **The Sword**

A Journal of Historical, Spiritual and  
Contemporary Carmelite Issues



## Volume 77, Number 1, 2017

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# Hybrid Worldview: A Study of the Worldview of the Catholics Living in Arjowilangun Village

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## Introduction

There are many scholars discussing and theorizing about the concept of worldview. They use different perspectives in discussing the concept. They, of course, produce a different concept of worldview due to the difference in the method used in analyzing the worldview and in the sociocultural background of the scholars. Actually the root of the concept of worldview is in the Western philosophy of *weltanschauung* which is introduced by Immanuel Kant. He uses the term of *weltanschauung*, that is, worldview in his work *Critique of Judgment*, published in 1790. According to

Kant, “If the human mind is able to think the given infinite without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is supersensible, our intuition of the world” (1987: 111-112). This concept is then discussed deeper by different scholars – two of them are Sorren Kierkegaard and Frederich Engels - when they were reflecting on their Western culture. They used the deductive method in analyzing the worldview of their own culture.

Sorren Kierkegaard with his Christian background, in his book entitled *Fear and Trembling*, sees worldview from a religious point view. By using the biblical figure of Abraham, he theorizes that worldview is about how someone lives as a single individual, giving priority to concrete human reality over abstract thinking and highlighting the importance of personal choice and commitment. Kierkegaard emphasizes the subjective of worldview since for him the God approaches man personally and subjectively (1986: 1-20). Frederich Engels approaches worldview from a different angle. Engels denies the role of God in a human being’s life; he excludes the role of God in understanding the concept of worldview. He states, “our sense-perception, scientifically controlled, induces in our minds ideas respecting the outer world that is, by their very nature, at variance with reality, or that there is an inherent incompatibility between the outer world and our sense-perceptions of it” (2006: 10). It is clear that how scholars define the concept of worldview is very influenced by their school.

Another root of the concept of worldview is in anthropology. Anthropologists use a different perspective in analyzing the worldview. The anthropological approach sees the reality on the



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field, collects the data from the everyday life of the people, and then develops the description of their worldview. Clifford Geertz's definition of worldview says that it is people's picture of the things; in sheer actuality are their concept of nature, of self, and of society in which contains their most comprehensive idea of order (1993: 303). Michael Kearney states that worldview is the way of seeing the reality which consists of basic assumption and image that is a more or less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world (1984: 41). David K. Naugle defines worldview as a person's understanding of reality which consists of symbols about how reality is constructed, particularly narrative symbols (2002: 271). Another scholar, James W. Sire (2004) defines worldview as a commitment, expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions which someone holds consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently, about the basic constitution of reality, provides the foundation on which someone lives and moves and has her/his being (2004: 19). Kraft defines worldview as "the totality of the culturally structured images and assumptions (including value and commitment or allegiance assumptions) in terms of which a people both perceive and respond to reality" (2008: 12). Hiebert defines worldview as "the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives" (2008: 26). DeWitt (2010: 22-26) points out a worldview consists of how human beings perceive the reality, how they make the representation of the reality made by human beings, and how human beings process the representation to become the truth. All of the definitions of worldview of the anthropologist consist of these three things: the reality of the world which is outside human beings, the understanding of the reality which happens inside human beings, and the two-way process that connects both of them.

A worldview cannot be separated from the culture of the people who own and develop the worldview. A worldview is a part of a culture, but it is also more than the culture. On one hand, a worldview influences how people live and develop their culture; on the other hand, the culture influences the worldview, how people perceive and understand the world in their everyday life. Morris Opler (1945) urges that worldview themes emerge within culture



and must be discovered by studying how people themselves look at the world. Stephen Pepper (1942) claims that people use objects of everyday experience (culture) as analogue for understanding the complex realities of the world (1942: 39).

In the era of globalization, no culture is pure; cultural encounters cannot be avoided. Cultures travel from one place to another place. When cultures meet, there is always conflict and negotiation (Burke, 2009: 7). Peter Burke states that in the cultural encounters, it happens that the other culture was first a threat but then undermined the categories of the existing culture. The existing cultural orders sometimes crack under the strain of the attempted perception of the other culture (Burke, 2009: 206). The next stage varies from culture to culture along a spectrum ranging from assimilation to rejection via adaptation and resistance. The consequences of encounters between cultures may vary from the simplest one to the more complex one, including adoption, adaptation, diffusion, appropriation, or even fusion of different cultural traditions. Usually after several ages, there is a phase of cultural crystallization (Burke, 2009: 207-209).

Nowadays, cultural encounter does not only involve two cultures, but many cultures. The result of the encounters of many cultures, of course, is different from the result of the encounters of two cultures. Moreover, the process of the cultural encounters does not happen once and then finished but continuously, again and again. This last-ending process, of course, influences the result of the encounters. Post-colonial thinkers believe that cultural encounter is not a single process, but a lot of processes; it is not a once-ending process but an on-going process. It is not a linear process but bilinear, multilinear, even a circular process (Rubies, Calaresu & de Vivo, 2010: 25). For these reasons, Peter Burke offers a different term for the result of these cultural encounters: cultural hybridity. The term of cultural hybridity is much broader and richer than cultural diffusion since it implies not only a once-ending linear process but also an on-going circular process. The process of the making of cultural hybridity is called hybridization. Hybridization happens when cultures meet and creatively and perpetually intermingle with each other that it results in a new form of culture (Burke, 2009: 3).



**The Catholic Church of the Annunciation of Mary in Arjowilangun Village** which is the subject of the study. (Photo courtesy of Hariawan Adji, O. Cam.)

As the basic way of a group of people in interpreting the seen and unseen reality that pervades a culture so comprehensively that it becomes a culture's concept of reality — what is good and bad, what is right and wrong, what is important and unimportant, what is sacred and secular, what is real and unreal, worldview and culture are inter-influential. Moreover, as the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks people make about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives, worldview and culture are inter-dependent. Finally, as people think, work, socialize and live their life in the frame of their worldview, worldview and culture are inter-collided. It means that if the culture is hybrid, the worldview is too.

This article intends to explore the existence of hybrid worldview by studying the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village.

### **Method of the Study**

The method of data collection employed in this study is a qualitative approach through interview, observation, and participation in their everyday life. The participants recruited in this study are selected with some considerations of their involvement of the past, their enactment of memory, and their social heterogeneity (gen-

der, social class, age/generation, ethnicity, social engagements). There will be 40 participants. Each participant is interviewed and observed more than once depending on the data that she/he presented. The purpose of this is to reduce the bias resulted by transgenerational effect.

The analytical process is started with reading the transcripts and identifying the key themes. This process covers materials of memory, imagination, bodily sensation, action, and performance. The transcripts were broken down into the initial themes and then reconsidered to generate new thematic structures. This process was replicated until the satisfactory commonalities (harmony) and differences (anomaly) could be identified. Both harmony and anomaly of the themes were paid the same attention because participants' collective cultural memory might be uniform and un-uniform. Regarding the anomalies, they were deconstructed and read again by considering the factors behind them. Furthermore, all data were reflected and interpreted to find the relationship, maturity and structure. The next step was developing the framework of the collective memory. Then, the puzzles of the collective cultural memory were put in the framework to get the common picture of the collective cultural memory by employing the existing records.

### **The Catholics Living in Arjowilangun Village**

The Catholics and the Catholic Church in Arjowilangun village are relatively new. Before 1965 there was no Roman Catholic Church in the area.<sup>3</sup> Until 1958 the services were provided by the priests who worked in Malang city, about 50 kilometres from that village.<sup>4</sup> The nearby Roman Catholic Church was in Balarjosari (Carmelrozen Jaargang XVII 1928-1929: 62-64)<sup>5</sup> about 20 kilometres from the village to the North. This church only functioned as a chapel so that no priest was living there. The priest came there once every thirty-five days.<sup>6</sup> Services were done from one house to another in rotations organized by Mr. Blyndenstein, the administrator of plantation in the area who was concerned about the spiritual needs of his workers (Blomesath, 1974: 1005). There is no information about the number of Roman Catholic Christians at that time, but according to the elders of the community it was only about 30 people.<sup>7</sup> They were not local people but migrant plantation workers from Central Java (Blomesath, 1974: 1005).

Then in 1965 the mass violence happened. It really influenced the development of the Roman Catholic Church in Arjowilangun village; it even was the major factor which made people of Arjowilangun village embrace the Roman Catholic Church though it was not the only factor; there were several other factors which directly and indirectly supported the increase: Roman Catholic charity works, the contextualization of the Roman Catholic Church, the coming of Javanese catechists from Central Java, forced Islamization effort and drought which caused hunger, and the building of Sutami Dam in Sumber Pucung.

After 1980, the number of the Roman Catholic Christians in Arjowilangun village did not increase significantly. Many of the young generation of Roman Catholic Christians living in Arjowilangun village are now socially and economically well-off. This is the result of the education programs offered by the Church. Besides farming, many of them also work as teachers, government officers, or merchants. Moreover, because of their knowledge, many of them become leaders in their neighborhood. Few of them work abroad as migrant workers.

### **The Hybrid Culture of Catholics Living in Arjowilangun Village**

No culture is an island, no culture never gets in touch with other traditions. Peter Burke claims that all cultural traditions are now in more or less direct contact with alternative traditions (2009: 102). He adds that traditions are like building sites, under constant construction or re-construction, whether the individuals and groups who participate in those traditions realize this or not. Peter Burke states that there are three kinds of the outcomes of cultural encounters. They are: cultural homogenization, cultural diglossia, and creolization (Burke, 2009: 102-103).

Looking at the culture of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village through Peter Burke's theory on cultural hybridity, it can be learned that their culture is truly a hybrid culture. Its process of hybridization started a long time ago when the local culture encountered another culture. Many cultures participate in the process; they are local Javanese, Indian, Chinese, Arab, Roman and Dutch cultures. Moreover, several different religious traditions



**The Main Altar of the Church of the Annunciation of Mary** in Arjowilangun village. (Photo courtesy of Hariawan Adji, O. Carm.)

(animism, dynamism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese beliefs, Islam, and Christianity) play their roles in the process of hybridization. The process which involves conflicts and negotiation continues until the present time. The hybridization process of the culture of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village does not only take on various forms (linear, bilinear, multilinear, or circular) but it also occurs in all levels and all parts of the culture. Moreover, the process takes place not only between the culture of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village and other cultures but also between the subcultures of their culture or even between the new and old form of their culture. This on-going and never-ending process makes the culture of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village keep developing and changing. The hybrid culture of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village can be traced through its artifacts, practices, and people.

## **The Hybrid Worldview of Catholics Living in Arjowilangun Village**

### *The Understanding of Oneself and Others*

The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village like other Arjowilangun people do not see themselves as the only persons who live in the area. They believe that they are one part of a community which consists of themselves as human persons and other-than-human-persons. Just like the other Arjowilangun people, they also believe that there are other-than-human-persons who have

higher position than they have and some others who have the same position or even lower. The difference is in what they regard as other-than-human persons, the structure of the world, and their pattern of their relationships.

The understanding of oneself and others of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village is surely influenced by the catechism that they learn. They learn from the catechism that beside the *mbaurekso* and *danyang*-s there are other other-than-human persons who share this world with them. Moreover, from their encounter with the Muslims, other religions, and other cultures, they learn the existence of different other-than-human persons. Those encounters create their understanding of oneself and others. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that they share their world with other-than-human persons: the Trinity God with Jesus Christ as one of the three persons, Saint Mary (the mother of Jesus Christ), consecrated host and wine, angels, *danyang*-s, spirits, genies, sacred objects, and evil spirits. All of them have their position in the world and due to their position, they have a different role and authority towards human persons. All of these influence how human persons have to build their relationship with those other-than-human persons.

For the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village, human persons live together in this world with those other-than-human persons; they interact and influence each other. Based on the hierarchy of power, some of the other-than-human persons are at the levels above the level of human beings; some are at the same level, and some others are at the level below the level human beings. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that the ones from the higher levels always do good things to human beings. They even become their protectors. For the ones who are at the same level as human beings, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that they and the other-than human persons have to respect each other. None might behave out of his/her capacity, and none might trespass her/his space. The interactions sometimes run well and sometimes are conflicting so that results in harm experienced by human persons. They believe that if the human persons break the harmony, the other-than-human person will become upset and start disturbing human persons. While if the other-than-human person breaks the harmony, human beings might do something to

get rid of them. This is the reason that when a Catholic living in Arjowilangun village enters into an area in which she/he believes that it is the place where other-than human persons live or under the authority of the other-than-human persons, she/he says *kulanuwun*<sup>8</sup> to ask permission to enter or pass the area. She/he does not want to upset the other-than-human persons. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that the last other-than-human persons are evil spirits who always disturb human beings. Human beings try hard to control them.

### **The Structure of the World**

It has been explained before that the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that they share their world with other-than-human persons. The other-than-human persons are the Trinity God with Jesus Christ as one of the three persons, Saint Mary (the mother of Jesus Christ), consecrated host and wine, angels, *danyang*-s, spirits, genies, sacred objects, and evil spirits. Before drawing and explaining the structure of the world, the following paragraphs describe some facts which become the foundation in drawing the structure.

The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that the world is created by the Lord and it is under His protection. They have learned that the Lord, according to the Catholic teaching, is Trinity, is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; they call them *Hyang Rama*, *Hyang Putro*, and *Hyang Rob Kudus*.<sup>9</sup> In daily life, they name the Trinity God *Gusti*.<sup>10</sup> They accept the Catholic teaching of the divinity of Jesus as the second person in the Trinity. Though they know the Catholic teaching of the Trinity, they prefer naming their God Jesus. For them, it is easier to understand their Lord in the second person of the Trinity than in the other persons. The humanity of the second person of the Trinity helps them to understand and communicate with the Lord. In their prayers, they acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ or in Javanese *Gusti Pangeran* or *Gusti Yesus*.

Saint Mary, the mother of Jesus, takes a significant position in the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village. Saint Mary is referred as *Bunda Maria* or *Dewi Mariyah*.<sup>11</sup> The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village feel that they have good relationship



**The Youth Group of the Catholic community** in Arjowilangun village during a festival. (Photo courtesy of Hariawan Adji, O. Carm.)

with *Bunda Maria* since she is their mother, and they are her children. They do a lot of devotion to Saint Mary. They pray rosary beads and visit the grotto of Saint Mary. In May and October, they meet every evening at a certain place to pray rosary beads together. The number of the participants in this devotion is even bigger than the number of the participants in other prayer occasions. They believe that Saint Mary plays a role as their protection. They believe that as the mother of Jesus Christ, Mary might intervene Jesus' decision. They pray to Mary to persuade Jesus to do what they want. The important role of Mary makes the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village love praying rosary beads.

The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that an angel is a pure spirit created by God who always does God's will. Due to their closeness to God, angels' power is above human power. They are sent by God to assist human beings, either as the messenger or as the protector and guardian of a human being individually or a group of people. They also believe that the Lord assigns an individual angel to each human being. This angel becomes their guardian angel, their traveling companion. The angels are sent by the Lord so that no one journeys alone and no one should think that they are alone. The angels also speak to comfort them, lead



them to the right path, and prevent them from making mistakes. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village pray to their guardian angels and ask them to guide and take care of them.

The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village also believe in the existence of *danyang*-s. A *danyang* is a soul of a human being who during his life in the world has got good spiritual quality. Because of her/his spiritual quality she/he does not die but experiences *mokhsa*.<sup>12</sup> The idea of *mokhsa* is a liberation from the world. She/he, because of her/his high spiritual quality, lives in heaven. People do not see her/him anymore because she/he is now not worldly; she/he overcomes the worldly space and time. Though people do not see her/him, she/he is still there; she/he can see and observe the people. She/he becomes their protector. Arjowilangun people believe that the founder of Arjowilangun village, Eyang Demang Mertowijoyo, experienced *mokhsa* after he had completed his tasks in the world. They believe that he did not die although they have his tomb. Due to his humility, he just pretended to die so that people did not know that he had high spiritual quality. People believe that after the burial of his body, his spirit and his body were assumed to unite with the universe. He does not leave the people of Arjowilangun but now becomes the protector of the village. Besides Eyang Demang Mertowijoyo, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe all distinguished good people experience *mokhsa*. They do not die but unite with the universe. They believe that Fr. G. J. A. Lohuis had experienced *mokhsa* due to his high spiritual quality and good deeds done to the people of Arjowilangun village. He now becomes one of their protectors.

Not all of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village are very fond of Catholic saints. They know the Catholic teachings on saints; but they are not really connected to them, except to Saint Mary, mother of Jesus. When they are baptized as a Catholic, they adopt a Christian name. They select the name from the list of the names of the Catholic saints without knowing who she/he is. Sometimes, the parish priest chooses the name for them. What they know about the saint is that the saint becomes their matron/patron. The matron/patron saint intercedes to God for the people who use her/his name. People can take their special needs to their matron/patron saints and know they will listen to their prayers, and pray to God with them.

Different from the worldview of Arjowilangun people which regards the nature as the other-than-human person, they do not see natural things as the other-than-human person. The reason that they do not see natural things as the-other-than human persons is the influence of the Christian biblical teaching or Quranic teaching. It is written in the Christian bible and in the Quran that God created the world and the creatures, including human beings, but only to human beings God gave the spirit.

The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village, just like other Catholics, believe that the bread and wine which have been consecrated by a Catholic priest are the real immanent body and blood of Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> They really respect the consecrated bread and wine. In the Catholic Church, there is always a tabernacle in which the consecrated bread is kept. The Catholics, including the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village, always kneel down and bow to the tabernacle to show their respect to the consecrated bread. In Eucharistic celebration, after the Eucharistic prayer, the consecrated bread is distributed to the people, and people directly consume it. They believe by consuming the consecrated bread they are united to the Jesus Christ. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe this, too. Before joining the *Bersih Desa* ceremony, they participated in the Eucharistic celebration to receive this consecrated bread. They believe that, by consuming the consecrated bread, they unite with Jesus Christ and have his power. This will keep them safe and protect them from bad evil who wants to possess them.

The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that one of the other-than-human persons who share the world with them are the spirits. The spirits here might mean the souls of human persons who have not reached the heaven or the *jinn*. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that the souls of the dead human beings sometimes cannot rest in peace due to their anger. They believe that if someone died in sins, unnaturally or in anger (died because of a murder, suicide or accident), she/he could not accept the death. The soul wanders in the world because she/he is not accepted yet in the heaven, or because he/he is still attached to do revenge to the one who made them die. Because of this bad condition, the spirit easily gets upset and finally harms other people. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that



**The Village Cleansing Ceremony** in Arjowilangun. (Photo courtesy of Hariawan Adji, O. Carm.)

the only way to help this spirit is to pray to the Lord to forgive her/his sins and accept her/him. They usually inform the parish priest who then dedicates certain daily Eucharistic celebrations for the soul. The interesting thing is that they believe that for certain souls one Eucharistic celebration is not enough.

In connection with that, because they do not want the dead member of their family to experience the same, they always have a seven-evening prayer for the dead<sup>14</sup> starting from the evening when somebody dies. Moreover, they celebrate the 40th day, the 100th day, the 365th day (one year) and the 1,000th day anniversary of the dead person with community prayer or Eucharistic celebration. They believe that after the 1,000th day, the soul, with the support of their prayers, has reached the heaven.<sup>15</sup>

Genie, as the other-than-human person in the worldview, results from the impact of Islamic teaching on the unseen creature. The Quran says that the genie or *jinn* are made of a smokeless fire but sometimes might have a physical nature (sometimes they might show themselves to human beings in the form of beast or human-being) and are able to interact with people and objects.<sup>16</sup> They live in remote areas, mountains, seas, trees, and in their own communities. They are productive: they marry and have offspring from their marriage. Some of them are good and well-behaved but some of them like annoying human beings. A human person who

has the power might control and even use the genie to do whatever she/he wants. Some bad people use genies to do bad things, for example, stealing or attacking other people. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun believe that sometimes bad people send a baby *jinn* (Arabic for “genie”) in the form of a baby or little kid (they call this kind of *jinn* a *tuyul*, Javeneese for “evil spirit”) to steal money from their cash box or wallet. This belief drives them to put a small mirror in their cash box or wallet so that when the *tuyul* come to steal the money, they cancel it because they find the mirror is more attractive than the money.<sup>17</sup> They also believe that sometimes a genie is sent by someone to frighten people and to make them sick. Moreover, they believe that the genie might possess someone and make him/her act differently.

The other kind of other-than-human persons is the sacred objects. While the Arjowilangun people see the sacredness of the objects based on their relation to the founder of the village, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village see the sacredness of something based on the one who is represented in the objects. Different from the Arjowilangun people, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village do not consider the relics inherited by the founder of the village as the sacred relics.<sup>18</sup> For the Catholics, the sacred relics are the religious articles: the pictures of Jesus and Mary, the crosses, the statues of Mary (mother of Jesus Christ), rosaries, and holy water. Those things are considered to have power to protect them. Those things are put in a certain place to become the protector the place and the people who stay or live in that place. They regard those things as a talisman that has power to protect them from evil spirits.

Among the religious articles, the cross is considered as a must for the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village. They not only think that it is the symbol of their Christian identity, but that it is a medium of protection from the Lord. They believe that the bad spirits are afraid to see the cross. They put the cross in the main room (living room) on the wall right above the entrance door. They believe that by putting it there the bad spirits will not enter the house. This custom is rooted in Javanese belief of life which is represented in *gunungan*. In the *gunungan* the house was guarded by a giant whose head is just above the door. Most Catholic families living in Arjowilangun have only one cross in their house; the rich

families might have more, and they put them also in the bedrooms.

Other religious articles which are popular among the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village are the statues of Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. It is interesting to know that they are not interested in having statues of Jesus Christ; for them, the cross has shown the existence of Jesus Christ in the house. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village love the figure of Mary. By having the statues of her, they believe that they are protected by Mary. In some houses, the Catholics have a special table and arrange it just like an altar where they put the statue of Mary, sometimes with a cross beside it. The altar is decorated beautifully with table cloth, candles, and plastic flowers. They regard the altar as a sacred place in the house. On the eve of *Jumat Legi*, some of them also put their offering to the spirits on the altar. They put it not because they present the offering to Mary, but because they believe by putting it in front of the statue of Mary that she blesses the offering so that the spirits which consume the offering and will not disturb the family living in the house.

Rosary beads are also popular among the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village. Although not all of them wear rosary beads as a necklace, they, mostly the women, always bring rosary beads with them. Some of them put a rosary bead under their pillow when they sleep to avoid nightmare – the Javanese believe that dreams are prophecies brought by spirits to them. They believe that by putting the rosary bead under their pillow they will only dream something good because only good spirits can approach them. Moreover, by putting the rosary bead under their pillow at night, they might easily grasp it when they feel afraid. Darkness is considered frightening by the people of Arjowilangun village; nights are the time for the evil spirits to come out from the underworld to disturb human beings. When they wake up in the middle of the night and feel afraid, they just need to grasp the rosary under their pillow. They believe that by holding the rosary bead, they are protected by Mary. When they are sick and have to lie on the bed for a period of time, they put the rosary bead on the bed to invite Mary's protection for the sick.

Holy pictures of Jesus and Mary are among the sacred relics. In the time of the riot of 1965, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun

village experienced the effectiveness of putting the holy pictures of Jesus and Mary in their houses. The pictures helped them to avoid being victims of the massacre. At present time, they still see the power of the pictures, but in a different way. In the past, the pictures saved them because the killers thought those who had that kind of pictures were Christians so that they would not have been member of the Indonesian Communist Party. In the present time, the Catholics see the power of the pictures to save them from spiritual disturbance. They believe that the pictures help them avoid the bad spirits. This kind of pictures are not only put in the main room in the house to keep the house secured but even in their cash box to avoid stealing by the *tuyul*.

The last sacred object is holy water. Holy water is water that is blessed by a Catholic priest to make it holy. In the ritual of the blessing of the water, the priest puts some salt in it and says a prayer of blessing. The water is used to bless and sanctify people and goods. According to the Catholic teaching, the holy water is powerful not because of itself but because it reminds the people of Jesus Christ, who is given the supreme divine blessing. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun believe that after the water is blessed, it has the divine power. Sometimes they give the sick holy water so that they might recover – the Catholics living in Arjowilangun believe that certain sickness come from the bad spirits. They believe that by drinking the holy water the bad spirit will leave the sick. They also have a custom of sprinkling the holy water to their field in order that it will have good harvest. Again here, they see that it might help them avoid the bad spirits which disturb their field. If they think that evil spirits come and stay in their house, they also sprinkle holy water in the rooms of the house to get rid of the bad spirits.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village respect and treat the sacred objects very well because they believe that those objects have power. They are not just goods but living things; they are the immanent form of the other-than-human person. They are afraid to treat it improperly because it might result in harm coming to them. The people put them in a certain respected place and believe because of the existence of the relics, the place becomes sacred. For the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village, those things are the good other-than-human persons; they protect and sanctify the people and the places.

The last other-than-human being which is believed to share the world with them is the evil spirit. They live in the underworld. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village call them *setan* (from Arabic word: /*syaiton*/), *iblis* (from Arabic word: /*abalis*/) or *roh jahat* (from Indonesian words which means bad evil). They believe that the evil spirits come out to the world on certain days to attack people and to lead them to do bad things. They also believe that the evil spirits might possess human beings so that the human beings do something evil. To avoid these evil spirits, the Catholics provide them offerings or perform certain ceremonies to get rid of them; for example, sprinkling holy water on someone possessed by the evil spirits or on the place which is occupied by the evil spirits. When human beings cannot handle the evil spirits, they ask help from the other-than-human persons who are from the higher level. The evil spirits will not win in the battle against the other-than-human being from the higher level.

For the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village, human persons live together in this world with those other-than-human persons; they interact and influence each other. Based on the hierarchy of spiritual goodness, some of the other-than-human persons are at the levels above the level of human beings, some are at the same level, and some others are at the level below the level of human beings. The Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that the ones from the higher levels always do good things to human beings. They even become their protectors. For the ones which are at the same level as human beings, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that they and the-other-than human persons have to respect each other. None might behave out of his/her capacity, and none might trespass her/his space. The interactions sometimes run well and sometimes conflict. They believe that if the human persons break the harmony, the other-than-human persons will become upset and start disturbing human persons. This is the reason that when a Catholic living in Arjowilangun village enters an area in which she/he believes that it is the place where other-than human persons live or under the authority of the other-than-human persons, she/he says *kula nuwun*<sup>19</sup> to ask permission to enter or pass the area. Finally, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village believe that the last other-than-human persons are evil spirits who always disturb human beings. Human

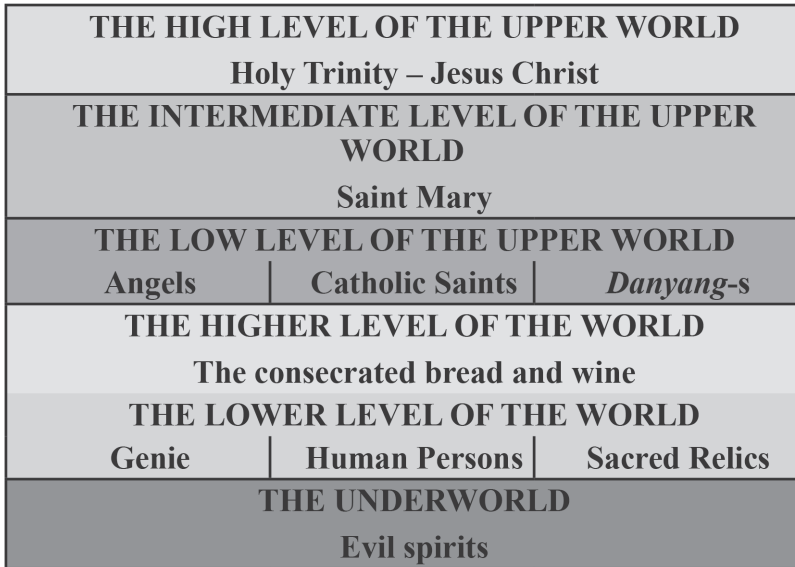


Diagram 1: **Hierarchy of Power and Authority** in the Worldview of the Catholics Living in Arjowilangun Village.

beings try hard to control them.

From the explanations about the other-than-human person above, it can be concluded that there are four layers of the world in the perception of the people. It can be presented in the following figures:

The figure can be explained as follows:

### 1. The Layers in the Figure

There are six layers. In the highest level of the upper world, exists the Holy Trinity, who they always refer as Jesus Christ. He has the power to control everything living in the layers beneath his layer. The second layer down is the intermediate level of the upper world. In this layer lives Saint Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Her authority is under the authority of the Holy Trinity or Jesus Christ and so is her power. Indeed her power is beyond the power of the angels, the Catholic saints and the *danyang-s* which exist in the lower level of the upper world. Then comes the world in which the immanent persons exist. This world is divided into two: the upper level of the world in which the consecrated bread and wine exists, and the lower of



the world in which human persons and two other-than human persons exist (the genie and the sacred objects). The power of the consecrated bread and wine is surely above the power of human persons, genie, and sacred objects. The last layer is the underworld where the evil spirits live.

## 2. The Color of the Levels

[Editor's Note: *The Sword* is not printed in color. However, this is the explanation of the actual chart which is in color.] The upper world is colored blue with its gradation. The very light blue refers to the upper level of the world while the light blue refers to the intermediate level of the upper world, and the blue refers to the the lower level of the upper world. They are colored blue to show that in those levels, the ones who have the authority are transcendent. The world is colored yellow with its two gradations. The light yellow refers to the higher level of the world while the yellow refers to the lower level of the world. This color is used to show that the ones who have the authority in that level are immanent. The lowest level of the hierarchy is colored red to show that the ones who have the authority there are from the lower level.

## The Pattern of Relationship

The pattern of relationship of the human persons and the other-than-human persons in the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village can be described in accordance with the social interdependence of all those persons.

In the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village, human persons and other-than-human persons, either transcendent or immanent, communicate from time to time. They communicate with the Holy Trinity (Jesus Christ), Saint Mary, the angels, the Catholic saints, the *danyang*-s, the consecrated bread and wine, the sacred objects and the evil spirits. In the communication they also acknowledge mutual responsibility. These relationships control their everyday behavior. Through the communication, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village learn that they and the other-than-human-persons share a portion of the sum of all the power and properties of the cosmos. Through the communication with the other-than-human persons, the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village realize that they have to do their obligations

to meet the needs and desires of other-than-human persons.

The pattern of relationship between human person and other-than-human-persons in the worldview of Arjowilangun people is as follows:

1. The Holy Trinity (Jesus Christ) has the power to control everything living in the world layers beneath his upper world. He functions as the main protector of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village.
2. Saint Mary's power of protection is below the power of Jesus Christ. She becomes the second protector for the Catholics living in Arjowilangun village.
3. The angels, the Catholic saints and the *danyang*-s are in the following level. Their power of protection is below the power of Saint Mary.
4. Those three levels above belong to the transcendent other-than-human persons. The layer below them is the high level of the world. This is the layer of the immanent other-than-human-person. In this level, the consecrated bread and wine exist.
5. The level below it is the low level of the world. In this level, there are genies, human persons, and sacred objects. Since they are from the same level of the world, they have the same level of power.
6. Then the last layer is the layer of the underworld. The evil spirits living in the underworld might cause problems to the human beings. They might voluntarily disturb the human beings, react to the bad behavior that human beings do to the harmony of the nature, or are moved by human being to disturb the others. Human beings might influence the underworld too.

## Concluding Remarks

From the exploration of the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun, it is clear that their understanding of the reality of the world, their understanding of the reality which happens inside them, and their two-way process that connects both realities are influenced by their hybrid culture and collective memory. Their worldview is built by the cultures which have encountered their culture. Each culture leaves its influence that it becomes very

rich. A deep look into the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun reveals that many parts of different cultures (Javanese, Indian, Chinese, Arab, Dutch, Roman, Japanese and others) and of different religions (animism, dynamism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity) mingle, negotiate, mix and create their worldview. The processes of mingling, negotiating, and mixing are unique since other factors, i.e.: social, political, economic, environmental, historical and religious factors also play their roles in the processes. This makes the worldview of the Catholics living in Arjowilangun different from the worldview of other communities.

It can be concluded then that worldview is living; it develops together with the development of the society which lives it. Cultural encounters that are experienced by the society build and rebuild the society's worldview. Moreover, the social, political, economic, environmental, historical, and religious factors of the society also colors and recolors the worldview. Worldview cannot be generalized. Two groups which belong to the same ethnic group may have different kind of worldview, because worldview is something unique. Every society creates and recreates its worldview.

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## End Notes

1. Prof. Dr. J.B. Banawiratma is the first promotor of Hariawan Adji in his doctoral program at ICRS – Yogya.
2. Dr. Fatimah Hussein is the second promotor of Hariawan Adji in his doctoral program at ICRS – Yogya.
3. The first Catholic Church in the area was established on June 28, 1971 (in Sidodadi hamlet) and the second (in Lodalem hamlet) on June 30, 1971. The second church functions as the parish church until the present time.
4. Since 1958, after the establishment of a parish church in Purworejo, a village next to Arjowilangun, located about 28 kilometres to the south, services were provided by the priest working in the new parish.
5. The church in Balearjosari was started to be erected on April 30, 1928. There was a rubber plantation there whose administrator was a devout Catholic. He was Mr. Blyndenstein. He, after his 50 years of age, decided to become a Carmelite priest.
6. The number 35 is the result of multiplication of 7 (the number of days in a week according to Roman calendar) and 5 (the number of days in a week according to Javanese calendar). The priests visited the communities on certain days based on the combination of Roman and Javanese calendar, e.g. every Thursday *Pabing* (*Pabing* is a day name in Java-

nese calendar) for one community and Friday *Legi* (*Legi* is another day in Javanese calendar) for another community.

7. Interview with Martinus Gino Ut, the first Catholic teacher in Arjowilangun village on April 20, 2014.
8. *Kula nunun* is an expression of asking permission.
9. The term *hyang* comes from Sanskrit. The term is usually used to refer to Hinduism' god(s). In Indonesian language, they use *Allah*, an Arabic term to refer to god(s). The Muslims also use this term to refer to God. In Indonesian language, the persons are, then, called *Allah Bapa*, *Allah Putera*, and *Allah Rob Kudus*.
10. *Gusti* is a Javanese word which meaning is master or lord.
11. *Bunda* is an Indonesian word which meaning is mother while *dewi* derives from Sanskrit's word which means goddess.
12. The idea of *Mokhsa* comes from Hinduism belief of the liberation of a soul from rebirth. When someone experiences *mokhsa*, she/he will not reincarnate again in the world and may unite with the heaven. The idea develops and varies in different culture (See Jayant R. Joshi, 2001:42). In Javanese tradition, *mokhsa* means liberation from space and time.
13. A consecrated host and wine are Eucharistic host and wine which have been ritually blessed by a Catholic priest as part of the Eucharistic ceremony. According to Catholic teachings, the rite of consecration transubstantiates the host and the wine into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ himself is really present in the consecrated bread and wine. (see the Decree of Council of Trent concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, chapter IV and Catholic Canon Law, canon no. 1376).
14. For seven evenings, the family of the dead invite people to come to their house to pray for the soul of the deceased. They read the bible and pray together. Sometimes they also pray the rosary. On the seventh evening, they usually invite the priest to celebrate requiem mass in the house.
15. These kind of celebration is also done by the *abangan* Muslims.
16. Quran 15:27
17. They believe that a *tuynul* is a baby spirit or a soul of a little child; a little child enjoys watching its own face on the mirror, so does the *tuynul*.
18. It is interesting that in the focus group discussion, they did not mention the Bible as one of the sacred objects. The Muslims usually see the Quran as the sacred objects. This is because not many Catholics living in Arjowilangun have Bible at home. The Javanese do not have reading tradition.
19. *Kula nunun* is an expression of asking permission.

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