RELIGIOUS RITUAL AND SOCIAL HOPE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF JOHN HICK'S CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

This study explores John Hick's concept of religious pluralism and its relevance in fostering interreligious harmony in the contemporary era of pluralism. Hick emphasizes the necessity of respecting religious diversity while affirming that all major religious traditions embody authentic responses to the same transcendent reality. This research employs a philosophical and library-based approach to analyze Hick's ideas, particularly their implications for interreligious coexistence. The findings demonstrate that Hick's notion of religious pluralism can serve as a foundation for nurturing interreligious harmony through concrete practices such as interfaith dialogue, recognition of the plurality of salvific paths, and affirmation of universal human rights. Furthermore, religious pluralism should be understood not merely as a theoretical construct but as a lived social reality that must be acknowledged and constructively managed to build a tolerant and inclusive society. In this regard, Hick's framework highlights the ethical dimension of religion—namely, the transformation of individuals from self-centeredness toward compassion and justice—as the key to realizing social hope in a pluralistic context.

Keywords: *John Hick, religious pluralism, interreligious harmony, ritual, social hope*

Introduction

Seyyed Hossein Nasr highlights that humanity today inhabits a historical era marked by the unprecedented visibility and coexistence of multiple religious traditions within shared social spaces (Nasr, 2007). This condition is amplified by processes of globalization: rapid advancements in communication technologies, mass migration, and increasing cultural interconnectedness have blurred traditional geographic and cultural boundaries. As a result, individuals of differing religious convictions now interact in ways unimaginable in earlier centuries.

Religious plurality, however, is a double-edged reality. On one hand, it holds the promise of enriching human life through dialogue, cooperation, and mutual learning across traditions. On the other, it carries the potential for misunderstanding, prejudice, and violent conflict, particularly when exclusivist or absolutist interpretations of religion dominate the public sphere (Cornille, 2013). The management of religious diversity has thus become one of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century, with implications for both domestic harmony and global peace.

The existence of multiple religious traditions raises pressing philosophical and theological questions: Can all religions be equally valid paths to ultimate reality? How should one respond to competing truth-claims that appear mutually exclusive? What ethical responsibilities follow from living in a religiously plural world? These questions demand frameworks that go beyond the limits of exclusivism—where one religion claims sole access to salvation—and inclusivism—where one tradition acknowledges the value of others but maintains its superiority. John Hick emerges as one of the most influential voices in this debate. His theory of religious pluralism reorients theological discourse by positing that the world's great religions are diverse responses to a single transcendent reality, which he refers to as *the Real* (Hick, 1989). For Hick, no single religious tradition can claim a monopoly on ultimate truth, as human knowledge of the divine is always mediated by culture, history, and linguistic frameworks. This epistemological humility allows space for recognizing the legitimacy of multiple religious paths.

Central to Hick's thought is the conviction that the essence of religion lies not in rigid dogmatic affirmations but in the ethical transformation of the human person. He proposes a "soteriological criterion" in which salvation is defined as a movement from self-centeredness to a life of compassion, justice, and God-centeredness (Hick, 1993). This framework underscores the idea that what ultimately matters is not doctrinal conformity but ethical and spiritual transformation. By shifting attention from the particularities of doctrine to the universality of ethical practice, Hick opens a new horizon for understanding religious ritual. Rituals, in this view, are not merely symbolic markers of exclusive religious identity but are formative practices that cultivate dispositions of humility, empathy, and solidarity. In other words, religious rituals are not only vertical acts of devotion toward the divine but also horizontal acts that orient believers toward the good of their neighbors.

The reinterpretation of religious ritual as a medium of ethical transformation has significant social implications. Rituals shape communities by reinforcing shared values, fostering social cohesion, and orienting individuals toward collective responsibility. When understood through Hick's pluralistic lens, rituals become instruments of *social hope*: practices that can contribute to building inclusive and harmonious societies in which differences are not erased but embraced as part of a larger human quest for the transcendent. This perspective is particularly relevant in contexts marked by interreligious tensions, such as Indonesia, where pluralism is both a lived reality and a contested ideal. Religious rituals—whether in the form of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, or communal celebrations—can be reinterpreted not as exclusivist markers of division but as opportunities for cultivating empathy and mutual respect across faith boundaries. By situating rituals within a pluralistic framework, Hick's thought provides a philosophical foundation for transforming religious diversity into a source of social enrichment rather than conflict.

The value of Hick's pluralism lies not only in its theological insight but also in its practical applicability to pressing global issues. In a world where religious exclusivism often fuels intolerance, radicalism, and sectarian violence, Hick's vision offers a model of coexistence rooted in ethical transformation and mutual recognition. His work encourages societies to look beyond mere tolerance toward genuine interreligious dialogue and cooperation.For pluralistic nations, the challenge is not to homogenize religious expression but to foster conditions where diversity becomes a foundation for shared flourishing. Hick's framework thus invites religious communities, policymakers, and scholars to reimagine the

role of religion: not as a barrier dividing humanity into competing enclaves, but as a force for building social trust, solidarity, and peace.

In this context, John Hick's thought on religious pluralism becomes particularly significant. Hick (1989) proposed a theological paradigm that emphasizes the idea that the world's major religions are diverse responses to the same *Ultimate Reality* (*the Real*), even if expressed through different symbols, languages, and traditions. By situating religions within a "theocentric" rather than "Christocentric" framework, Hick sought to provide a philosophical and theological foundation for interreligious harmony. This approach recognizes the legitimacy of different faith traditions as authentic paths toward salvation and ethical transformation.

Nevertheless, Hick's pluralistic model has not gone without criticism. Exclusive theologians—particularly within Christianity—have argued that his framework risks diluting or relativizing the unique truth-claims of individual traditions. Gavin D'Costa (1996), for example, contends that Hick's paradigm undermines Christianity's central claim about the uniqueness of Christ, and thus cannot be accepted as a universally valid theology of religions. Similar critiques have been raised by Netland (2001), who emphasizes that Hick's pluralism often neglects the internal integrity of religious traditions and their particular doctrinal commitments.

Despite these critiques, Hick's pluralism remains influential as a theoretical framework for fostering peaceful coexistence in religiously diverse societies. Its emphasis on ethical transformation rather than doctrinal exclusivity makes it particularly relevant in contexts marked by religious plurality, such as Indonesia, where high levels of religious and cultural diversity coexist with periodic tensions. The key challenge, therefore, lies in critically examining to what extent Hick's pluralism can be applied as a practical basis for interreligious harmony in such multireligious settings.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2007) notes that humanity today lives in a historically unique condition, in which the world's major religions are not only present but actively interact within the same social spaces. This phenomenon has become increasingly visible in the era of globalization, where geographical, political, and cultural boundaries have diminished due to advances in communication technologies and human mobility. Religious plurality is thus no longer an avoidable phenomenon, but an ontological reality embedded within global society.

However, the presence of religious plurality is deeply ambivalent. On one hand, it offers opportunities for enriching human identity through interfaith dialogue and cooperation. On the other, it can become a source of tension, political struggle, and even violent conflict when not managed wisely. As Knitter (2002) and Cornille (2013) point out, the central challenge lies in how to realize interreligious harmony and peaceful coexistence without erasing the unique truth-claims of each religious tradition. More recent scholarship (Schmidt-Leukel & Edelmann, 2020; Steinhart, 2025) similarly emphasizes that pluralism must move beyond mere tolerance toward a constructive framework that allows religions to interact meaningfully while maintaining their particularity.

In the Indonesian context, scholars such as Abdullah (2005) and Azra (2020) stress that pluralism is not only a theological or philosophical issue but also a sociopolitical reality that must be managed to strengthen national unity and prevent sectarian conflict. In this

regard, Hick's pluralism—while developed in a Western theological context—offers valuable insights for fostering interreligious dialogue and cultivating *social hope* in plural societies.

This research analyzes John Hick's concept of religious pluralism and its potential contribution to building religious harmony, with a specific focus on the diverse society of Indonesia. The study uses a philosophical-theological approach, engaging Hick's ideas with the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia. The primary sources are Hick's major works, including *An Interpretation of Religion* (1989), *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (1985), and *God and the Universe of Faith* (1993).

John Hick, a leading 20th-century philosopher of religion, championed a radical view of religious pluralism. He rejected the traditional exclusivist approach that insists on salvation through only one religion, and instead proposed a **theocentric paradigm**. In this view, the world's great religions are seen as different human responses to the same ultimate reality, which Hick calls **"the Real."**

For Hick, religious diversity is not an obstacle but a legitimate path toward ethical transformation and a closer relationship with the Transcendent. He argued that religious harmony can be achieved if people shift their focus from exclusive truth claims to an ethical transformation centered on love and justice.

While John Hick's pluralism has been widely studied, most existing research has concentrated on theological critiques. Prominent scholars such as Gavin D'Costa, Harold Netland, Catherine Cornille, and Paul Knitter argue that Hick's approach risks relativism, lacks adequate defense of particular religious truths, and underestimates the fundamental differences between faith traditions. Despite this extensive critique, an important gap remains: there is still little scholarship that connects Hick's philosophical framework with the practical application of religious harmony in Indonesia's pluralistic society. Current Indonesian studies on religious plurality are predominantly sociological and political, leaving the philosophical-theological dimension of Hick's contribution underexplored.

This research seeks to fill that gap by contextualizing Hick's philosophy within Indonesia's unique socio-religious landscape. Its novelty lies in integrating Hick's abstract philosophy of pluralism with concrete practices such as interfaith dialogue, multicultural education, and social reconciliation. By bridging philosophical reflection and social praxis, this study not only advances academic discussions in religious philosophy but also offers tangible contributions to Indonesia's ongoing discourse on preserving religious plurality and cultivating social hope through ritual and shared ethical commitments.

Methodology

This study employs a **qualitative approach** with a **library research method**. Accordingly, the data are not derived from interviews or surveys but are drawn from written sources such as books, journal articles, and other academic documents.

Type and Approach

- **Type of Study:** This research is situated within the field of the philosophy of religion. Its primary focus is not the collection of empirical facts but rather a critical and in-depth analysis of John Hick's ideas.

- **Philosophical-Hermeneutical Approach:**
  - *Philosophical:* Applied to critically and systematically analyze the logical structure of Hick's framework of thought. This involves a kind of conceptual "deconstruction" to reveal the coherence and presuppositions of his arguments.
  - *Hermeneutical:* Employed to interpret Hick's texts, uncovering both the intended meaning of the author and the historical-philosophical context in which his ideas were developed.
- **Comparative Approach:** This approach is used to juxtapose Hick's thought with the perspectives of his critics (e.g., Gavin D'Costa) as well as with the socio-religious context of Indonesia. Such comparison makes it possible to evaluate both the relevance and the limitations of Hick's pluralistic paradigm in different cultural and theological settings.

Data Sources and Collection

- **Primary Sources:** The original works authored by John Hick.
- **Secondary Sources:** Academic writings from philosophers, theologians, and researchers who have engaged with or critiqued Hick's thought, including studies on religious pluralism and interfaith harmony in Indonesia.
- **Data Collection:** Data are gathered through close reading, detailed note-taking, and systematic classification of relevant themes and arguments from both primary and secondary materials.

Data Analysis

- **Content Analysis:** Applied to identify, categorize, and interpret Hick's core concepts, such as *the Real* and theocentric pluralism.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Used to contrast Hick's ideas with alternative viewpoints in order to highlight their strengths, weaknesses, and contextual relevance.
- **Analytical Stages:** The analysis follows the general stages of qualitative research:
  1. *Data Reduction:* Selecting and focusing on the most relevant material.
  2. *Data Display:* Organizing the reduced data into a coherent and comprehensible form.
  3. *Conclusion Drawing:* Formulating critical insights and conclusions that logically emerge from the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Brief Profile of John Hick's Thought

John Hick (1922–2012) is widely recognized as one of the most influential philosophers of religion in the twentieth century, consistently developing his theory of religious pluralism. At the heart of his thought lies the conviction that all major world religions represent diverse human responses to the same transcendent Reality, which he calls *the Real*. In his seminal works, such as *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (1985), *An Interpretation of Religion* (1989), and *God and the Universe of Faiths* (1993), Hick rejects

the exclusive claims of any single tradition and instead advances a pluralist paradigm that regards the world's religions as legitimate paths to salvation or soteriological transformation.

In contemporary scholarship, Hick's ideas remain both a foundational reference and a point of critical debate. Recent studies highlight several new developments in the interpretation of his pluralist framework:

1. **Pluralism and semantic realism.** Łukasiewicz (2024) examines the relationship between Hick's religious pluralism and semantic realism, arguing that the concept of *the Real* can be understood as a universal core that penetrates the diverse religious languages. This reinforces Hick's relevance in bridging symbolic differences across traditions.
2. **Reinterpretation of *the Real*.** Steinhart (2025) reinterprets Hick's concept of *the Real* in relation to Yujin Nagasawa's discussions on pantheism, axiarchism, and atheism. He contends that Hick's framework can be extended beyond the theistic paradigm to include non-theistic metaphysical models, thereby broadening the philosophical scope of Hick's thought.
3. **Mystical dialogue and comparative theology.** Schmidt-Leukel (2024) connects Hick's philosophy with dialogical and mystical approaches to the transcendent reality, suggesting that *the Real* enables cross-traditional understanding without negating the uniqueness of each religious identity (Hick & Schmidt-Leukel, 2024).
4. **Metaphysical critique of pluralism.** Becker (2024) offers a critique by pointing out that Hick's pluralism, like other pluralist models, struggles to construct a comparative metaphysics capable of adequately accounting for religious diversity without reductionism. This underscores both the influence and the limitations of Hick's contribution.

Thus, John Hick's thought can be seen as a foundational framework that continues to shape the discourse on religious pluralism. His theory not only provides a basis for reinterpretation and expansion in contemporary philosophy of religion but also remains open to constructive criticism that deepens the conversation about the metaphysics of religious diversity. Thus, Hick remains a central figure in the philosophy of religion: he opens space for a more inclusive interreligious paradigm while at the same time provoking new philosophical and theological debates regarding the possibility of uniting highly diverse religious experiences within a single metaphysical framework.

In *An Interpretation of Religion* (1989), Hick introduces the concept of pluralistic theocentrism, representing a shift from **Christocentrism** to **Theocentrism**. For Hick, it is inadequate to claim that only one religion possesses an absolute monopoly on salvation. Rather, he argues that all religions serve as legitimate paths toward the ethical transformation of humanity—from a state of self-centeredness to a mode of existence oriented toward the Divine Reality (*self-centredness to Reality-centredness*).

Religious Ritual and Social Hope: The Contribution of John Hick's Concept

John Hick (1922–2012) stands as one of the most influential philosophers of religion whose theory of religious pluralism reshaped modern debates about faith, truth, and coexistence. His thought is particularly relevant for understanding how religious rituals

generate social hope, since Hick interprets religion not as an exclusive claim to truth but as a transformative response to the transcendent Reality (*the Real*).

The Real as the Ground of Ritual

Hick argues that *the Real* is a transcendent reality beyond the full grasp of human reason and language (*An Interpretation of Religion*, 1989). Religious rituals, therefore, should not be seen as literal representations of God but as symbolic responses to *the Real* within particular cultural and historical contexts. This perspective allows religious practices—whether prayer, sacrifice, or communal worship—to be understood as authentic human attempts to encounter transcendence. As Steinhart (2025) and Łukasiewicz (2024) note, Hick's concept of *the Real* continues to be reinterpreted in contemporary metaphysics and semantic realism, demonstrating its enduring capacity to ground diverse ritual expressions.

Ethical-Transformational Soteriology and Social Hope

For Hick, the essence of salvation lies not in exclusive membership within a single tradition but in the ethical transformation of human life—from self-centeredness to reality-centeredness (*God and the Universe of Faiths*, 1993). Rituals thus gain significance as communal practices that foster moral formation, compassion, and justice. In this sense, religious rituals function as vehicles of social hope: they sustain communities by orienting individuals toward values of love, justice, and peace. While D'Costa (2020) criticizes Hick for underestimating doctrinal complexities, Schmidt-Leukel (2024) affirms that his soteriological vision opens constructive space for interreligious dialogue rooted in ethical transformation.

Theocentric Pluralism and Shared Futures

Hick rejects both exclusivism and inclusivism, advancing instead a theocentric pluralism that places God—or *the Real*—at the center of religious life rather than any one religious figure. This shift from *Christocentrism* to *Theocentrism* affirms that all major religions, through their doctrines and rituals, contribute validly to humanity's search for salvation. As Becker (2024) observes, such a comparative metaphysics is ambitious and faces challenges in reconciling doctrinal diversity. Yet Hick's paradigm provides a conceptual foundation for seeing diverse rituals not as competitive claims but as complementary expressions of humanity's orientation toward the divine.

Relevance to Social Hope in Indonesia

In Indonesia, where religious plurality is both a sociological reality and a constitutional principle (UUD 1945, Article 29), Hick's framework offers practical contributions to nurturing social hope:

- **Philosophical basis for interfaith ritual dialogue:** By interpreting rituals as authentic responses to *the Real*, Hick's concept legitimizes interreligious encounters and shared practices of peacebuilding (Cornille, 2013).
- **Ethical orientation toward common good:** Hick's emphasis on ethical transformation highlights that rituals must generate a lived ethos of justice, compassion, and human dignity, essential for sustaining harmony (Knitter, 2002).

- **Contextual theology for Indonesian pluralism:** His thought can inspire the development of a theology of pluralism in line with *Pancasila* and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, integrating ritual diversity with national unity (Madjid, 2001; Azra, 2006).

John Hick's concept of religious pluralism—structured around *the Real*, ethical-transformational soteriology, and theocentric pluralism—offers a powerful framework for interpreting religious ritual as a source of social hope. While not free from critique, his ideas remain vital for addressing contemporary challenges of pluralism, fostering interfaith dialogue, and building communities of justice and peace in a globalized and religiously diverse world.

Critique of Hick and Its Implications

Reduction of Particular Theologies

One of the most consistent criticisms of Hick's pluralism is that it tends to reduce the theological identity of each religion. Gavin D'Costa (1996) argues that by interpreting all religions merely as "responses to the Real," Hick implicitly undermines the distinctive truth-claims of particular traditions. In Christianity, for example, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the center of salvation becomes blurred when equated with other religious figures. Similarly, Harold Netland (2001) maintains that Hick's model neglects the internal truth-claims of religions and risks creating a form of "new epistemological imperialism," since it requires all religions to conform to his philosophical framework.

More recent scholarship reinforces this point. Becker (2024) stresses that Hick's comparative metaphysics unites religious traditions in an artificial manner, potentially erasing the very theological diversity that gives them meaning. From this perspective, Hick's pluralism is often judged problematic for suppressing religious particularity—a concern that directly affects how rituals, which are deeply tied to unique doctrines, can be meaningfully interpreted across traditions.

Epistemological Problems

Criticism has also been directed at Hick's assumption that all religions refer to the same *Real*. Robert Heim (2001) questions how, given the radically different and sometimes contradictory claims of religions (e.g., the Trinity in Christianity versus *tawḥīd* in Islam), Hick can argue that they all derive from the same transcendent source. This epistemological tension remains a significant challenge.

Łukasiewicz (2024) links this issue to semantic realism: how can radically divergent religious claims all be considered valid without collapsing into reductionism? Steinhart (2025), however, seeks to reinterpret *the Real* as a more flexible metaphysical concept—capable of embracing difference without forcing it into absolute unity. Yet the critique persists: Hick's epistemological foundation remains fragile. This has implications for ritual as well, since rituals embody truth-claims, and the coherence of shared social hope depends on how these claims are understood in relation to one another.

Practical Implications in Indonesia

In Indonesia, a multireligious society where religious diversity is both a sociological reality and a constitutional principle, Hick's ideas offer insights but also face challenges. Scholars such as Azyumardi Azra and M. Amin Abdullah (2005) argue that religious pluralism

in Indonesia cannot simply be equated with theological relativism. Instead, Hick's framework is more productive when understood as a social ethic—providing a basis for interreligious coexistence and shared responsibility.

Recent Indonesian research has adapted Hick's thought toward "civic pluralism," a pluralism oriented not toward theological uniformity but toward shared social life. For instance, Mudzhar (2020) and Fachruddin (2022) emphasize that pluralism must be rooted in local contexts, attentive to majority–minority relations, and anchored in *Pancasila* as the foundation of national identity. Within this framework, religious rituals become powerful symbols of coexistence and cooperation, offering communities a way to enact social hope beyond doctrinal agreement.

Criticism of Hick's pluralism can be grouped into three main areas:

1. **Reduction of particular theologies** – neglecting the distinctive claims of each religion.
2. **Epistemological problems** – the assumption of a common *Real* is philosophically fragile.
3. **Practical implications** – in Indonesia, Hick's pluralism must be applied as an ethic of harmony rather than as theological relativism.

Despite these criticisms, Hick's legacy remains significant. His framework continues to stimulate discourse on how religions might coexist without negating one another, and how philosophy of religion can contribute to peacebuilding. When connected to ritual practice, Hick's pluralism offers a vision of social hope: that through diverse rituals, humanity can be ethically transformed and united in the pursuit of justice, compassion, and peace.

Synthesis and Contribution to This Research

This research affirms that John Hick's thought on religious pluralism offers a philosophical-theological framework that is relevant for building an ethic of harmony, interfaith dialogue, and shared social hope. His three main concepts—*the Real*, ethical-transformational soteriology, and theocentric pluralism—encourage a paradigm of religion that emphasizes love, justice, and openness. Yet, its application in Indonesia cannot be adopted wholesale; it must be contextualized within the nation's distinctive social, political, and cultural realities, particularly as expressed in *Pancasila* and local theological traditions.

Research Gap: Contextualization with Pancasila and Local Theology

Studies on Hick in Indonesia remain limited, especially in their relation to *Pancasila* as the state ideology and theologies rooted in local traditions. *Pancasila* affirms the oneness of God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice—principles that resonate with Hick's vision of a transcendent *Real* and universal ethical transformation. For example, Hick's concept of *the Real* can be aligned with the first principle of *Pancasila*, "Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa," which affirms the existence of a divine reality beyond any single religious formulation.

Likewise, local theological currents such as *Islam Nusantara*'s theology of harmony, Indonesian Catholic theology of dialogue, or Hindu Bali's *Tri Hita Karana* reflect contextual practices of ritual and ethics that embody interreligious coexistence. This research

contributes by positioning Hick's framework as a bridge between global philosophy of religion and local theological praxis.

Research Gap: Connection with Practical Problems in Indonesia

Religious conflict in Indonesia—intolerance, radicalism, minority discrimination, and social exclusion—demands a pluralism that is not only theoretical but also operational. Much of the scholarship on Hick remains at a conceptual level, without direct application to conflict resolution or the role of rituals in sustaining peace.

Recent studies highlight this urgency. Syahrin (2022) stresses the need for a pluralist theology that addresses religious radicalism, while Wahid (2023) argues for combining pluralist frameworks with *ukhuwah insaniyah* (human brotherhood) in Indonesian Islam to strengthen social solidarity. In this light, Hick's pluralism can be applied as *public ethics*—not as theological relativism, but as a normative foundation for civic coexistence. When expressed in ritual forms such as interfaith prayers, commemorations, and acts of social service, Hick's vision becomes a source of *social hope* embodied in lived communal practices.

Contribution of This Research: Public Ethics and Interfaith Dialogue

The main contribution of this research lies in offering a contextual analysis that reinterprets Hick's thought as a resource for public ethics and religious rituals in Indonesia. By adopting Hick's framework, this study:

- Provides a philosophical foundation for a dialogical theology that respects diversity without erasing faith identities.
- Suggests a praxis of pluralism that supports Indonesia's program of religious moderation (*moderasi beragama*) initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
- Reinforces interfaith dialogue not only as academic discourse but also as a practical strategy to counter intolerance, radicalism, and exclusion.

Through this synthesis, Hick's pluralism contributes to shaping religious rituals as spaces of encounter and cooperation, and to nurturing social hope as an ethical orientation for plural societies. This research thus enriches the study of religious pluralism in Indonesia by connecting Hick's philosophy with *Pancasila*, local theological traditions, and the urgent practical challenges of interreligious life today.

Conclusion

John Hick's pluralist philosophy, while not without criticism, remains a vital resource for reimagining how religions can coexist in diversity. When reinterpreted in the Indonesian context, his framework encourages **religious rituals to function as channels of ethical transformation and social hope**, thereby sustaining peaceful coexistence across traditions.

Hick's concept of *the Real* provides an intellectual foundation for interfaith understanding, affirming that each major world religion is a genuine response to the transcendent. This shifts the orientation of religiosity from exclusive truth-claims toward openness, mutual respect, and dialogue. His idea of **ethical-transformational soteriology** reminds us that the essence of salvation lies not in formal religious

membership, but in the ethical transformation of human beings—from self-centeredness toward lives of love, justice, and God-centeredness.

For Indonesia, Hick's thought resonates deeply with **Pancasila** and the nation's commitment to pluralism. His framework can reinforce national unity, support dialogue across traditions, and counter intolerance. In this sense, Hick's pluralism is not relativism, but an **ethical call to build peaceful, just, and dignified communal life**. It becomes relevant not only in academic discourse but also as **public ethics**—applicable in policy, education, and the everyday practice of social harmony.

Contribution to Readers

This article offers readers:

1. **Theoretical Framework** – A deeper understanding of religious pluralism through John Hick's philosophical lens.
2. **Ethical-Practical Reflection** – An affirmation that pluralism is a foundation for shared life, not merely a theological abstraction.
3. **Contextual Inspiration** – Guidance on integrating Hick's vision with local values such as *Pancasila*, making it relevant to Indonesia's struggle against intolerance and radicalism.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. **Hick's Pluralism and Religious Moderation** – Examining its integration with Indonesia's state-led program of *moderasi beragama* (religious moderation).
2. **Multicultural Education and Religious Curricula** – Exploring how Hick's ethical pluralism could inform curricula in schools and madrasahs to cultivate tolerance in younger generations.
3. **Dialogue with Local Philosophies and Theologies** – Investigating resonances between Hick's ideas and Indonesian traditions such as *Tri Hita Karana* (Hindu Bali), *Islam Nusantara*, Catholic theology of dialogue, or *Gotong Royong*.
4. **Pluralism and Conflict Resolution** – Conducting empirical studies on applying Hick's framework to resolve religious conflicts in regions vulnerable to intolerance.
5. **Comparative Global-South Perspectives** – Placing Hick in dialogue with pluralist thinkers from Asia and Africa to identify common ground and contextual differences.

In conclusion, the greatest contribution of John Hick's concept is not merely providing a framework for global pluralism but **inspiring a contextualized pluralism in Indonesia**—one rooted in local values, sustaining public ethics, and guiding religions toward the shared task of embodying love, justice, and peace in society.

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