

FOREWORD

This issue has taken to task to present three articles that compare contending issues in three areas, namely, literature, role of women and the Confucian concept of Xunyi. At times it is through comparisons that the existing similarities and differences are highlighted and can be further dialogued to enhance the understanding of different, if not contending, perceptions.

Intercultural Understanding through Literature by Mireya Sosa Abella and Ricardo Mariano Reyes compares two tales written by García Márquez and Abdul Samad Ahmad. One is from the world of Latin American literature while the other is from Malaysian oral folktales. *Light is like Water* and *Si Tanggang* are set in Magical Realism and Realism, respectively. The authors present how the elements of character, space and time are treated and events unfold to lead towards one similar theme: tragedy. These tales from two distant cultures and languages may use two different literary approaches but tragedy is still a stark fact.

Xunzi on empathy: A Confucian and biological naturalist viewpoint by Tee Boon Chuan examines what is meant by 'a science of empathy'. Then he goes on to compare empathy by a Confucian scholar, Xunzi, who lived circa 313 BCE - 218 BCE with the disciplinary studies in the West. This paper takes a huge leap in time and space to elaborate an ancient Confucian philosophy on empathy and to compare it with the interpretation by modern Western counterparts. The author points out and elaborates the three differentiations as he sees it in terms of terminology, approach and the goal of the empathy. This paper aims to provide justification and elaborate Xunzi's Confucian philosophy deserve a good read and perhaps calls for an intriguing dialogue to further compare the very concept of empathy as we see it today.

A dialogue on the role of Muslim women in developing a healthy economy in Islamic civilization by Zohreh Sadatmoosavi looks at the role of women in the Islamic context. In what ways are the roles different from those that were forwarded by other contending feministic theories? The author calls for us to examine and compare if at all economic and cultural dominance by the West impose any influence on Muslim lifestyle to cause Muslim women to depart from Islamic culture. How and what are the role of women in contributing towards an Islamic economy seems to be the focus of comparison in this paper.

It is our hope that this collection of articles will be a valuable resource for *Katha* readers and will stimulate further discussion and dialogue.

Assoc Professor Dr Faridah Noor Mohd Noor

Chief Editor, *Katha*