

TRADITION, REPETITION, TRANSFORMATION : The Dynamic of Cultural Globalization

Yasraf Amir Piliang¹ | Institute Technology of Bandung,
Bandung, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

'Tradition' is a contradictory concept with strong ideological burdens. On the one hand, the concept strongly connotes 'repetition', 'fixity' and 'changelessness'; on the other hand, it is diametrically opposed to the concept of 'change', 'dynamism' and 'transformation'. As a form of repetition, tradition is seen as an opposite of change, because it only repeats what 'has been'. However, through a comprehensive interpretation of the concept, it can be argued that the concept of tradition can connote both 'repetition' and 'change'. As a form of repetition, tradition is not totally separated from and immune to a particular pace of change, innovation or even transformation. This is because there is not only a 'static repetition', but also a 'dynamic repetition' that produces change and difference. Here, I want to stress a 'transformation of tradition'. There are several ways through which a tradition can be transformed:

1) reinterpretation of particular forms of tradition; 2) trans-aesthetics discourse as a dialogues between tradition and other cultures; 3) cultural exchange as a complex process of exchange and selection; 4) critical openness as an inclusive attitude to external cultures; and 5) knowledge differentiation as the enhancement of knowledge of a tradition.

Key Words:

•*Tradition* •*Culture* •*Repetition* •*Change* •*Transformation*
•*Globalization*

The position of 'tradition' in recent processes of globalization is problematic and contradictory, because of the duality of the concept of globalization itself. Globalization is not only understood as a process of interconnectedness of almost all parts of the world, but also a process in which various interest groups compete to safeguard a strategic position. Globalization is a space of tensions between related competing powers, which have created a dilemmatic situation for all cultural traditions. On the one hand, because of strong external pressures for change, traditions have to find a strategic place through a 'politics of position'; on the other hand, because of internal pressures to protect traditions from any external threats, a cultural conservation has to be performed in its various forms and levels. These are the dilemmas for every tradition: between conservation/change, tradition/progress, and repetition/newness.

If a particular change of a cultural tradition caused by external pressures is an excessive one, the change can severely threaten the originality and continuity of the tradition itself. Transformation is one of those hazardous changes in terms of the continuity and originality of a cultural tradition, when a particular cultural tradition is not capable of developing an appropriate cultural strategy. The excessive transformation not only changes a tradition, but also replaces it with another form or structure. To escape from this hazardous excess, an appropriated model of transformation of a tradition in the context of globalization has to be developed that can change certain aspects of a tradition, without threatening and replacing its fundamental principles.

On the other hand, if the cultural tradition does not initiate a particular change, as is demanded by globalization, there is another danger that certain external powers or vested interests will use their power to change a cultural tradition for their own purposes and interests, particularly economic and political interests. In the context of economic interests, traditions are explored and produced as commodities, and then distributed in the global capitalist market to

make profits. In the context of political interests, certain aspects of traditions are exploited as part of political agendas or ideological strategies in the context of global power relations.

In this dilemmatic situation, the cultural discourse about the transformation of traditions should be advocated by a thorough philosophical thinking, a comprehensive social consideration and an appropriate cultural strategy in order to be capable of producing a 'creative tradition' in the space of globalization without threatening the basic principles of traditions itself. In this sense, transformation can be seen as a process of differentiation and enrichment of cultural traditions, through the creation of a specific space for the development of the 'creativity of the tradition', so that traditions are capable of producing different forms, expressions and meanings, without suffering from the loss of fundamental values.

Tradition and Repetition

'Tradition' is defined in *The Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* as "any body of works, styles, idioms, conventions or beliefs which are represented as having been 'handed down' from the past to the present"². It can be implied from this definition that tradition is something unchangeable, continuous and repetitive in character. Tradition is a continuous 'repetition' of the past, in the most conventional sense of the term. As a repetition, tradition is seen as something passing from one generation to another as taken for granted, as the thing uncritically acknowledged as a truth, with no space for critical interpretations. However, this kind of understanding is not completely true, because, however minor it may be, what is repeated in tradition is opened to either internal or external reinterpretation, and the product of reinterpretation is still acknowledged as 'tradition'.

In the above conventional meaning of the term, the combination of the terms 'tradition' and 'change' tends to produce a contradictory semantic meaning. This is because tradition is conventionally seen as a continuity of the past, and if it is subject to a certain pace of change, it is no longer acknowledged as 'tradition'. 'Change', in this connection, is regarded as the 'enemy' of tradition, which threatens its continuity, identity, originality and authenticity. Change is also seen as an opposite of 'repetition', because in repetition there is only sameness, and no space for change and difference. In the same way, the combination of the term 'tradition' and 'transformation' produces the same contradiction, because 'transformation' is a more radical concept than the concept 'change'.

Related to the concept of change, Ted Honderich explains in *Conservatism* that there is a basic difference between the concepts of 'change' and 'reformation'. 'Change', according to Honderich, alters substances, essences or main features of something³. 'Reformation' is not a substantial change, but a process of 'repairing'

existing deficiencies or weaknesses, in order to make it better, more beautiful or more complex. Reformation only touches something extrinsically or accidentally. Hence, reformation changes only certain extrinsic, accidental or apparent aspects. As explained by Honderlich, change alters something fundamental, whereas reformation alters only something non-fundamental⁴. 'Fundamental change' is a total or revolutionary change. 'Revolution', according to Smith, is a fundamental change toward a new beginning, even by a total 'cleansing' of all legacies of a certain tradition or era. A revolution produces totally new ideas, new systems and new values⁵. It is because of this radical change that a revolution is usually associated with panics, dissatisfaction, anxiety, riots, disturbances and violence.

'Innovation' is a kind of radical change, both extrinsic and intrinsic, form and substance, appearance and essence, with no traces of the past are remained. Innovation, in this sense, is not a form of reformation, but a revolutionary change, which produces a totally new thing. The result is a 'progress', as a process of a never-ending new beginning, which regards every achievement as no more than a temporary condition. A good example is modern art. First, modern art detached itself from any tradition, through a kind of disenchantment, in order to produce a never-ending newness. However, it is also detached from its own achievements, through a kind of 'self-negation' or 'self-detachment', as a way of producing newness and progress. The sign of this progress, according to Jürgen Habermas, is the emerge of "the new which will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style."⁶ The way of producing newness, according to Clement Greenberg, is through an intensive and continuous 'self-criticism', its main task is "to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art."⁷ It is through this self-criticism that art is capable of producing continuous newness.

'Conservatism' is an ideology that rejects forms of change, particularly a radical or revolutionary change, since its basic principle is to conserve⁸. One of the basic principles of conservatism is the principle of 'traditionalism'; this is a commitment and respect to established habits and institutions. Conservatism is a repetition of the past, which conserves every familiar thing. However, as explained by Honderlich, while conservatism conserves or repeats a tradition, it does not mean that it is totally 'anti-change' and merely a pale repetition of the past. As explained above, conservatism tolerates certain limits of change, as far as the change does not totally replace its fundamental principles. Hence, an art form with conservatism as its basic ideology is not completely anti-change, since it still tolerates certain paces of change, but not a radical or revolutionary one.

However, like tradition, conservatism is not a single ideology either. Jürgen Habermas distinguishes three types of conservatism. First, the group of Young Conservatives is a group of thinkers inspired by Nietzsche who reject the concept of progress, which makes them anti-capitalism, anti-elitism and anti-development;

who refuse everything popular through the celebration of freedom and emancipation from the power of elites; who show high loyalty towards self-belonging and the faithful protector of one's own cultural roots and heritages (mythical thinking, mysticism, unconsciousness); who celebrate the Dionysian spirit of affirmation to all forms of desire, will and passion⁹. These kinds of spirits can be seen in most poststructuralist thinkers, who 'deconstruct' elitist and binary moral categories and meanings (Derrida)¹⁰, who celebrate the 'desiring revolution' to build a productive society (Deleuze and Guattari)¹¹, who celebrate dialogue with past cultures through the strategy of 'dialogism' or 'intertextuality' (Kristeva)¹².

The group of Old Conservatives completely refuses the influences of cultural modernism. They identify a degradation of human reason, knowledge, ethics and morality, modern world view and its rational procedures, which lead to the self-destruction of humanity, nature and the eco-system. By rejecting modernity, they urge us to return to natural wisdoms, especially to the cosmological ethics that is more respectful to nature and humanity. The tendency of returning to the spirit of Gaia, as a lively earth, to the power of nature, to a sustainable and holistic model of life, to a green lifestyle – are among the latest tendencies of the Old Conservatives. Fritjof Capra, for example, urges us to see the world as a 'whole' with its 'parts' as mutually dependent, where damage to a part means destruction of the whole. Here, man is no longer the 'center' of the world, as it was claimed by the modern view of world, but as a part of a 'higher spiritual nature'¹³.

The group of Neoconservatives, on the other hand, is highly critical to the progress created through technologies and the economy, particularly its capitalistic form. The development of the sciences, technologies and arts organized by global capitalism, has led to a discontinuity between the 'human' and the 'sacred', which leads to a cultural contradiction of capitalism, in which any progress is at the same time a self-destruction. Daniel Bell, for example, remarks how the development of capitalism has created a kind of 'cultural contradiction', in which, a hedonistic attitude and uncontrolled ego humiliates everyday life, that produces a profane culture and 'inhuman' forms of life. Only through a revitalization of religious consciousness, the protection of culture from secularization of the life-world, and rebuilding an ethical basis of society so that life can be conserved¹⁴. The return to 'the sacred' becomes an important doctrine of Neoconservatives as a genuine way to protect humankind from the self-destructive effects of capitalism.

It can be seen, that however different their emphasizes may be, all types of conservatives are highly critical to the concept of 'progress', 'newness' and 'utopia' or 'projects of modernism' in general, in order to celebrate a kind of 'historical reversal', as a respect to the past culture (pastiche). This is what Nietzsche calls 'eternal return', as a moment of 'coming again' of something. The process of 're-

presence' shows differences from the previous presence¹⁵. The concept of eternal return or 'repetition' is quite different to the concept of tradition in the most conventional meaning of the term. While in tradition something is repeated incessantly with no space for any change or difference, eternal return is a genuine way to produce changes and differences. It is in this sense that the return to tradition, as shown by the group of Young Conservatism (postmodernism), is not a pale reproduction of tradition, but an attempt to find its 'new spirits', through the aesthetic paradigm of eclecticism, intertextuality and hybridism.

'Repetition' as a philosophical concept, according to Gilles Deleuze, is not a single concept that refers to a single semantic connotation, but it refers to a complicated range of philosophical categories and meanings. Here, Deleuze distinguishes between two types of repetition: a 'static repetition' and a 'dynamic repetition'. The former is a repetition 'of the same' or 'ordinary' implying sameness, stagnant, continuity, changelessness, equality, commensurability and symmetry. The latter is a repetition of 'difference' implying alterity, change, inequality, transformation, incommensurability, dissymmetry, affirmation, dynamic and discontinuity. A 'dynamic repetition' is a repetition through which the past is repeated in order to change it¹⁶. Tradition, in this new context, is no longer understood as a 'static repetition', but as a 'dynamic repetition' that introduces change. Tradition as a 'static repetition' might only be found in primitive cultures, where people did not have the concepts of change, transformation and the future, and only repeated all heritages of their traditions.

From the discussion above on repetition, I construct a new interrelation of the concepts 'tradition', 'repetition', 'change' and 'transformation'. As remarked previously, conservatism conserves or repeats tradition. However, different conservatives have different ways of conserving tradition. Interestingly, although all conservatives tend to conserve, but some of them – particularly Young Conservatives – tend to conserve 'tradition' in order to change it. In other words, the term 'conservation' is given a new meaning as a process of 'transporting' traditions to new contexts and meanings, to make it 'come again' in its new forms or appearances. Here, tradition is 'reinterpreted' or 'repositioned' in new ways through a 'dynamic repetition', that is, a repetition that introduces change. The aesthetic strategy of 'dynamic repetition' has been employed intensely by postmodernism. For example, the textual strategy of 'allegory' or 'parody' in the postmodern aesthetic, through which a work of art of the past culture is reused and reinterpreted in certain ways by changing its forms, styles and meanings. The art is 'transported' from the past to the present, but by producing new meanings.

Reformation, Transformation, Revolution

As discussed above, the new relation of the concepts 'tradition' and 'change' has opened new possibilities of seeing tradition in a more dynamic way. Tradition is

no longer diametrically opposed to 'change', but change is a part of its general processes. The open possibilities of interpreting tradition in dynamic ways within the space of change is due to the polysemic or even contradictive nature of the concept of 'change' itself. There are several semantic connotations of the concept 'change'. In the social sciences, for example, the term 'change' relates to two tendencies. First, the social science that promotes a 'social static' tends to see equilibrium or order as the ultimate aim of society, and regards change as an enemy of social order and tradition. However, the social science that promotes 'social dynamic' regards change as a 'social energy' that create a dynamic society.

Peter C. Bishop, in *Encyclopaedia of the Future*, distinguishes three forms of change. First, a discontinuous change or total and complete change. It is a radical change or rupture from one structure, form or condition to another, in order to create a totally new beginning. Discontinuous change is a revolutionary change that rejects all traces of tradition. 'Transformation' is one form of radical change. Second, a continuous change. It is an evolutionary change from one condition to another through a gradually improvement of its quality or quantity. Because of its evolutionary character, this change has to pursue certain consistently patterns or phases of change. For example, the gradual changes of human life from a simple pattern of life towards a more complex one. Decay is another example of continuous change, as can be seen from an evolutionary biological development of human body from the infant, young, adult to the old. And the third form of change is cyclical change. This model of change can be described as a change that pursues certain patterns, which recur regularly in certain periods of time¹⁷.

If I relate these categories of change to Honderlisch's categories, it can be concluded that 'transformation' is different from 'reformation' in their scale of change: the former is a total change and the latter is a partial one. However, the scale of change in transformation is not as radical as revolution, although it is a kind of 'immense change'. Revolution is more radical and total than 'transformation'. In this connection, Anthony D. Smith distinguishes two categories of change: an 'evolutionary change' and a 'revolutionary change'. Functionalism in the social sciences preserves what is called a 'social equilibrium' and argues that the only change tolerated in order to preserve an equilibrium is an evolutionary change. In contrast, a revolutionary change is regarded as a form of abnormality and disturbance, which can lead to a dangerous social disintegration, disorganization, uncertainty, anxiety, moral panics, madness and restless. But in art, particularly in modern art, the effects of a revolution are not seen as a negative one, because one of the main objectives of modern art is to create 'social shock', social transgression, disturbance and madness through the 'shock of the new'.

'Reformation' is a concept used in the social sciences to describe a moderate

solution to social problems of dissatisfaction, discontent, frustration, anxiety or hostility caused by certain social conditions. Some of these conflicted phenomena can lead to a dangerous social instability, although it can stimulate new ideas and values, which can be made concrete through an agenda of reformation instead of revolution. To implement the agendas of reformation, new social agents are demanded, to make sure that reformation takes place in the right track. Here, the ultimate aim of reformation is to preserve the equilibrium of everyday life (social, economical, cultural, artistic) – this is a 'functionalist' view of social change¹⁸. An equilibrium can only be preserved through reformation (partial change) and not through revolution (total change).

Based on the above concepts and categories of change, a 'spectrum of change' can be proposed here, which describes a scale of change from a minimal to a total change. This spectrum is: 1) conservation as an insignificant change; 2) reformation as a change of inessential things, through a rearrangement of existing forms or formations; 3) transformation, as a fundamental change that not rearranges certain forms and formations, but introduces new forms or formations; 4) revolution, as a total, radical, complete and fundamental change by totally replacing all existing forms and formations. If I stick to the origin of the Latin word *transformare* (*trans* means change, and *formare* means form), then transformation can simply be understood as a change in character or condition, change in composition or structure, or more lightly a change in the outward forms or appearances. I use the word 'trans' here to connote 'transfer', that is, a movement from one place to another.

According to the functionalist concept of change, tradition is understood as something consistently and purely preserved (form, idiom, style, habit, behavior, identity), so that it is always in a condition of equilibrium. Change of a tradition cannot be a revolutionary or radical change, a change that totally dissolves the roots of a tradition. The only model that can be adopted in changing a tradition is an evolutionary model of change. Revolution and transformation cannot be tolerated in the functionalist vision of change. On the other hand, a revolutionary change is highly celebrated in conflict theory, such as Marx's theory of change. According to the Marxist's theory of change, the only promising way of changing society is through a revolution or revolutionary change¹⁹.

However, 'revolution' itself is not a concept with a single meaning. There are several kinds of revolutions with different connotative meanings. Based on its intensity, Smith distinguishes two kinds of revolutions. First, a partial revolution. It is a revolution that takes place in one or several sectors of the life world, such as a cultural revolution, political revolution or economic revolution. Second, a total revolution. This is a revolution that takes place in all sectors of the life world²⁰. Revolution – whether partial or total – is the essence of aesthetic modernism. Partial revolution in modern art can be seen as a revolution in one or several aspects of formal element, for example: themes, lines, shapes, materials or colors.

Total revolution, on the other hand, is a total change of all aspects of art: materials, styles, meanings, ideas, ideologies and cultural beliefs.

Transformation from Tradition

The relation between tradition and change can be seen in a more concrete way in the context of globalization, in which traditions are subject to changes and transformations by various vested interests in globalization, whether economic, political or cultural. However, like tradition or change, 'globalization' is not a single term with a single meaning. Globalization is an amalgam of complex processes of not only a unification of different social, economic, political and cultural elements in a single global space, but also processes of conflicts and contradictions. Globalization not only entails processes of interconnectedness and interdependence, but also conflicts and struggles among various interest groups for certain spaces, positions and status. Globalization can be seen as a space of 'tensions', in which various interest groups struggle for a strategic position.

Globalization must be understood as an amalgam of complex processes of integration, unity, homogenization and uniformity, and also of disintegration, disunity, heterogeneity and difference. As remarked by Alan Scott, globalization is "a complex interaction between of globalizing and localizing tendencies (so called 'glocalization'), a synthesis of particularistic and universalistic values."²¹ As remarked by Zdravko Mlinar, globalization is a tendency of 'unity of opposites' – heterogeneity in homogenization²². The interactions between the local and the global can take the forms of 'tension', 'coercion', 'repression' or even 'exchange', which involve certain power relations. A strong local culture can take advantage from global interaction and exchange, while at the same time it is capable of maintaining and restoring its local identity. However, a weak culture that has no particular power and strategic position tends to be absorbed, transformed or even destroyed by the processes of globalization²³.

Because of the above 'paradox of globalization', I also see a paradox of the position of tradition in the discourse of globalization – I call this a 'paradox of tradition'. The paradox of globalization is a result of the coexistence of two opposite tendencies in its discourse: the one embodied by a 'modernist spirit' (integration, unity, homogenization and uniformity), the other by a 'postmodernist spirit' (disintegration, disunity, heterogeneity and difference). Modernism treats tradition through the concepts of negation, marginalization and colonialization. A transformation of tradition is initiated as far as it is conformed to its own interests. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is a respect to the plurality, heterogeneity and diversity of tradition and their values. Postmodernism can be seen as a tendency that offers a wider space for the construction of intercultural collaborations, intertextuality or what is called by Mikhail Bakhtin as 'dialogism',

which can produce a 'heteroglossia' or a diversity of languages and expressions²⁴. Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'rhizome' to denote a model of growth constructed by multiple and heterogeneous dialogic lines of various cultural sources, to produce a 'productive difference'²⁵.

This paper focuses on the postmodernist tendency of the transformation of tradition, by ignoring the transformation carried out by the modernist, which according to some cultural critics has produced only a 'monoculture'. What is interesting about the postmodernist transformation of tradition is the openness to multiple ways of producing texts of tradition. Postmodernism produces multiple textual strategies: hybrid, ironic and sometime self-contradictive texts. I discuss these textual tendencies of the postmodernist transformation of tradition in the next section. However, it is important to understand, in the first place, the 'condition of globalization' itself, which makes the transformation of tradition possible. Globalization is an amalgam of immense processes of 'historical reversal', both mentally, cognitively and spiritually of various aspects of cultures, which comprise a cultural tradition.

First, a philosophical reversal. This is a reversal from 'a philosophy of modernity' to 'postmodernity'. Weber describes modernity as a process of rationalization of the life world through the power of science and technology, the emergence of new space-time consciousness and a secular worldview, which provide no space for traditional models of consciousness, belief systems and worldviews. In the cognitive dimension, the disenchantment of man from all forms of magic led to the demythologization of knowledge, that is, the removal of knowledge from its mythological dimensions²⁶. There was an immense discontinuity from all forms of 'the sacred' and the 'transcendent', and the emergence of the power of rational calculation; the disappearance of the traditional worldview – which sees the world as an integral part of 'supernatural world' – is replaced by a modern worldview, which is supported by a rational way of thinking. The emergence of postmodernism has created a new space-consciousness and more inclusive worldviews. Postmodernism emphasizes solidarity, inclusiveness, fragmentation and pluralism of traditions. It is a movement of 'back to tradition' in its multiple dimensions and interpretations: localism, tribalism, and ethnicity, postcolonialism and New Age. It is a respect to the marginalized, repressed, and alienated. It is a reinvention of the irrational, mystical and magical dimensions of the past. Moreover, postmodernism is highly tolerant to various modifications, appropriations, recombinations, hybridism, eclecticism and syncretism²⁷.

Second, a cultural reversal. Cultural modernism can be described as a process of rationalization and homogenization of culture, which produced a universal culture. The most extreme form of cultural modernism, according to Francis Fukuyama, is a globalization of culture, in which the end of history is accompanied by the end of cultural plurality, to be completely replaced by cultural

homogenization, with liberalism as a single ideology of the world²⁸. It is for this reason that cultural critics, like Jerry Mander, criticize globalization as a new form of 'cultural imperialism' that produces a global 'monoculture'²⁹. However, other thinkers, who see globalization as a strengthening of cultural difference and plurality, put contrasting views forward. As remarked by Immanuel Wallerstein in *After Liberalism*, instead of guiding the world to a single ideology of liberalism, what has been taken place in globalization in the last decade is the collapse of liberalism itself as a hegemonic ideology, as a result of its loss of promise and legitimacy³⁰. What is taking place, in contrast, is a condition of 'heterogeneity within homogeneity', of what is called by Wallerstein a condition of 'bifurcation'. Instead of a monoculture, cultures are fragmented into various lifestyle groups or subcultures, the differentiation of cultural signs and the strengthening of local cultures. As remarked by Edward Said, what has been developed since two decades is a 'critical consciousness' within the local culture itself, in a complex condition of intersecting, overlapping, influencing, recollecting, removing and conflicts³¹.

Third, an aesthetic reversal. Like cultural modernism, aesthetic modernism can be seen as a tendency toward aesthetic uniformity and homogenization. Modernism developed a universal principle of aesthetics, which excluded all forms of tradition. Thus, a binary aesthetic categorization is created: art/kitsch, progressive/tradition, newness/repetition, high art/low art. The aim of aesthetic modernism is to produce new forms, materials, compositions and styles as a form of 'aesthetic newness'. The essence of aesthetic modernism, according to Habermas, is the production of "the new, which will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style."³² Here, art is seen as a discourse of 'self-criticism', which its main objective, according to Clement Greenberg, is "to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art."³³ As remarked by Andreas Huyssen, aesthetic modernism is a form of Great Divide, in which all expressions that do not conform to the universal aesthetic standards are marginalized, alienated and negated, including traditional, ethnic, tribal and popular art forms. The coming of postmodernism has led to a radical shift in aesthetic discourse. There are several characteristics of aesthetic postmodernism: a respect to the value of heterogeneity, fragmentation and difference; a fuse of high art and low art; a return to the past by revaluing the idioms and aesthetic languages of the past culture; a radical eclecticism by freely combining various styles in one aesthetic expression; the diffuse of the boundary between 'centre' and 'peripheral'; the deconstruction of the boundary between high art and popular art; and the opening-up of space for the existence and development of various marginalized art forms, including the traditional art forms³⁴.

Transformation of Tradition and Globalization

As argued previously, the relation between the concept 'tradition' and 'repetition' can be constructed in a new way, so that tradition is no longer understood as a 'static repetition', and 'repetition' is no longer a reproduction of the 'same'. Like Deleuze, I use the concepts of change and repetition as unitary and inseparable concepts. Repetition is to repeat in order to change, and there is no change without repetition. In the same stroke, I also talk about the 'transformational' character of tradition and repetition. Repetition is a form of transformation, if I stick to the literal meaning of the term in its Latin origin. To transform is to repeat something in order to change it. Here, transformation of tradition has to be understood as a repetition of tradition in order to change it to produce difference.

As mentioned before, in the discourse of globalization there are high pressures for change and transformation of traditions by various economic, political and cultural vested interests. In the constellation of globalization, in which various forms of tensions, clashes and influences are taking place, the 'reposition' and 'recontextualization' of tradition is needed, in order to find appropriate strategies for its continuity and development. Globalization has provided several strategic choices for traditions: 'conservation', 'reformation', 'transformation' or 'revolution'. For this reason, a comprehensive and encompassing concept of 'change' or 'transformation' have to be made, in order to find a strategic position for future development and continuity of a tradition. If 'transformation' is regarded as the most strategic choice, a specific meaning of 'transformation' has to be proposed, so that it is not understood in the most conventional meaning of the term: as a total 'rupture' from tradition, without leaving any traces of the past. Transformation has to be understood as a 'dynamic repetition' as argued previously. According to the postmodern view, transformation is understood not as a total rupture or discontinuity from tradition, but as a complex process of 'revaluation' of tradition (pastiche), not to reproduce and replace tradition, but to recontextualize it, in order to explore rich aesthetic differences and experiences. In this process of transformation, innovation, newness, and progress (as main principles of aesthetic modernism) are still acknowledged, but the starting point are the local or indigenous aesthetic sources, and no universal claims whatsoever are made about the aesthetic meaning and truth. Several principles of this 'transformation of tradition' can be proposed.

First, transformation as a reinterpretation. Transformation of a tradition can be seen as a reinterpretation of tradition, through which indigenous knowledge and materials are used as a starting point of aesthetic explorations, in order to develop different and more complex aesthetic forms, aesthetic experiences and consciousness (of space, time, place, society, spirituality). On the one hand, reinterpretation necessitates a new consciousness of the uniqueness of place,

humans, knowledge and indigenous culture; on the other hand, it also necessitates a new consciousness of the importance of knowledge exploration, enrichment of language and idiom, and the heightening of aesthetic complexity by systematic attempts of critical aesthetic reinterpretation of a tradition. For this reason, a strategy of 'self-criticism' is demanded in the discourse of tradition, as a precondition of the process of aesthetic recontextualization based on a consideration that aesthetic identities, values and meanings are never a final 'being', but are always in the process of reinterpretation, recreation and continuous 'becoming'. Various aesthetic sources of tradition, such as language, myth, unconsciousness, inner language, 'silent language' and tacit knowledge, can be explored to create much richer and complex aesthetic forms³⁵. The reinterpretation of tradition is a recent tendency in contemporary Indonesian art forms, in which some forms of ritual, myth, procession and festivals are reinterpreted in their new aesthetic context. For example, the power of 'the sacred', archaic sites and supernatural deities; various sources of inner power, natural power and unconsciousness; primitivism, and shamanism have been reinterpreted by several artists to create contemporary Indonesian art forms.

Second, transformation as transaesthetics. Unlike reformation, 'transformation' opens spaces for a complex dialogic line between a particular tradition and other traditions or other cultural sources. Transformation opens a wider space for a complex 'cultural intersection' or 'cultural exchange', a mutual process of give and take, enrichment and influence, which is capable of producing multiple aesthetic forms, expressions or formations. I call this tendency 'transaesthetics'. In the context of art forms in Indonesia, this paradigm of 'transaesthetics' can be established because of the richness and plurality of Indonesia's cultural traditions. Through multiple dialogic lines new forms, concepts, ideas, idioms and expressive languages can be produced. The tendency of some Indonesian artists to combine traditional aesthetic forms, values, and meanings with contemporary aesthetic principles can be seen as a form of transaesthetics. For example, a transaesthetic combination is made by Hendrawan Riyanto, who creates out of various mystical or supernatural aesthetic sources and contemporary aesthetic principles, as a 'dialog' between the past and the present, new aesthetic expressions and experiences.

Third, transformation as cultural exchange. The encounter of one tradition (or culture) with other traditions involves a complex process of selection, exchange and influence, which can be positive, constructive and productive for the development of a cultural tradition if appropriate cultural strategies can be developed. What makes a particular tradition enthusiastic to incorporate certain aspects of external cultures is a spirit of building a common denominator between related cultures through the process of 'cultural exchange'³⁶. Cultural exchange motivates the exponents of a tradition to involve in a process of screening, composing, extracting, choosing and deciding in a productive intercultural

encounter. In exchange, the actors are involved in a process of mutual learning, playing, criticism and interpreting, which is formalized by a common rule or social convention³⁷. In every cultural encounter a process of 'reposition' (of form, meaning, value, identity and ideology) must take place, through which a particular tradition tries to reinvent a new position within the global constellation, while at the same time being able to preserve its fundamental cultural principles. It is through exchange that a tradition can develop creatively and produce more complex cultural expressions and a richer cartography of meanings³⁸. Experiments with cultural exchange have been performed in various art events in Indonesia, to produce a kind of 'aesthetic hybrid'. For example, in Milenart art event 2000 in Bali, the dialogues and exchanges between two or more cultural traditions were held, for instance the dialogue between the tradition of Bali and Bajo, which resulted in unimaginable new aesthetic forms, meanings and values.

Fourth, transformation as critical openness. The process of transformation – as can be seen from its basic word 'trans' – necessitates that a particular tradition opens-up to other traditions and cultures. However, this openness or inclusiveness has to be supported by a kind of 'critical consciousness', that is, the ability to critically judge such external aspects of culture, to objectively select constructive aspects and reject destructive ones, in a kind of a 'critical cultural selection'. Tradition has to open itself to various positive new ideas and innovations originated from various external sources, based on a principle of 'inclusiveness' and 'toleration', as a principle of not making any prejudice to others. This means that it sees the other positively, constructively and, more importantly, critically. A critical ability is particularly needed in order to avoid some negative aspects that can threaten the basic values of a tradition itself. It is this complex relation of critical openness that makes that the existence of a cultural tradition is in the context of globalization always in a field of continuous 'tension' and 'alertness'.

Fifth, transformation as knowledge differentiation. The transformation of a tradition cannot be imagined without the enhancement of the quantity and quality of its knowledge, epistemology and methodology through various activities of aesthetic research and development. These researches and developments can hopefully explore the sources of local or indigenous knowledge, particularly the knowledge that is related to aesthetic expressions and forms. The products of research and development hopefully can be used as rich sources of new aesthetic experimentation and explorations that is capable of producing new aesthetic forms and experiences. In this research and development, emphasizes have to be given on local objects, problems and approaches that can produce various unique, different and original cultural forms.

Notes :

1. He attained his doctoral degree from the Faculty of Art and Design, Institute Technology of Bandung (ITB), and he is specialized in visual culture and cultural studies. He is a lecturer at the same faculty.
2. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 226.
3. Ted Honderlich, *Conservatism* (New York: Wesview, 1990), 6.
4. Honderlich, 6.
5. Anthony D. Smith, *The Concept of Social Change, A Critique of the Functionalist Theory of Social Change* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 98.
6. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity: an Incomplete Project," in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 32.
7. Clement Greenberg, "Modern Painting," in *Esthetics Contemporary*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Prometheus Books, 1986), 196.
8. Honderlich, *Conservatism*, 1.
9. Habermas, "Modernity: an Incomplete Project," 32.
10. For Derrida, 'deconstruction' is not destruction or demolition of something, but a process of de-sedimentation of all significations that have their source in that of the 'logos' or 'truth', particularly the 'truth' constructed through a principle of binary oppositions. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 10.
11. 'Desiring revolution', according to Deleuze, is a revolution created by a 'desiring machine' or 'desiring production' as a domain of 'free syntheses' where everything is possible. It means that everything can be created, produced or consumed; nothing has to be rejected, negated or forbidden. It is in this reason that the philosophy of Deleuze is named as a 'philosophy of affirmation'. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: The Viking Press, 1982), 300.
12. 'Intertextuality', according to Kristeva is a "transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another." It is a space, in which several signs or texts from different sources, places, periods or cultures are intersected one to another in certain form of exchange and permutation, to create a 'third text'. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 60.
13. Fritjof Capra, *Titik Balik Peradaban: Sains, Masyarakat dan Kebangkitan*

- Kebudayaan*, (Yogyakarta: Bentang Budaya, 1997), 371.
14. Jürgen Habermas, *New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 29.
 15. Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1989), 30
 16. Repetition' is a philosophical term that is interpreted and categorized by Deleuze in many different and sometimes complicated ways. As can be implied from his philosophy, the differentiation between a 'static' and 'dynamic repetition' cannot be seen as a form of binary opposition, since the basic philosophical 'spirit' of Deleuze's is a 'philosophy of affirmation', that cannot negate or reject something. Otherwise, his philosophy is a 'self-negation' in character, or a proponent of the philosophy of 'negativity' of modernity, which makes a clear and definite border between 'high' and 'low culture' and absolutely rejects the later. This means that a 'static repetition' as a concept cannot be negated or rejected either. A 'static' and 'dynamic repetition', therefore, are two concepts that have to be positioned in a frame of 'equality'. In this connection, a 'static repetition' cannot be seen as a 'bad', 'wrong', 'negative' or 'sinful' concept, that has to be negated. It is only a matter of choice: to choose one or another. Deleuze perhaps just wants to say, that if we choose a 'static repetition' we can only produce 'sameness' and 'continuity'. But, if we choose a 'dynamic repetition', we will be able to produce 'difference'. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 20.
 17. Thomas Kurian, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Future* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1996), 71.
 18. Smith, *The Concept of Social Change*, 98.
 19. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 90-94
 20. Smith, *The Concept of Social Change*, 115.
 21. Alan Scott, *The Limits of Globalization, Cases and Arguments* (London: Routledge, 1997), 7.
 22. V. Aspike Peterson, "Remapping in the Context of Globalization," in *Globalization, Theory and Practice*, eds. Eleonore Kofman and Gillian Youngs (London: Pinter, 1996), 12.
 23. Wang Gungwu, in Caroline Turner, ed., *Tradition and Change* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1993), vi.
 24. Mikhail Bakhtin uses the concept 'dialogism' to denote a textual tendency that is built through the intersection of past texts and present

- ones. In other words, within a present text we can find voices of previous texts. In one single text we can find two or more voices that are intersected one to another to produce a kind of 'hybrid text'. In one single text we can see two or more tropes, codes, ideologies, and semantic meanings. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 67; Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogical Principle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 60-68.
25. Deleuze and Guattari use the concept 'rhizome' to denote a particular model of growth or development, which is constructed by 'multiple roots' that produce a multiplicity of processes, forms, and texts. This is a model of growth that rejects a binary model, linear development or single determination in order to create the power of 'connection' or 'dialogic lines'. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Rhizome," in *On the Line Semiotext(e)* (New York: Columbia University, 1983), 4-7.
 26. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 213.
 27. Although there are two versions of postmodernism as identified by Rosenau, an 'affirmative postmodernism' and 'skeptical postmodernism', however, general characteristics of postmodernism can be identified: a respect for pluralism, fragmentation and difference. Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Postmodernism and Social Science, Insight, Inroad and Intrusion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 109-137.
 28. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), xi.
 29. Jerry Mander, "Facing the Rising Tide," in *The Case Against the Global Economy, And for a Turn Towards the Local*, eds. Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996), 5
 30. Immanuel Wallerstein, *After Liberalism* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 242.
 31. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Jakarta: Penerbit Mizan, 1995), 27.
 32. Habermas, "Modernity: an Incomplete Project," 4.
 33. Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 196.
 34. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
 35. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 28-32.

36. Ahmed Gurnah, "Elvis in Zanzibar" in *The Limits of Globalization, Cases and Arguments*, ed. Alan Scott (London: Routledge, 1997), 120.
37. Ahmed Gurnah, 123.
38. Ahmed Gurnah, 129.

Bibliography :

1. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
2. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).
3. Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1989).
4. Fritjof Capra, *Titik Balik Peradaban: Sains, Masyarakat dan Kebangkitan Kebudayaan*, (Yogyakarta: Bentang Budaya, 1997).
5. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: The Viking Press, 1982).
6. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Rhizome," in *On the Line Semiotext(e)* (New York: Columbia University, 1983).
7. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
8. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976).
9. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).
10. Clement Greenberg, "Modern Painting," in *Esthetics Contemporary*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Prometheus Books, 1986).
11. Ahmed Gurnah, "Elvis in Zanzibar" in *The Limits of Globalization, Cases and Arguments*, ed. Alan Scott (London: Routledge, 1997).
12. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).
13. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity: an Incomplete Project," in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985).
14. Jürgen Habermas, *New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).
15. Ted Honderlich, *Conservatism* (New York: Wesview, 1990).
16. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
17. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

18. Thomas Kurian, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Future* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1996).
19. Jerry Mander, "Facing the Rising Tide," in *The Case Against the Global Economy, And for a Turn Towards the Local*, eds. Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996).
20. V. Aspik Peterson, "Remapping in the Context of Globalization," in *Globalization, Theory and Practice*, eds. Eleonore Kofman and Gillian Youngs (London: Pinter, 1996).
21. Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Postmodernism and Social Science, Insight, Inroad and Intrusion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
22. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).
23. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Jakarta: Penerbit Mizan, 1995).
24. Alan Scott, ed., *The Limits of Globalization, Cases and Arguments* (London: Routledge, 1997).
25. Anthony D. Smith, *The Concept of Social Change: A Critique of the Functionalist Theory of Social Change* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).
26. Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogical Principle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).
27. Caroline Turner, ed., *Tradition and Change* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1993).
28. Immanuel Wallerstein, *After Liberalism* (New York: The New Press, 1995).
29. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).