

ethical agency of rhetoricians and active audiences, and boldly claims that the pulpit is one of the few places left from which to speak truthfully.

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Lull, James. *Culture-On-Demand: Communication in a Crisis World*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007; pp x + 222. \$69.95.

In our globalizing world, the transformations between politics, culture, media, and religion have greatly intensified the problems and potentials for viable civil societies. Correspondingly, “Never before in history have so many disparate cultures suddenly become so aware of each other” (195). Do these advancing complexities improve or impede the possibilities for broad socio-political human development? Such is the question posed and partially answered by James Lull, who optimistically situates communication as the central hope for creating “shared values” and “a meaningful level of moral agreement” in an often atomistic, fragmentary, and uncertain social terrain (xxi).

Lull believes that the proliferation of interactive technologies and channels in our expanding media environment offers “culture-on-demand,” or the capability for individuals and societies to cooperate by broadening their range of cultural experiences and active communication skills. Drawing on the widening symbolic and material resources available through globalizing technologies (such as open sourcing), Lull posits that the primordial need for human expression and community can be fulfilled through ecumenical, cultural connectivity that affirms the value of “individual human rights” and “social democracy” (191). Such connectedness is not guaranteed, however, so “Open and frank exchanges about cultural values and practices are discussions that *must* take place at the global level” (149).

Toward this aim, Lull stresses the dominant role that *religion* plays in contemporary crises and spends a good portion of the book indicting religious and secular fundamentalisms for obstructing progress toward global common ends. In particular, he spotlights the tensions between Islam and open global communications, and the religion's challenge to secular-democratic political authority—as opposed to many other faith traditions, “whose fundamentalism has been tempered by secular authority and political history” (182).

Lull argues that for various reasons, scholarship has been generally unreflective and overly apologetic with Islam's ideology and practices. Citing incidents from 9/11 to the Danish cartoon controversy in 2005, he states, “Islam has not simply been converted into political ideology for sinister purposes; the religion itself is deeply ideological and, because of its untestable claims of infallibility, is subject to extreme interpretations and uses” (xiv). A basic tenet of Islam with forbidding political consequences, for example, is that practitioners should desire religious world domination over cultural and ethnic differences (though Lull does qualify later in the book that there are some interpretive disagreements within Islam) (130). These tensions between Islam and the world community have been opened and heightened by globalization, which exposes the disparities between nations and cultures.

Lull identifies religious standards on gender relations as the major impediment to egalitarianism, tolerance, and a productive workforce in the Islamic world. Koranic decrees contribute to the concealment of the female body, subordination to men in all areas of life, and legitimated barbarisms such as genital mutilation. Additionally, Islamic pronouncements against the display of images collide with the increasing spread of global visual culture. Exacerbating these tensions is the totalizing Koranic ruling that law and religion be one, and the ensuing problem that “closed societies don't innovate” (20).

Lull draws from a wide base of research to support his claims, showing “less than one percent of the Arab population uses the internet,” religious and government leaders “refuse to

permit polio vaccines and other modern health services,” and “more than half of Arab women are illiterate” (142). Studies from around the world illustrate that self-expression is correlated with tolerance. A developing danger is that closed societies that lack tolerance are no longer restricted to geography, as cultural memes and identities are reproduced across territories and global migrations.

The potential for many Islamic countries and groups to engage the world community is not without hope, however. Lull sees the secular-political governance in Turkey and new media developments like Qatar-based satellite television station Al-Jazeera (which operates free from government influence) providing spaces within the region for debate and controversy, and even needed reflections and articulations on Western hegemony in major global events like the Iraq war.

What these kinds of technological developments reflect is the positive force to be played by “cultural transparency,” or the ongoing “penetrating condition of openness, surveillance, and vigilance that makes the actions of powerful persons and institutions visible and holds them publicly accountable” (133, 134). Ideas are increasingly being circulated on a global scale, hence the scrutiny of everything from one’s own beliefs to the U.S. government’s response to Hurricane Katrina is fostered by conditions of “*reflexive cultural globalization* wherein people constantly compare themselves and their ways of life to others” (137).

In this environment, and aligning with much contemporary sociological theory, Lull perceives cultural experiences as increasingly personal and textual and decentralized rather than structured in their remove from time and space constraints. While critiquing the excessive individualism of the West, Lull still points out the general moral value of this trend, since “culture-on-demand tendencies . . . actualizes most often at the individual level,” and extremism flourishes at institutional levels (198). That is, while we are always embedded within cultural relations, individuals are increasingly able to operate as “culture creators” or “increasingly sovereign subjects” who can use the

expanding resources of globalization to imagine new ways of thinking, being, and acting in common.

As we bump into one another with rising frequency, Lull sees dialogic open spaces developing in overlapping phases, which avoid the trappings of “minimal reflection” and “little or no sense of true universal humanity” fostered in different fundamentalisms (181). These stages emphasize the astounding rate of worldwide information production, global visibility and transparency, and platforms for participation that raise themes for deliberation. Furthermore, global consciousness raises the potential for mobilizations of powerful public opinion, making necessary cultural introspection and endeavors toward global wisdom, and what he forecasts as almost utopian promises for meaningful dialogue. Lull refers to a particularly heuristic idea at the end of the book—that individuals will have to become comfortable with multiple identities to be global citizens (193).

Lull's analysis is a bold and needed venture into the relationship between communication, globalization, and religion. He is not afraid to theorize the global-local predicaments that threaten to undo common human norms, nor make the interdisciplinary connections to construct an optimistic vision of the future. Yet the latter choice also appears to be a limitation. Lull overwhelmingly draws from and constructs his arguments from the sociological and journalistic insights of Sam Harris, Thomas Friedman, Fareed Zakaria, Robert Putnam, Anthony Giddens, Manuel Castells, Ulrich Beck, and Nestor Garcia-Canclini. What is most needed at this scholarly juncture is to bring unique insights from the discipline of communication to bear on religion and global processes.

Ironically, there is also not much on exactly *how* Muslim societies might best respond to globalization and modernity. Lull conjectures that “youth almost always leads the way” (94), yet admits that in the Islamic world, youth frequently tend to be even more traditional than their parents (115). Insight into how and why other varieties of fundamentalism have been tempered by secular-political contexts may have helped in this regard. More broadly, Lull might also have suggested how and

where religionists of all persuasions could look within their own traditions to find spaces for the common humanity necessitated by globalization and secular communication. The positive role that religions might play within the public sphere is admitted, but left unexplored. At the very least, there is lots of room for scholars to build upon these vital questions, and Lull has done an exemplary job in directing our conversations on these issues.

At its core, *Culture-On-Demand* is a moral, transnational call to make our religious and ideological visions of the world larger, through tolerant communicative encounters enacted within new media's capacities to create space for the other. And for the sound research and liberal optimism constituted toward that goal, this book is a solid contribution to scholarship in religion, communication, and humanistic ideals.

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Quentin J. Schultze, *Here I am: [Now What on Earth Should I be Doing?]* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005. 109 pages. Paper, \$11.99.

Here I am: [Now What on Earth Should I be Doing?] is Quentin Schultze's provocative book inspired by the Lily Endowment's call to engage college students in conversation about vocation. Going beyond nominal definitions typical of related books, Schultze's work focuses on being willing and available to respond to God's call in the here and now because we recognize our existence by grace. The declaration "Here I am" is the servant response of Abraham, Moses, and Samuel when God called them by name, comparable to Mary's willing response to God. The book's title also invokes Christ's call to us in Revelation 3:20 out of our unbelief or self-delusion into open hearts and communion with him. According to Schultze, when we respond to his call with "Here I am, Lord," God uses both our strengths and weaknesses in his eternal plan to renew all things. He explains, "Replying 'Here I am' is a way of declaring

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