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Ranier Carlo V. Abengaña, *Überschatten*, 2017. Photograph.

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A Tribute to Emerita S. Quito

Dekolonisasyon para sa Diwang Pilipino ni Emerita S. Quito: Isang Pagpupugay

Rodrigo D. Abenes and Jerwin M. Mahaguay

Abstract: This study is a tribute to the late great Filipino-philosopher Emerita S. Quito (11 September 1929 – 17 September 2017). This paper highlights her contention regarding the role of decolonization as a necessity for the restoration of Filipino identity. This paper is divided into three parts: the first part introduces Quito as one of the country's unique philosophers who aspired for the greater glory of the Filipino people; the second part features her thoughts on Filipino identity and decolonization as the ultimate symbol of her intellectual journey as a philosopher and patriot; and lastly, we shall try to show the weaknesses and limitations of Quito's views.

Keywords: Quito, Filipino identity, decolonization, tribute

Panimula

Noong 17 Setyembre 2017, marami ang nalungkot sa pagkamatay ng bantog na pilosopong si Emerita S. Quito, ang itinuturing 'Socrates ng Pilipinas.'¹ Marami ang nagdalamhati, subalit sa kabila ng kalungkutang ito ay kapangahasan naming sinasambit na ang kanyang kamatayan ay hindi dapat maging pagluluksa, bagkus ito ay dapat maging isang pagdiriwang dahil sa kanyang iniwang pamana sa tradisyon ng pilosopiya sa Pilipinas. Siya ang nagsindi ng ilaw na hanggang ngayon ay nag-aalab at nagbibigay inspirasyon upang pag-ibayuhin at pagyamanin ang ugnayan ng pilosopiya at makabayang kaisipan at kamalayan. Kaya naman nais tahakin ng papel na ito na magbigay ng pagpupugay sa kanyang hindi matatawarang legasiyang nagbigay daan upang ang mga bagong sibol na

¹ Romualdo E. Abulad, Introduction to Emerita S. Quito, *A Life of Philosophy: Festschrift in Honor of Emerita S. Quito* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1990).

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makabayang palaisip ay magpatuloy na sumalang sa paghahanap ng lalong kaluwalhatian ng lahing Pilipino sa pilosopikal na pamamaraan.²

Upang makamit ang nilalayan, binalangkas namin ang papel na ito sa tatlong bahagi: 1) ang pagpapakilala kay Emerita S. Quito bilang isang dakilang pantas sa kasaysayan ng pilosopiya sa Pilipinas; 2) ang pagpapakita ng kaisipan ni Quito ukol sa diwang Pilipino bilang tugatog ng kanyang intelektuwal na paglalakbay bilang isang pilosopo at bilang isang makabayan; 3) at ang huli ay ang pagbatikos sa kanyang pananaw sa diwang Pilipino, hindi upang igupo ang kanyang pananaw, kundi upang ipakitang binuksan niya ang panibagong diskurso sa pamimilosopiya sa Pilipinas na dapat tahakin ng mga bagong sumisibol na mga makabayang pilosopong Pilipino.

Ang pakikibahaging ito sa diskurso ng kamalayang-bayan ay masasabing sumisibol sa sinisimulang naratibo at sanaysay. Subalit buo ang aming paniniwala na ito ay isang likas na bahagi ng diyalekto para sa pagpapalutang ng higit na makabubuting pamantayan.

Emerita Quito: Pangkaisipang Talambuhay

Ang lahat ng dakilang adhikain ay nagsisimula sa pagkilala sa sarili, bilang tao, pamilya, pamayanan, at higit sa lahat, bilang isang nasyon. Ang lalim ng kamalayang-bayan ang huhusga sa tayog na maaabot ng isang nasyon. Kaya nga tungkulin ng mga intelektuwal na magnilay sa katahimikan ng gabi kung papaano kikilalanin ang hugis ng kamalayang ito at kung wala, ay bigyan ito ng hugis batay sa ninais na kahahantungan ng isang nasyon.

Si Emerita S. Quito ay isang pilosopo, intelektuwal, manunulat, edukador, at higit sa lahat ay makabayan. Noong 11 Setyembre 1929, isinilang siya sa isang gitnang-uring pamilya sa bayan ng San Fernando, Pampanga.³ Bagama't isinilang na babae sa pamilya, ang kanyang pamilya ay mayroon pantay na pagturing sa pagbibigay ng edukasyon na hindi limitado sa kasarian kaya naging madali sa kanya ang pagtahak sa landas ng pagkatuto. Dahil sa hangaring mag-aral ng abogasiya, nag-aral siya ng kursong pilosopiya sa Pamantasan ng Santo Tomas sa Maynila. Matapos ang ilang

² Ang papel na ito ay sagot din sa hamong nabanggit ni Emmanuel de Leon. Ayon sa kanya, "Napapanahon na upang basahin, dalumat in at kung kinakailangan ay batikusin ang mga akda ni Quito, malaki ang magagawa nito sa lalong pag-papaunlad ng pamimilosopiya sa ating bansa." See Emmanuel C. de Leon, "Emerita S. Quito (1929-): Ang Ugat ng Isang Panibagong Direksiyon ng Pamimilosopiya sa Pilipinas," in *Malay* 29:2 (2017): 30-46.

³ Isa itong panahon kung saan ang damdaming pangkamakabayan ay umaalimpuyo dahil sa pagkakatayala mula sa mga Kastila at muling pagkakasadlak sa kamay ng bagong mananakop at manglulupig—ang mga Amerikano. Sa larangan ng edukasyon ay napakasalimuot din ng panahon na ito lalo na sa pag-aaral ng mga kababaihan.

taong pag-aaral, tuluyan nang tumubog si Quito sa pilosopiya. Dahil dito agad din niyang ipinagpatuloy ang pag-aaral sa pamamagitan ng pagkuha ng Masterado sa Pilosopiya sa nasabing Pamantasan. Mula dito'y kanya nang kinalimutan ang pangarap na maging abogado. Ang kanyang pag-aaral sa Pamantasan ng Santo Tomas ay tuwirang mababanaagan sa kanyang kahusayan sa pilosopiyang Tomistiko. Ito ay makikita sa kanyang masteradong tesis na pinamagatang "*The Will and Its Relation to the Divine Causality and Knowledge*" noong 1956. Palibhasa'y likas ang kagalingan, sa kanyang pagtatapos ay kinuha siya ng nasabing Pamantasan upang magturo. Subalit ito ay naudlot nang tumulak siya sa Europa upang magpakadalubhasa at mag-aral ng Doktorado sa Pilosopiya sa Pamantasan ng Fribourg. Natapos niya ang kanyang disertasyon noong 1965 na pinamagatang "*The Idea of Participated Liberty in the Philosophy of Louis Lavelle.*" Sa nabanggit na disertasyon, kanyang tinahak ang panibagong pamimilosopiya sapagkat ito ay hindi naaayon sa kanyang Tomistikong tradisyong natutunan. Sa kanyang pagbabalik, dinala niya ang makabagong uri ng pilosopiya sa iba't ibang pamantasan sa bansa gaya ng Pamantasan ng Santo Tomas, Pamantasang Ateneo De Manila, at Colegio ng Assumption, at Pamantasang De La Salle kung saan na siya nagturo hanggang sa kanyang pagreretiro. Masasabing ang kanyang ginawa sa panahong iyon ay mabigat, sapagkat ang nangingibabaw pa rin ang Tomistikong pananaw at ang pilosopiya ni Santo Tomas de Aquino.⁴ Dagdag pa niya:

The Thomist school, which is the most populous, stays close to the philosophy of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and views all other philosophies in the light of Aristotelico-Thomism. This school considers as gospel truth the writings of the Catholic Saint. Hence, there is no originality in this school; no new ideas are forged; Catholic ideas of the Medieval Ages are repeated with more or less depth. The followers of this school still considers philosophy as ancilla theologiae (handmaid of theology), and therefore, philosophy should subserve theology⁵

⁴ Ang ganitong hinuha ay naayon din sa nagging pag-aaral ni Demeterio. See F.P.A. Demeterio, III, "Thomism and Filipino Philosophy in the Novels of Rizal: Rethinking the Trajectory of Filipino Thomism," in *Academia*, <https://www.academia.edu/7340247/Thomism_and_Filipino_Philosophy_in_the_Novels_of_Jose_Rizal_Rethinking_the_Trajectory_of_Filipino_Thomism>.

⁵ Emerita S. Quito, *The State of Philosophy in the Philippines* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1983).

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Ang kanyang intelektuwal na buhay ay maaaring sabihing isang obra. Kung kaya nama'y hindi nag-atubili si Romualdo Abulad na bansagang "Socrates ng Pilipinas" si Emerita Quito.⁶ Buhat sa kanyang mga panayam, artikulo, komentaryo, at mga aklat ay mababanaag na isa siya sa sinasabi ni Florentino Timbreza na tagahawan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Bagama't malinaw na dalubhasa siya sa mga kaisipang Kanluranin at Silanganin, lagi niyang itinataas ang kaisipang Pilipino bilang isang kapantay na uri ng lahat ng tradisyon sa mundo. Buhay na buhay ang pagkamakabayan sa kanyang mga sulatin na makikita sa pagtatampok niya sa diwang Pilipino at dekolonisasyon.

Upang mas maunawan natin ang kaisipan ni Quito, mas mainam, marahil, na muling dalawin ang kanyang mga akda. Sa ibaba ay makikita ang talahanayan ng kanyang mga akda upang maging gabay sa mga mambabasa kung anu-ano ang pamimilosopiyang pinagkaabalahan ni Quito.

Mga Taon	Pamagat ng Akda	Anyo
1956-1970	1956. "The Will and Its Relation with Divine Causality and Knowledge." <i>Unitas</i> 19	Artikulo
	1962. "On Jean-Paul Sartre and Louis Lavelle." <i>Journal of Education</i> 5.	Artikulo
	1962. "The Integration of Religion in the Teaching of Languages." <i>Journal of Education</i> 4.	Artikulo
	1966. "The 'Symposium' of Plato," <i>Philippiniana Sacra</i> 1:3.	Artikulo
	1967. <i>Address on a New Concept of Philosophy</i> . Manila: UST Press.	Aklat
	1967. "Principles of Existentialism" [retitled: "Existential Principles and Christian Morality." <i>Philippiniana Sacra</i> 2.	Artikulo
	1967. "The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl." <i>Unitas</i> 40.	Artikulo
	1967. "The Meaning of Existentialism." <i>Unitas</i> 40.	Artikulo
	1967. "Existential Principles and Christian Morality." <i>Philippiniana Sacra</i> 2:5.	Artikulo
	1968. "The Theme of Absurdity in Albert Camus." <i>DLSC Dialogue</i> 4	Artikulo
	1969. <i>La notion de la liberté participée dans la philosophie de Louis Lavelle</i> . Fribourg, Suisse: Studia Friburgensia, Imprimerie St. Paul.	Aklat

⁶ Abulad, Introduction to Quito, *A Life of Philosophy*.

	1969. "Existentialism and Phenomenology: An Introduction." <i>DLSC Dialogue</i> 5.	Artikulo
	1970. <i>Herbert Marcuse and Contemporary Society</i> . Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press.	Aklat
	1970. "Marcuse: Students Make the Best Demonstrators." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (13 February).	Artikulo
	1970. "Should Communism Be Taught in the Universities?" <i>Horizons</i> (April).	Artikulo
1971-1982	1971. "Structuralism: A General Introduction." <i>Unitas</i> 44:1	Artikulo
	1971. "Reflections on the Death of God." <i>Unitas</i> 44:2.	Artikulo
	1971. "On Structuralism." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (March).	Artikulo
	1971. "Structuralism, Pilipino and a Universal Language." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (17 March).	Artikulo
	1971. "Philosophy in Pilipino, Anyone?" <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (4 April).	Artikulo
	1971. "Structuralism and Myth." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (4 April).	Artikulo
	1971. "Philosophy of Life." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (2 May).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Oriental Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (9 May).	Artikulo
	1971. "Chance or Necessity." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (19 May).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Filipino Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (25 May).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Greek Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (31 May).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Medieval Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (7 June).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Renaissance Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (14 June).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Modern Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (20 June).	Artikulo
	1971. "The Contemporary Mind." <i>Manila Chronicle</i> (28 June).	Artikulo
	1971. "Contemporary Trends in Philosophy." <i>DLSC Dialogue</i> 7.	Artikulo
	1971. "Robert Andrey: Scientist or Philosopher?" <i>Unitas</i> 44.	Artikulo
	1971-72. "The Philosophy of the Renaissance: An Introduction." <i>Sophia</i> 1.	Artikulo
	1971-72. "The Philosophy of the Renaissance: Nicolas of Cusa." <i>Sophia</i> 1.	Artikulo
	1971-72. "The Historical Concept of Being and Truth." <i>Sophia</i> 1. [With an Open Forum].	Artikulo
	1971-72. "Open Forum on 'The Historical Concept of Being and Truth.'" <i>Sophia</i> 1.	Artikulo

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1972. <i>Ang Pilosopiya sa Diwang Pilipino</i> . Manila: United Publishing Co.	Aklat
1972. "The Evolving Concept of the University." <i>Faculty Forum</i> .	Artikulo
1973. "The Paradox of Freedom in Louis Lavelle." <i>Unitas</i> 46.	Artikulo
1973-74. "Ex Oriente Lux." <i>Sophia</i> 3.	Artikulo
1974. "What Philosophy Ought to Be." <i>Sophia</i> 4.	Artikulo
1974. <i>Ang Kasaysayan ng Pilosopiya</i> . Manila: Zone Publishing Co	Aklat
1974. "Regeneration of Moral and Social Values." <i>Beacon</i> 44	Artikulo
1975. <i>Oriental Roots of Occidental Philosophy</i> . Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press. Also published (1975) by DLSU as Occasional Paper No. 1.	Aklat
1975. "A Short Introduction to Oriental Philosophy." <i>Sophia</i> 4.	Artikulo
1975. "Pagsusuri: Ang Kasaysayan ng Pilosopiya." <i>DLSC Dialogue</i> 10.	Artikulo
1977. "Philosophy of History: An Introduction." <i>DLSU Dialogue</i> 13.	Artikulo
1977. "Reflections on the Death of God." <i>Unitas</i> 50.	Artikulo
1978. "The Role of the University in Changing Women's Consciousness." <i>DLSU Dialogue</i> 14.	Artikulo
1978-79. "How Original is Hegel's 'Philosophy of History'?" <i>Unitas</i> 51. Also published in <i>Sophia</i> 8 (1978-79).	Artikulo
1979. "Ang Kayamanan ng Ating Wika [Retitled: "Ang Kayamanan ng Wikang Filipino"]." <i>Daop Diwa</i> 3.	Artikulo
1979. <i>Lectures on Comparative Philosophy</i> . Occasional Paper No. 7. Manila: De la Salle University.	Aklat
1979. <i>Four Essays in the Philosophy of History</i> . Manila: DLSU Office of Research	Aklat
1979. "University's Role in Changing Women's Consciousness." In <i>Role of the University in Women's Movement</i> . Edited by Iva I. Shipstone and Nora Shipstone. Lucknow, India: The Asian Women's Institute.	Artikulo
1979. <i>Ang Pilosopiya ng Tao</i> . Manila: Phoenix Publishing Co.	Aklat (katuwang na manunulat)

	1980. "Process Philosophy: An Introduction." <i>Sophia</i> 9.	Artikulo
	1980-81. "Ang Pilosopiya: Batayan ng Pambansang Kultura," <i>Daop Diwa</i> 6.	Artikulo
	1981. <i>Homage to Jean-Paul Sartre</i> . Manila: De La Salle University	Aklat
	1981. "The Philosophy of Avicenna in the Twentieth Century." <i>Sophia</i> 11.	Artikulo
	1982. "An Existentialist Approach to Ecumenism." <i>Sophia</i> 12	Artikulo
1982-1986	1983. <i>The State of Philosophy in the Philippines</i> . Manila: De la Salle University Research Center.	Aklat
	1983. "Ang Sariling Wika, Ang Pilosopiya, at ang mga Tao." In <i>Mga Babasahin sa Pilosopiya: Epistemolohiya, Lohika, Wika at Pilosopiyang Pilipino</i> . Compiled by Virgilio G. Enriquez. Quezon City: Surian ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino.	Artikulo
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	1984. "Isang Teorya ng Pagpapahalaga." <i>Malay</i> 3:2.	Artikulo
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	With Romualdo Abulad, Herminia Reyes, and Florentino Timbreza. 1985-86. "Ulat Tungkol sa Sanggunian at Leksikon ng Pilosopiya." <i>Malay</i> 5.	Artikulo
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	1987. "Ang Kaugnayan ng Wikang Pambansa at Edukasyon." <i>Malay</i> 6.	Artikulo
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	1989. <i>Fundamentals of Ethics</i> . Manila: DLSU Press.	Aklat
	1989. "A Structural Approach to Philippine Epics [focus on the Ulahingan and Biag ni Lam ang]." Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines.	Artikulo
	1989. "Isang Teorya ng Pagpapahalaga." In <i>Readings in the Philosophy of Man</i> . DLSU Philosophy Department: De La Salle University Press.	Artikulo
	1989. "Ang Konsepto ng Kalayaan ni Louis Lavelle." <i>Karunungan</i> 6; also in <i>Sofia</i> 18 (1988).	Artikulo
	1989. "The Relevance of the National Language to Education." <i>DLSU Graduate Journal</i> 14.	
	1990. <i>A Life of Philosophy: Festschrift in honor of Emerita S. Quito</i> . Manila: De la Salle University Press. [A Life of Philosophy, Selected Works (1965-1988). Manila: De la Salle University Press.]	Aklat
	1990. "Teaching and Research of philosophy in the Philippines." In <i>A Life of Philosophy</i> . Manila: De la Salle University Press.	Artikulo
	1990. "Homage to Jean-Paul Sartre." In <i>Readings in Filipino Philosophy</i> . DLSU Philosophy Department: De la Salle University Press.	Artikulo
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	1992. "St. John Baptist de La Salle's Philosophy of Education in the Philippine Context." In <i>St. John Baptist de La Salle and Education Today</i> . Manila: De La Salle University Press.	Artikulo
1993-1997	1993. "Teaching as an Art." <i>DLSU Newsletter</i> (8 February).	Artikulo

	1993. <i>Ensayklopidiya ng Pilosopiya</i> . Manila: De La Salle University Press.	Aklat (katuwang na manunulat)
	1994. "Philosophy of Education for Filipinos." In <i>Philosophy of Education: Concerns, Purposes, Content, and Methods of Education</i> . Edited by Celeste O. Botor and Aniceta M. Ortinero. Manila: Rex Book Store.	Artikulo
	1997. "A Concept of Hero." <i>Karunungan</i> 10-14.	Artikulo
	1999. "Frank Tipler's The Physics of Immortality." <i>Karunungan</i> 16.	Artikulo
	2000. "Introduction to Hermeneutics." <i>Karunungan</i> 17.	Artikulo
2000-2003	2000. "Pro Death Penalty: Hic et Nunc." <i>Karunungan</i> 17.	Artikulo
	2001. <i>Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein</i> . Manila: De La Salle University Press.	Aklat
	2002. <i>Critique of Historical Theory</i> . Manila: De La Salle University Press.	Aklat
	2002. "God in the Third Millennium." <i>Karunungan</i> 19.	Artikulo
	2002. "Philosophy as a Critique of Society." <i>Karunungan</i> 19.	Artikulo
	2003. "A New Concept of Philosophy." <i>Karunungan</i> 20.	Artikulo

Talahanayan 1: Mga Akda ni Emerita S. Quito⁷

Walang isang sistema o paksang masasabing magtatahi sa mga iisinatulat ni Quito. Hindi dahil wala siyang direksyon sa kanyang pag-iisip o pagsusulat, kundi dahil hindi siya maaaring ikahon sa isang panahon o paksa lamang. Buhay at gumagalaw ang pilosopiya para kay Quito kaya iisinatulat niya ito sa anumang anyo kung paano ito magbigay ng inspirasyon sa kanya. Maaaring tawaging eklektiko ang kanyang pamamaraan subalit hindi iyon limitasyon bagkus, ito'y isang pagpapakita ng yaman at lawak ng kanyang abot-tanaw-isip. Gayunpaman, ikinakatuwiran ng papel na ito ang kanyang kaisipan ukol sa diwang Pilipino bilang pagpupugay sa kanyang pagiging pilosopong Pilipino, o mas mainam na sabihing *makabayang pilosopo*.

⁷ Ang talahanayang ito ay modipikasyon sa talahanayang gawa ni De Leon. Minarapat lang naming pagsunod-sunurin ang mga akda, kahit may pagkakaiba ito sa anyo—aklat man o artikulo. See De Leon, "Apendiks 1: Mga Akda ni Emerita Quito, 1956-2003," in "Emerita S. Quito (1929-)," 43-46.

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Gayundin sa ginawang pag-aaral ni De Leon sa mga isinulat ni Quito,⁸ gamit ang mungkahing taksonomiya ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ni Demeterio,⁹ makikitang isang-katlo sa kabuuan ng mga akda ni Quito ay tungkol sa diwang Pilipino. 12.5% ang pananaliksik tungkol sa pananaw sa mundo ng mga Pilipino; 6.25% naman ang tungkol sa pananaliksik hinggil sa pagpapahalaga sa etikang Pilipino; at 15.62% naman ang pamimilosopiya tungkol paggamit ng wikang Filipino. Samakatuwid, masasabing ang tahakin naming magbigay ng pagpupugay ay makatarungan sapagkat isang-katlong bahagi ng kanyang isinulat ay patungkol sa pag-aaral sa diwang Pilipino.

Subalit bago tuluyang saysayin ang kanyang kaisipan ukol sa diwang Pilipino, nararapat lamang na magkaroon muna ng pagtatalas ukol sa katwiran kung bakit niya ito naisulat—mga dahilan at karanasang nagtulak sa kanya upang magtika sa paksang ito. Marapat ding ipakita ang kanyang pamamaraang ginamit sa pagbalangkas ng kanyang kaisipan bilang pundasyon ng kadalisan ng kanyang hangarin at kaisipan.

Bagama't wala na si Quito para saysayin ang mga dahilan ng pagtataya niya sa diwang Pilipino, mayroon namang mga akda na siyang maaaring gawing pamantayan sa pagninilay dito. Una, kung babalikan ang kanyang mga akda ukol sa wikang Filipino, sinabi niya na dala ng kanyang karanasan sa pag-aaral sa Europa at ang kanyang pakikisalamuha sa iba't ibang pagtitipon sa pilosopiya, nakita niyang mas kinikilala ng mga dayuhan ang mga Asyano, o mga dayuhan na may pagtitika sa sariling wika at identidad bilang isang bansa. Samakatuwid, hindi kahanga-hangang magaling tayo sa wikang banyaga o kalinangang-banyaga, sapagkat ang kahanga-hanga ay ang pagtataguyod at pagpapaunlad sa sariling wika at kalinangan. Pangalawa, mapapansin na ang panahon kung kailan nagsimulang magtika si Quito sa diwang Pilipino ay nagsimula sa pagtatapos ng dekada '70 hanggang sa dekada '80. Ang panahong ito ay kritikal dahil panahon ito ng paghahanap sa pagkakakilanlan ng Pilipino sa iba't ibang larangan. Ang dating-pangulong Ferdinand E. Marcos ay naglayong magpasimula ng bagong kamalayang Pilipino sa pagtatatag niya ng Bagong Lipunan. Samantalang si Virgilio Enriquez naman ay nagpasimula ng kanyang Sikolohiyang Pilipino. Sa larangan ng Sosyolohiya at kasaysayan, itinulak naman ni Salazar ang Pantayong Pananaw. Samakatuwid, makikita sa panahong ito ang igting ng pagnanasa ng bawat isa na isulong ang isang makabayang pananaw sa iba't ibang larangan. Tunay ngang hindi natutulog ang pilosopo sa panahong iyon dahil kay Quito.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Status and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy' in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo, and Co" in *Φιλοσοφία: International Journal of Philosophy* 14:2 (2013).

Buo ang aming pananalig na ang pagtatampok ni Quito sa diwang Pilipino ay bunga ng kanyang pagnanais na maiangat ang kalagayan ng kanyang bayan at hindi bahagi lamang ng kanyang pakikipagtagisan sa mga pilosopo sa kanyang panahon. Makikita natin sa kanyang mga akda ang mga paksa patungkol sa pilosopiya ng edukasyon, pilosopiya sa Pilipinas, at kaisipang Pilipino. Bunga nito ang pagpapahiwatig na hindi na mahalaga sa kanya ang pamamaraan; ang mahalaga na lamang ay ang kanyang isinusulong na adhikain, kung kaya nga't maaaring sabihing eklektiko ang kanyang pamamaraan sa pagsusulong sa diwang Pilipino. Lumabas ito sa kanyang sulatin ukol sa mga kababaihan, edukasyon, pilosopiya, kasaysayan at lalong higit, ay sa hinaharap ng lahing Pilipino. Makatuwiran ding sabihin na maaaring binagtas niya ang kritikal na pamamaraan lalo na sa pagtingin niya sa mga dayuhan bilang tagapaghawak ng kapangyarihang umaalipin sa kamalayang katutubo. Sa huli, mas marami pa rin ang hindi nasabi tungkol kay Quito, sapagkat napakarami pang paraan at kwentong dapat saysayin para lubusan siyang ipakilala, subalit batay sa kanyang pamamaraan at pananaw ay walang ibang pinakamakatuwirang gawin para lubusan siyang makilala, kundi basahin, siyasatin, at batikusin ang kanyang mga akda at nagawa.¹⁰

Ang Diwang Pilipino ayon kay Quito

Malinaw kay Quito na hindi isang pisikal na katangian ang magbubuklod sa pagka-Pilipino. Ayon nga sa kanya, “kung ang hinahanap natin ay ang hugis ng katawan o kulay ng balat o tabas ng mata, ay walang kasariling Pilipino, datapwat mayroong kasariling diwa (soul identity) ang Pilipino at hango ito sa pilosopiyang taglay ng bayang Pilipino.”¹¹ “*Volkgeist*” sa wikang Aleman, “*spirit of the people*” naman sa wikang Ingles, at *diwa* sa wikang Filipino na siyang ginamit ni Quito para sa kamalayang ito. Para sa kanya, diwa ang sumasalamin sa pangkalahatang kamalayan ng mga Pilipino. Ang diwang ito naman, bilang kamalayan, ay maaaring tawaging pilosopiya. Ang diwang ito ay makikita sa mga mito at alamat na nagpapakita ng kanilang pagpapahalaga at gawi. Mahalaga ang mga ito, ayon kay Quito, sapagkat dito naipapahatid ang kanilang “*deeper feeling*.”¹² Ang ganitong pananaw sa batayan ng pagka-Pilipino bilang diwa ay paraang

¹⁰ De Leon, “Emerita S. Quito (1929–).”

¹¹ Emerita S. Quito, “Ang Pilosopiya: Batayan ng Pambansang Kultura” in *A Life of Philosophy: Festschrift in Honor of Emerita S. Quito* (Manila: De La Salle University, 1990), 686.

¹² Emerita S. Quito, “A Filipino Volkgeist in Vernacular Literature” in *A Life of Philosophy: Festschrift in Honor of Emerita S. Quito* (Manila: De La Salle University, 1990), 754.

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tinatahak din ni Virgilio Enriquez¹³ sa pag-aaral naman niya ng katangian ng sikolohiyang Pilipino.

Kung gayon, ang katangiang Pilipinong sinasabi ni Quito ay hindi limitado sa pisikal na kaanyuan. Ang ideya ni Quito ay higit na tumutukoy sa kolektibong kamalayan ng mga mamamayang Pilipino, sapagkat lampas ito sa panlabas na pamantayan lamang. Tinatahi ng kaisipan ni Quito ang pagkakaibang panlabas ng mga Pilipino sa buong bansa.¹⁴ Samantalang ayon pa nga kay Quito, ang diwang iyon ay naroroon na bago pa man dumating ang mga mananakop. Ito ay dalisay at “*free from foreign influence, unsullied by foreign contact.*”¹⁵ Ang ganitong kadalisayan ay makikita sa mga alamat at kwentong-bayan, sapagkat dito mababanaag ang pagtatalastasan ng kaisipan o diwa ng mga tao at ng kanilang pilosopiya. Ito ay makikita sa wika ni Quito na:

What is the function of myths and legends? For one thing, they are the gauge of a people's psyche; they constitute the collective consciousness of a people vis-à-vis a deity or an event. Hence there must be a connection between myths and a people's indigenous thought or between and grassroots philosophy.¹⁶

Dagdag pa niya, mababakas ang mga panitikang ito sa mga panitikan at ugaliin sa mga lalawigan na naisulat sa mga wikang bernakular na wika “*the Filipino soul can be better gleaned from the prism of vernacular literature since it reflects grassroots thinking and living.*”¹⁷ Dito, makikita na malaki ang tiwala ni Quito sa mga naisulat sa lalawigan kaysa sa mga manunulat sa lungsod sapagkat mas nakaampat ito sa kadalisayan ng diwang-Pilipino. Isa sa ibinigay niyang halimbawa ay ang “*Pampango vernacular literature*”¹⁸ bilang isa sa mga batayan ng diwang Pilipino.¹⁹ Upang mas higit na maunawaan kung ano nga ba ang Diwang Pilipino, mas mainam na balangkasin natin ang mga sumunod na diskurso ni Quito tungkol sa: 1) Katangian ng Diwang

¹³ Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience*. (Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1994).

¹⁴ Jerwin M. Mahaguay, *Ang Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon para sa mga Pilipino ayon kay Emerita S. Quito: Isang Pagsusuri* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University, 2013).

¹⁵ Emerita S. Quito, “Structuralism and the Filipino Volksgeist” in *A Life of Philosophy: Festschrift in Honor of Emerita S. Quito* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1990), 732.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Quito, “A Filipino Volksgeist in Vernacular Literature,” 755.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 755-760.

¹⁹ See Jerwin M. Mahaguay, “Nasyonalismo: Lakas ng Edukasyong Pilipino,” in *Kaisipan: Ang Opisyal na Dyornal ng Isabuhay, Saliksikin, Ibigin ang Pilosopiya (ISIP)* 1:1 (2013): 28-40.

Pilipino, 2) Diwang Pilipino sa Panahon ng Pananakop, at 3) Pagbalik sa Diwang Pilipino sa pamamagitan ng Dekolonisasyon.

Katangian ng Diwang Pilipino

Masalimuot ang pagtatalas ng mga talagang katangian na tiyak na maglalarawan sa diwang Pilipino lalo na at napakalawak at napakarami ng mga katutubo na dapat balikan bago dumating ang mga dayuhan upang ito ay tukuyin. Kaya naman, may mga ilan lamang binigyan ng pansin si Quito. Upang maging payak ang paglalarawan sa katangiang ito, hinati ang mga akda ni Quito sa dalawa: una, ang pagiging relihiyoso; at pangalawa, ang pagkakaroon ng kakaibang batayan ng gawi at pagpapahalaga sa buhay.²⁰

Una, noon pa man ay may malalim nang paniniwala ang mga Pilipino sa isang Kataas-taasang Nilalang o "*Supreme Being*." Kinuha ni Quito ang pag-aaral ni Pablo Fernandez²¹ na nagsabing noon pa man ay mayroon nang kinikilalang Diyos ang mga Tagalog—si Bathala; Laon sa mga Visaya; at Cabunian sa mga Ilokano. Kaya naman, tulad ni Landa Jocano²² ay naniniwala si Quito na bago pa man dumating ang mga Kastila ay napakalaki na nang ginagampanan ng paniniwala sa Diyos o relihiyon sa bansa. Bagama't ang relihiyong ito ay hindi pormal o walang isang sistema. Ang relihiyong ding ito ay may sariling paraan ng pagpapaliwanag ng paglikha.

Ikalawa, mayroon ring sistemang pagpapahalaga ang mga Pilipino na nakabatay sa paniniwala sa Diyos o kay Bathala, at sa Batas ng Panunumbalik na may kahawig sa batas ng Karma ng mga Indiyano.²³ Ang mga batayan ng pagpapahalaga at gawi na ito ay ang mga sumusunod:

Bahala na. Ito ay galing sa salitang Bathala na. Nangangahulugan ito pagbibigay ng tiwala sa Bathala sa lahat ng maaaring maganap sa isang gawain o adhikain sa buhay. Samakatwid ay nag-uugat ito sa matinding pananampalataya sa Kataas-taasang Bathala.

Gulong ng Palad. Paikot mag-isip ang mga Pilipino. Naniniwala sila na lahat ay nagbabago sa buhay. Lahat ay matatapos at mapapalitan, pagkatapos ng hirap ay saya naman at pagkatapos ng saya ay hirap kaya dapat itong paghandaan.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Pablo Fernandez, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)* (Manila: National Book Store, 1979) as cited in Quito, "Structuralism and the Filipino Volkgeist," 733.

²² As cited in Quito, "Structuralism and the Filipino Volkgeist," 733.

²³ *Ibid.*

Kagandahang-loob. Mapagbigay at maalaga ang mga Pilipino. Maayos silang tumanggap sa mga bisita at matulungin. Isang halimbawa nito ay makikita sa kanilang bayanihan.

Reciprocity. Ito ay ang pagkilala na ang mga bagay na tinatanggap buhat sa kapwa ay nararapat ding ibalik at bigyan ng karampatang pagpapahalaga. Makikita ito sa mga gawi tulad ng: paggalang sa matatanda, pakikisama, utang na loob (mas maipaliliwanag sa susunod na paksa).

Hiya. Ito ay maaaring tingnan sa iba't ibang aspeto tulad ng kawalan ng sariling kusa, kawalan ng kakayahang tumanggi sa kahilingan ng iba, at kawalan ng tiwala sa sarili.²⁴

Ganap at isinasabuhay ng mga katutubo ang mga katangiang ito, subalit, ayon kay Quito, sa pagdating ng mga dayuhan, ang diwang ito na nakatago sa mga panitikan ay natabunan at napalitan. Nagbago ang sitwasyon kaya naligaw at nalunod ang mga Pilipino sa bagong kalinangan, bagong gawi, at bagong pagpapahalaga.

Diwang Pilipino sa Panahon ng Pananakop

Sa pagdating ng mga mananakop ay nawala ang kadalisan ng Diwang Pilipino sapagkat ito ay nakakawing sa implikasyon ng kolonyalismo. Ito ay bunga ng pananakop ng mga dayuhan sa ating bansa sa loob halos ng 400 na taon—humigit-kumulang na tatlong daang taon sa mga Kastila, limampu sa mga Amerikano, at tatlong taon naman sa mga Hapon. Kaya naman masasabing ang mga Pilipino ay nagkaroon ng *colonial mentality* o pag-iisip kolonyal,²⁵ kagawiang banyaga, at hilaw na pagpapahalaga.

Pag-iisip na Banyaga

Tuwirang sinasabi ni Quito na dahil sa sobrang tagal na karanasan ng mga Pilipino sa pananakop ng mga dayuhan, nagkaroon tayo ng 'inferiority complex.' Ibig sabihin nito ay "mas nadadaig ng kanilangan

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 734-737.

²⁵ Emerita S. Quito, "Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon sa Diwang Filipino," in *Malay* 4 (1985), 1.

kalinangan (dayuhan) ang likas na kalinangan (sinasakop).²⁶ Ang pag-iisip-kolonyal ay resulta na rin ng pananakop ng mga dayuhan sa hindi lamang sa kalupaan kundi sa larangan ng kultura o kalinangan.

Ang ganitong kaisipan ay nagbunga ng talumbalikan: ang pagkagalit at pagkapoot sa mga dayuhan. Pagkapoot sa mga dayuhan dahil sa pagkalusaw ng kanilang mga kalinangan, gawi, at kultura. Ngunit, bagama't may pagkapoot, mayroon ding hindi mawaring paghanga sa kulturang kanluranin na animo'y mas mataas ang kanilang kultura kaysa sa atin. Kaya sa kabila ng poot ay makikita na patuloy pa ring ginagamit ang wika, gawi, pagpapahalaga, at relihiyon ng mga dayuhan upang sa gayon ay mapabilang sila sa kanilang hinahangaan. Kaya naman tahasang sinabi niya na "karaniwan sa mga bayang nasakop ay mahigpit pang kumakapit sa kuldon ng kongkistador."²⁷ Kung gayon, mismong mga nasakop o *colonial subjects* ang nagpupumilit na itago ang kanilang mga sarili sa anino ng mga mananakop. Mas pinipilit nilang ibilang ang kanilang mga sarili sa anyo ng mga dayuhan kaysa balikan ang kanilang sariling kalinangan.

Kaya masasabing hindi na puro at buo ang kalinangang Pilipino sapagkat ito ay hindi kalinangan-dalisay sapagkat "ang kalinangan ay sagisag ng isang bayan: ang kabuuan ng kanyang kasaysayan, wagas at walang bakas ng banyagang ideolohiya."²⁸ Ang pag-iisip ng mga Pilipino ay may pagkaunyangong banyaga na nagiging sanhi ng pagkiling sa banyagang kalinangan at kabihasan. Bagama't malinaw na may pagkiling sa kalinangang banyaga, ang masama pa rito, aniya, ay di malinaw kung saang kalinangan kumikiling, kung sa Silanganin o Kanluranin. Kaya naman, ayon kay Quito "*Filipino can be said to be a cultural hermaphrodite who stays on the borderline between East, and West without knowing whether he belongs to one or to the other.*"²⁹

Gawing Banyaga

Maaaring ilatag ang mga kagawiang nakita ni Quito sa apat na grupo: katamaran, pagkamakasari, karuwagan, at kahinahunan.³⁰ Ang saysay ng mga kagawiang ito, ayon kay Quito, ay mabuti o masama lamang depende kung saan at kaninong pananaw ang gagamitin. Kung sa

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Quito, "A Filipino Volksgeist in Vernacular Literature," 754.

³⁰ Mahaguay, *Ang Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon para sa mga Pilipino ayon kay Emerita S. Quito: Isang Pagsusuri*.

makasilangang kalinangan ang gagamitin, mabuti ang mga gawing ito; samantala, kung sa kanluran naman ay magiging kahinaan ang mga ito.³¹

Ang unang grupong tumutukoy sa katamaran ay may mga gawi tulad ng “ningas-kugon, bahala na, sakop *mentality*, at mañana.”³² Ang ningas-kugon ay ang paggawa ng mabilisan ngunit mabilis din kung tumigil. Mabuti ito dahil nagiging mabilis ang paghusga ng isang tao, subalit negatibo dahil nawawala naman ang pagpapatuloy ng isang bagay. Ang *bahala na* naman ay tumutukoy sa pagpapaubaya sa mga maaaring mangyari sa *Bathala*. Nagpapakita din ito sa pagiging bukas sa iba’t ibang posibilidad na maaaring mangyari. Maganda ito dahil nagpapakita ito ng malalim na pananampalataya sa Banal. Nagiging handa rin sa lahat ng maaaring mangyari, ngunit sa kabilang dako ay nagiging tamad at umaasa na lamang sa halip na paghandaan ang mga bagay-bagay. Ang *sakop* na kaisapan ay tumutukoy sa pagiging kabilang ng pamilya o kasamahan sa lahat ng pagpili. Mabuti sapagkat ipinapakita nito ang pagkakaisa at samahan ng pamilya, subalit masama rin dahil halos nakasalalay na lamang ang nais ng isang tao sa nais o pulso ng nakararami. Ang *mañana* naman ay tumutukoy sa palagiang pagpapaliban ng mga gagawin. Maganda ito dahil ipinapakita nito ang kahinahunan at kawalan ng problema, subalit hindi rin maganda dahil sa palagiang pagkabalang ng mga takdang gawain ay wala ring natatapos. Sa puntong ito ay walang isang paliwanag ang katamaran sa mga Pilipino kundi nakasalalay lamang sa kung anong pamantayan ang gagamitin.³³

Sa ikalawang grupo, kabilang naman sa pagkamakasarily ang “hiya, at kanya-kanya.”³⁴ Ang hiya sa aspetong ito ay tumutukoy sa kawalan ng lakas ng loob na subukan ang mga ibang bagay. Kaugnay din ng konseptong ito ang dangal, kung saan dapat ay “magkaroon ng kahihyan” o “panatilihin ang dangal.” Maganda ang unang kahulugan ng hiya dahil hindi na nahahirapan at nahahadlangan ng mga bagay-bagay ang isang tao, subalit hindi rin maganda dahil hindi na nailalabas ang sariling kagalingan. Samantala, ang pag-uugnay sa hiya at dangal ay nagbubunga ng laging mabuting hangganan. Ang pagkakanya-kanya naman ay tumutukoy sa pagtatampok sa mga kabilang sa pangkat o sakop. Kaakibat din nito ang pagsasawalang bahala sa mga taong hindi kabilang sa isang grupo. Mabuti ito dahil natututo ang bawat isa na pahalagahan ang pamilya o ang samahan, subalit masama dahil nagiging limitado ang pakikisama sa pamilya o sa iilang grupo lamang.³⁵

³¹ Emerita S. Quito, “The Ambivalence of Filipino Traits and Values,” in *Karunungan: A Journal of Philosophy* 5 (1988), 42-45.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Sa ikatlong grupo ay binigyang-pansin ni Quito ang kahinahunan ng mga Pilipino, Ito ay makikita sa mga gawi tulad ng “pwede na at ok lang.”³⁶ Ang *pwede na* ay nagpapakita ng pagtanggap sa mga bagay-bagay anuman ang kayarian nito. Ito ay mabuti dahil walang nasasaktan at natatapakan sa ganitong patakaran. Gayon din ang *ok lang*; malinaw ang pagpayag at pagsang-ayon kahit walang pag-aaral na ginawa, ang mahalaga ay mapagbigyan at hindi makasakit ng iba. Subalit sa puntong ito, tila pinipilit na lamang tanggapin ng mga Pilipino ang isang bagay kahit hindi siya nasisiyahan o sumasang-ayon sa dahilang gusto niyang masiyahan ang isang tao at ayaw makasakit ng damdamin ng iba. Sa gayon ay nasasakripisyo ang kalidad o kagalingan ng mga gawain.

Ang huling grupo ay may kinalaman sa kaduwagan ng mga Pilipino sa pagtanggap sa sariling pagkakamali. Ayon kay Quito, ang mga salitang tulad ng “saving face, akala ko, at kasi”³⁷ ay sumasalamin dito. Ang *akala ko* ay ang dagliang paghuhugas kamay sa isang pangyayari, samantalang, ang *kasi* ay tumutukoy sa pagbibigay ng dahilan kung bakit nangyari o nagawa ang isang bagay. Mabuti ang mga ito sapagkat nagpapakita ito ng bilis ng isip at kakayahang linisin ang pangalan sa mga ‘di magandang nagaganap. Subalit hindi rin ito maganda sapagkat nagpapahiwatig ang *akala ko* ng kakulangan ng mga Pilipino sa kritikal na pag-iisip, hindi muna pagsisiyasat o pagtatanong bago gumawa ng isang bagay kaya malimit ay walang kaayusan. Bukod ditto, ang *kasi* ay nagpapakita ng pagtalikod sa negatibong ginawa, gusto lagi ay may masisisi.

Mapapansing may kaguluhan ang direksyon ng mga gawing ito. Ito ay sa kadahilanang ang kagawiang Pilipino ay bunga ng pinagsama-samang: “relihiyon ng mga Kastila, teknolohiya ng mga Amerikano, at diwa ng mga Asyatiko.”³⁸ Sa gayon ay naghahalo-halo at hindi maintindihan kung ano at saang pagkakataon mas makatutulong at kapaki-pakinabang ang isang kagawian. Kaya nga malinaw na sinabi ni Quito na “ang magaling na pilosopiya ng edukasyon para sa mga Pilipino ay maglalagay ng kaayusan sa ating mga katangiang negatibo.”³⁹

Pagpapahalaga

“Ang pagpapahalaga ang batayan ng katarungan”⁴⁰ para kay Quito. Ang katarungan ay ang pagbibigay kung ano ang nararapat kaninuman, sinuman, at saanman. Malawak itong usapin dahil sa bawat sitwasyon ay

³⁶ Quito, “Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon sa Diwang Filipino,” 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Quito, “Ang Pilosopiya: Batayan ng Pambansang Kultura,” 686.

³⁹ Quito, “Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon sa Diwang Filipino,” 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

maaaring magkaroon ng napakaraming batayan kung paano ibibigay ang mas malaki o mas maliit sa isang pangkat. Kaya naman, mahalagang linawin ang pamantayan ng pagpapahalaga. Sa pag-aaral ni Quito sa mga Pilipino ay naghanay siya ng mga batayan ng pagpapahalaga para sa mga Pilipino. Ilan sa mga batayang ito, ayon kay Quito, ay ang mga sumusunod: “utang na loob, hiya, amor propio, pakikisama, at pagmamahal sa pamilya.”⁴¹

Ang utang na loob ay tumutukoy sa pagkilala sa sinumang tumulong o nagbigay pabor sa kanila. Sa gayon, kung sakaling dumating ang panahong sila naman ang humingi ng tulong ay hindi niya ito maaaring tanggihan dahil sa kanyang pagkakautang. Mabuti ang pagkilalang ito sapagkat naroon ang elemento ng seryosong pagkilala at pagpapasalamat, subalit nagiging negatibo ito dahil, una, may mga seryosong pabor na hindi dapat basta-basta ibinibigay subalit kapag nahilingan ng pinagkaka-utangang loob ay napipilitang ibigay (tulad na lamang ng boto sa mga politiko). Sa gayon ay nasasakripisyo ang katotohanan, ang kalidad, at ang pag-unlad sa pangkalahatan.

Malaki rin ang pagpapahalaga ng mga Pilipino sa mga pangalan, pamilya, at trabaho. Sinumang nagtataglay ng mga ito ay masasabing kinikilala sa lipunan. Sa puntong ito makikita na kalimitan ay lagi silang napapaburan at hindi naitatama ang kanilang mga mali dahil sa hiya sa kanila. Sa gayon ay naaabuso ang mga batas at tungkulin para lamang hindi mapahiya ang ibang tao. Halos katulad na rin nito ang pakikisama. Lahat ay gustong maging masaya, kaya lahat, kung maaari, ay pakikisamahan at bibigyan ng pabor.

Sa huli ay namamayani ang pamilya sa lahat ng bagay. Kaya lumilitaw ang mga kasabihang “mas matimbang ang dugo kaysa sa tubig.” Sa lahat ng pagkakataon ay makikitang hindi maaaring iwan o ipagpalit ang pamilya. Kaya naman, sa sobrang pagmamahal sa pamilya, kasama pa rin sila kahit na may asawa na ang isang miyembro nito. Dito masasalaman ang hilaw na pagpapahalaga ng mga Pilipino sapagkat imbes na bayan bago ang sarili ay mas nauunang bigyan ng prioridad ng mga Pilipino ang sariling pangarap kaysa sa kagalingang pambayan at pambansa.

Pagbalik sa Diwang Pilipino sa pamamagitan ng Dekolonisasyon

Dekolonisasyon at Edukasyon

Edukasyon ang sinandalan ni Quito upang maibalik ang diwang Pilipinong niyurakan ng mga dayuhan. Malinaw kay Quito na hamon sa mga

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Pilipino na “*we must reformulate our educational goals towards nationalist-oriented ideals.*”⁴² Mapapansing isinusulong ni Quito ang paglalagay sa nasyonalismo bilang “*a consciously directed policy*”⁴³ sa lahat ng larangan sa bansa. Sa ganitong punto, hindi lamang paglalagay o pagpapayabong ng kaalaman tungo sa kaunlaran, paglalatag ng tamang gawi at pagpapahalaga, pagbuo ng kritikal na pag-iisip, ang mga layunin ng edukasyon para sa mga Pilipino; kundi, ito rin ay maglalagay ng nasyonalismo sa mga mamamayan bilang pundasyon ng lahat ng pagkatuto. Ang nasyonalismo ang magbubuklod sa lahat ng pagkakaibang dinadala dulot ng relihiyon, wika, lugar, at pamilya.

Bagama’t buo ang paniniwala ni Quito na edukasyon lamang ang makapagpapanumbalik sa diwang Pilipino, kakaibang edukasyon ang nais niya at may paghamon nga niyang sinabing “kung nais natin ang edukasyon na tunay na maka-Pilipino, nararapat magkaroon ng ‘*Filipinization*’ sa lahat ng larangan.”⁴⁴ Ang ‘*Filipinization*’ ay ang pagsasabuhay o pagpapanumbalik ng mga kalinangan, gawi, at pagpapahalaga ng mga Pilipino. Ayon kay Quito “ang Pilipinas ay may kalinangan bago pa man dumating ang mga Kastila, kalinangan na matatawag na Pilipino.”⁴⁵

Maisasakatuparan ang ‘*Filipinization*’ sa pamamagitan ng “dekolonisasyon o pagkalas sa kalinangan ng mga kongkistador.”⁴⁶ Ang pagkalas na ito ay marahas dahil “bubungkalin nito ang nasa pinakamalalim sa kaluluwa ng taong sinakop.”⁴⁷ Ang karahasang ito ay walang pagpili sapagkat, ayon kay Quito, “kahit na gaano kalaki ang ambag ng mga dayuhan sa bayan gaya ng wika, relihiyon, at salapi, nararapat na ito’y ipagwalang-bahala.”⁴⁸ Ito ay tumutukoy sa pangkalahatang pagtalikod na maaari ring “walang katapusan.”⁴⁹ Alam ni Quito na “mahirap itong gawin, dahil mistulang pagwawalay ito ng batang munti sa kanyang ina at kapag hindi nagtagumpay ang pagwawalay na ito sa inang kultura, ang isang bayan ay mananatiling nakabilanggo sa kanyang sariling bakuran.”⁵⁰ Sa gayon ay hindi ito maaaring ipagwalang-bahala sapagkat mababaliwala ang mga pinaghirapan ng mga naunang makabayang Pilipinong nagbuwis ng buhay para sa kalayaan. Matuwid na sinabi ni Quito na “ang kasaralang

⁴² Emerita Quito, “Philosophy of Education for the Filipinos,” in *A Life of Philosophy: Festschrift in Honor of Emerita S. Quito* (Manila: De La Salle University, 1990), 762.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Quito, “Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon sa Diwang Filipino,” 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

ipinagkaloob lamang ay walang kabuluhan kung ang mga taong sinakop ay patuloy pang tumatangkilik sa landas ng buhay ng kongkistador.”⁵¹

Sino naman ang gaganap sa tungkuling ito? Para kay Quito, “malaki ang pananagutan ng mga katutubong-intelektuwal sapagkat sa kanila nakasalalay ang pagbangon ng isang sariling kalinangan o kultura.” Dagdag pa niya “tungkulin ng mga intelektuwal ang kumalas sa kalinangan ng kongkistador sa pamamagitan ng pagbalangkas ng sariling kalinangan.”⁵² Wika ni Quito, dapat tandaan ng mga intelektuwal na “*to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation.*”⁵³

Isa sa mga na pinuri ni Quito ay si Renato Constantino, bilang isa sa mga intelektuwal na nag-umpisa ng ganitong gawain. Bahagi ng dekolonisasyon ang muling pagsulat ng kasaysayan hango sa pananaw ng mga Pilipino at hindi sa pananaw ng mga Kastila. Hindi na dapat sabihing natuklasan ang Pilipinas noong 1521 sapagkat naroon na ang Pilipinas bago pa man dumating ang mga Kastila at mayroon nang kalinangang matatawag na Pilipino. Nararapat na bigyang dangal din hindi lamang si Rizal kundi maging sina Lapu-lapu at iba pang bayani. Mahalaga ring ipagpatuloy ang pagsulat ng kasaysayan sa pananaw Pilipino tulad ng pagkilala kina Benigno Aquino bilang mga bagong bayani.⁵⁴

Dekolonisasyon at Wika

Ang unang hakbang patungo sa dekolonisasyon, ayon kay Quito, ay ang pagtataguyod ng sariling wika upang mas mapalakas ang pambansang damdamin at kamalayan. Ang kanyang diskurso ay hindi nalalayo sa hakbangin nina Zeus Salazar⁵⁵ at Prospero Covar⁵⁶ ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas. “Sa pamamagitan ng wika, tayo ay magbabalik sa mga ugat, sa pinakamalalim na adhikaing namamayani sa ating bansa.”⁵⁷ Makikitang ganito rin ang punto ni Salazar sa sinabi niyang “dala ng wika ang ating kulturang kanya ring pinauunlad.”⁵⁸ Kaya naman masasabing ang manipestasyon ng nasyonalismo ang paggamit ng wika, sapagkat para kay Quito, ang tunay na antas ng nasyonalismo ng isang tao ay nasusukat sa kung marunong siyang magsalita ng wika ng kanyang bansa. Dagdag pa niya, ang

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵³ Quito, “Philosophy of Education for the Filipinos,” 763.

⁵⁴ Quito, “Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon sa Diwang Filipino,” 3.

⁵⁵ Zeus Salazar. *Ang Kasaysayan: Diwa at Lawak* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 1974), ix

⁵⁶ Prospero Covar, *Larangan: Seminal Essays on Philippine Culture* (Manila: Sampaguita Press, Inc., 1998).

⁵⁷ Emerita S. Quito, “Wikang Pambansa at Edukasyon,” in *Malay* 6:2 (1987), 147.

⁵⁸ Salazar, *Ang Kasaysayan: Diwa at Lawak*, x.

mga ganitong bagay ay hindi na dapat pagtalunan pa sapagkat, sinumang “nagsasaad na ang nasyonalismo at ang wika ay magkaakbay ay nakayapak sa *terra firma* ng magandang asal at matinong pag-iisip.”⁵⁹

Kaya naman, hindi kataka-taka na isa sa adhikain ni Quito ay gamitin ang wikang pambansa ng mga Pilipino bilang unang wika ng bansa sapagkat “maibubunyag lamang ang malalim na kalungkutan (damdamin) o pighati kung hindi sa sariling wika.”⁶⁰ Higit pa, masasabing “ang ating diwa ay mabibigyan ng wastong pag-iral sapagkat magkaugma ang diwa at wika.”⁶¹

Ang Landas ng Pagtatanong sa Diwang Pilipino

Ang Posibilidad ng Diwang Pilipino

Malinaw kay Quito na hindi makikita ang diwang Pilipino sa katangiang-pisikal ng mga Pilipino. Upang ulitin, ayon kay Quito, “kung ang hinahanap natin ay ang hugis ng katawan o kulay ng balat o tabas ng mata, ay walang kasarilinang Pilipino. Datapwat mayroong kasarilinang diwa (soul identity) ang Pilipino at hango ito sa pilosopiyang taglay ng bayang Pilipino.”⁶² At ang diwang ito ay makikita sa mga panitikan tulad ng tula, kwento, at kanta ng mga Pilipino.⁶³ Lumalabas din na kahit may iba’t ibang linggwahe ang mga Pilipino ay may pagkakaisa naman ang kanilang diwa dahil may pagkakatulad ang kanilang pananaw sa mundo.

Subalit ang problema sa sagot na ito ay nakatago sa nakaraan. Ang diwang ito ay kailangang balikan. Samakatuwid, binubuksan ng sagot na ito ang ilang mga mabibigat na katanungan. Una, hanggang kailan ang punto na dapat balikan para matawag na ang estadong iyon ay sa mga Pilipino? Ikalawa, kung mayroon mang Pilipino, hindi ba kasama sa kanyang pagka-Pilipino ang karanasan nila sa panahon ng pananakop hanggang sa kasalukuyan? Ikatlo, posible bang maging puro ang pagiging Pilipino sa panahon ng globalisasyon?

Sa unang katanungan, hinggil sa panahon o punto kung saan may diwang matatawag na talagang Pilipino, makikitang bago pa man dumating ang mga dayuhan, ang Pilipinas ay magkahati-hati sa mga isla at linggwahe. Samakatuwid, iba-iba rin ang kanilang sining at literatura, at bunga nito ay iba-iba rin ang kanilang diwa. Kung gayon, ang diwa ng mga panahong iyon ay hindi matatawag na diwa ng isang bansa kundi diwa ng mga lahi ng bawat lugar. Maaaring ang diwang tinatawag ni Quito ay isang pangarap lamang

⁵⁹ Quito, “Wikang Pambansa at Edukasyon,” 146.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁶¹ Quito, “Ang Pilosopiya: Batayan ng Pambansang Kultura,” 688.

⁶² Quito, “Ang Pilosopiya: Batayan ng Pambansang Kultura,” 686.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

bago pa man dumating ang mga dayuhan, at ang nagpatibay lamang ng pagiging isang bansa ay ang pangkalahatang pagdanas ng karahasan dulot ng mga Kastila. Ngunit sa ganitong paraan, tila wala namang isang diwa ang mga Pilipino, bagkus, nagkaroon lamang ng isang pangkalahatang pagkilos dahil ang lahat ay nakaranas ng karahasang nagbunsod ng isang pareparehong kasagutan. Dito makikitang hindi diwa ang naging dahilan ng pangkalahatang pagkilos kundi ang sama-samang pagdanas ng isang bagay sa ilalim ng mga dayuhan.

Sa ikalawang katanungan, kung sakali man at mayroon ngang diwang Pilipino bago pa man dumating ang mga dayuhan, at ang diwang ito ay nasakop ng mga Kastila, maaari bang sabihing ang karanasan sa panahon ng pananakop ay bahagi na rin ng pagka-Pilipino? Sa puntong ito ay magandang tingnan ang diwa o ang sarili na hindi binubuo ng isang esensyang sa simula't simula pa lamang ay buo na; sa halip, ang diwa o ang kasarinlan ng bansa ay nagpapatuloy at binubuo. Tulad ng isang tao, ang kanyang mga karanasan, mabuti man ito o masama, ay bahagi na ng kanyang pagkatao. Ganito rin ang mas mainam na pagtingin sa bansa. Ang mga natutunan sa panahon ng pananakop ay hindi na maaaring alisin bilang aspeto ng pagka-Pilipino.

Ang huli naman ay tumutukoy sa pagka-Pilipino sa panahong kasalukuyan. Ang daigdig ay umiikot sa ilalim ng globalisasyon kung saan bawat bansa ay nakaaapekto sa isa't isa. Ang mga gawi, pagpapahalaga, at kalinangan ng isang bansa ay mabilis nang nakararating sa iba. May kasarinlan pa bang matatawag ang isang Pilipino kung saan ang pagka-Pilipino ay ngayo'y itinatakda sa bisa ng batas? Ayon sa Saligang Batas ng Pilipinas 1987 ang mga Pilipino ay ang mga sumusunod:

- [1] Those who are citizens of the Philippines at the time of the adoption of this Constitution;
- [2] Those whose fathers or mothers are citizens of the Philippines;
- [3] Those born before January 17, 1973, of Filipino mothers, who elect Philippine citizenship upon reaching the age of majority; and
- [4] Those who are naturalized in accordance with law⁶⁴

Napakapayak ng pagka-Pilipino kung susundan ang lohika ng mga pamantayan na nasa itaas. Makikita nga rin dito na hindi naman mahalaga kung gumagamit ka ng wikang Pilipino o hindi. Hindi kailangang alam mo ang pagpapahalaga o gawi ng nakararami. Ang mahalaga ay kinikilala ka ng

⁶⁴ *The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines*, Art. 4, § 1-4.

batas bilang isang Pilipino. Kung kaya't kahit sa ibang bansa isinilang ang isang tao, at doon na nanirahan, at kalauna'y babad na sa kalinangang dayuhan, masasabing Pilipino pa rin siya kung siya'y anak ng isang Pilipino, kahit wala siyang nalalaman patungkol sa kulutura nito.⁶⁵

Globalisasyon at ang Posibilidad ng Dekolonisasyon at Filipinisasyon

Maaari ba talagang magkaroon ng dekolonisasyon? Magandang pagnilayan sa puntong ito—bilang paraan na rin ng pagbatikos sa problema ng dekolonisasyon sa panahon ng globalisasyon na siyang pinagtuunan ng pansin ni Quito—ang dalawang pagtingin sa globalisasyon: una, tumutukoy ito sa paglalapit-lapit ng lugar at pagpapablis ng oras na siyang may malinaw na epekto sa kalinangang Pilipino; ikalawa, ang pagtukoy sa globalisasyon bilang ideolohiyang nakatuon sa prinsipyo ng malayang pamilihan na tuwirang nanghihimasok sa kamalayang Pilipino.⁶⁶

Sa unang pag-unawa sa globalisasyon, masasabing napakabilis nang makarating ng mga dayuhan sa Pilipinas at gayundin ang mga Pilipino sa ibang bansa. Sa ganitong punto, napakabilis na ng palitan ng mga kalinangan at teknolohiya. Ang ganitong sitwasyon ay hindi maaaring iwasan lalo na sa isang sistema ng pamahalaang demokratiko. Mas pinapalala pa nito ang malawakang kultura ng migrasyon. Ang mga Pilipino ay pumupunta sa ibang bansa upang magtrabaho at manirahan, samantalang ang iba naman ay bumabalik dala ang kalinangang dayuhan. Gayundin ay palasak ang mga dayuhang naninirahan sa bansa upang magnegosyo o mag-aral kaya naman tiyak na ang palitan ng kalinangan ay hindi maiiwasan.

Sa ikalawang bahagi naman, ang ideolohiya ng globalisasyon ay makikita sa pagkalat ng mga *multinational-supranational* na korporasyon kung saan ang epekto sa mga tao, sa kanilang trabaho at pamumuhay, ay kakaiba. Ang mga ito ay nasa media, pamahalaan, pamilihan, at paaralan. Kaya tiyak na ang pagbalik ay isang napakalayong gawain. Kasabay din nito ang walang hanggang bukal ng impormasyon o kaalaman. Hindi kayang harangan ang pagpasok ng mga mamamayan sa *cyber world*, *virtual reality*, o *internet*. Hindi na lamang paaralan ang lugar kung saan pwedeng matutuo ang mga bata patungkol sa ibang kamalayan. Bukas na rin ang pagkakataong ito sa pamamagitan ng *internet*, kung saan ay wala nang sakop ang gobyerno. Maaari rin naman ngang magkaroon ng mga batas upang ito ay limitahan, subalit hindi ito kaaya-aya sa isang demokratikong bansa.

⁶⁵ Mahaguay, *Ang Pilosopiya ng Edukasyon para sa mga Pilipino ayon kay Emerita S. Quito: Isang Pagsusuri*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Samantalang kung talagang mangyayari man na maipatupad ang dekolonisasyon, hanggang saan kaya masasabing naabot na ang kalinangang Pilipino? Malinaw kay Quito na bago pa man dumating ang mga dayuhan ay mayroon ng kalinangan na matatawag na Pilipino. Subalit Pilipino na nga ba sila dati? May mga pananaw nagsasabing hindi naman talaga sila Pilipino, o gumagalaw bilang isang bansa. Kumikilos sila batay sa angkan o lugar kaya ang himagsikan ay pangprobinsya lamang at hindi kilos ng isang bansa. Kung gayon, kaninong kalinangan ang marapat na balikan: sa mga Ilokano, Bisaya, Tagalog, o Muslim?

Samantalang kung babalikan ang salitang Filipino ay masasabing hindi naman talaga ito tumutukoy sa mga Pilipino (sa diwa na iniisip natin bilang mga taga-Pilipinas bago pa man dumating ang mga Kastila). Ang Pilipino ay tumutukoy sa mga purong mga Espanyol na ipinanganak sa Pilipinas o mas kilala sa tawag na 'insulares.' Kung magkagayon, ang dekolonisasyon ay paghahawan pa rin o pag-aalis ng pagka-Pilipino ng mga Pilipino, upang lumitaw ang tunay na kalinangan ng mga tao bago dumating ang mga Kastila. Ito ang tinatawag nating *pagkakasakatutubo*.

Filipinisasyon

Sa ganitong punto, makikitang ang Filipinisasyon ay *pagsasa-katutubo*. Pero sino nga ba ang mga katutubo? Sila ba ay iyong mga Igorot, Ilokano, o Muslim? Ang mga grupo ng taong ito ay mayroong iba't ibang kultura at wika. Subalit noo'y hindi rin nila alam na sila ay isang bansa. Marami ngang mga tala na ang bawat isa ay may alitan. Kung ganito man, ang Filipinasasyong pagsasa-katutubo ay pagbalik lamang sa panahon ng pagkawawatak-watak o pagkakanya-kanya. Ito ay tuluyan lamang sasalungat sa layunin ni Quito na pagkabubuklod-buklod.

Sa isang banda, subukan nating bigyan ng puwang ng pagdududa, na noon pa man ay mayroon na noong diwang-katutubo na sinasabi ni Quito. Masasalamin ito sa pagkakatulad ng mga panitikan ng magkakaibang kulturang (Ilokano, Tagalog, Bisaya, Muslim). Ang mga susunod na katanungan naman ay: kung magtagumpay man ang dekolonisasyon at mailagay ang antas ng kalinangan, pagpapahalaga, at gawi ng isang Pilipino (katutubo), papaano ito isasabuhay? Posible ba ang isang kalinangang walang bahid ng ibang kultura sa panahong kasalukuyan? Magandang tingnan ang paksang ito sa apat na aspeto: kahalagahan, paraan, responsibilidad, wika at pag-unlad.⁶⁷

Patungkol sa kahalagahan, maaaring itanong kung mayroon bang kalinangan, gawi, at pagpapahalaga ang mga Pilipino bago pa man dumating

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

ang mga dayuhan. Maaari pa ba itong balikan para masabing mahalaga pa ito at kapaki-pakinabang sa panahong kasalukuyan? Halimbawa na lamang ay ang paraan ng pagsulat. Kung sakaling ituturo ang 'Baybayin' sa mga kabataan sa kasalukuyan, mahalagang tingnan kung ito ay mas magdudulot ng kaunlaran sa mamamayan o lalo lamang magiging magulo at lalayo sa makabagong panahon ang mga Pilipino. Hindi kaya mas lalo lamang maiwan ang mga Pilipino sa paraan ng pagbalik na ito? Isa pang halimbawa ay ang pagtaas ng mga Tagalog kay Bathala sa paggamit ng "bahala na." Mas makatutulong ba ito sa buhay Pilipino? May mga pagkakaiba ba ito sa pananampalatayang Kristiyano Katoliko, o baka naman binabago lamang ang salita pero ang gawa at ang diwa ay ganoon pa rin? Hindi ba dapat ang pagpapahalaga at gawi ay tutugon upang makasabay ang tao sa kasalukuyang takbo ng buhay at hindi dapat ang kasalukuyan ang makikibagay sa gawi at pagpapahalaga ng mga tao?

Mahalagang saysayin ang kahalagahan ng diyalogo ng tao at kalagayan sa kaligiran ng pag-unlad at edukasyon. "*Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education.*"⁶⁸ At sa diyalogo ay hindi maaaring isa lamang ang magdidikta, marahil ay may kalinangang babalikan at may mga iiwanan na rin kung ito ay hindi na mahalaga o kailangan. Samakatuwid, ang Filipinisasyon o pagsasa-kakatutubo, ay dapat pagpili lamang ng mga kalinangang makatutulong sa atin. Marapat lamang ang paglimot sa mga hindi na kailangan.

Ikalawa, ang pamamaraang hangad ni Quito ay nagsisimula sa mga intelektuwal o dalubhasa at pagkatapos ay tumutuloy sa pagsuporta sa pamahalaan at sa lahat ng aspeto ng lipunan. Dito makikita ang kapangyarihan na ibinibigay ni Quito sa paaralan na tila hindi na isang katotohanan sa paraang kasalukuyan. Talas naman ni Quito ang kakayahan ng mga korporasyon pero hindi niya nakitang maaari ring pasukin ng korporasyon ang sagradong lugar ng pamantasan. Sapagkat sa kasalukuyan ay nagiging isang korporasyon na rin ang mga paaralan. Hindi na kultura at bayan ang pangunahing layunin nito, kundi ang mga tubo o kita bilang korporasyon ang patakaran. Ang mga intelektuwal ay unti-unting naglalaho sa pagharap sa kanilang responsibilidad para sa ikauunlad ng karunungan. Bagkus, sila'y nagiging sunud-sunuran na lamang para sa ikauunlad ng pamantasan. Kung magkagayon, ang kapangyarihan ay wala na sa mga dalubhasa kundi nasa administrador na ng pamantasan, o dili kaya ay sa mga may-ari ng nito. Ang isa pang punto ay nawawalan na ng kapangyarihan ang pamantasan sa pagtatanghal ng antas ng kaalaman, lumalakas na rin ang antas ng mga pribadong korporasyon sa larangan ng pananaliksik. Ayon nga

⁶⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Maya Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2005), 92-93.

sa ilang pananaw, minsan ay mas mataas pa ang antas ng sertipiko na iginagawad ng isang korporasyon, halimbawa ay Microsoft, kaysa sa isang pamantasan. Sa puntong ito ay napakamasalimuot ang pagbalik at pagsasakatuparan ng Filipinisasyon.

Ang panghuling aspeto ay ang usapin tungkol sa wika. Maganda ang panukala ni Quito na gumamit ng isang wikang matatawag na Filipino. Kahit anong diyalekto man ito, ang mahalaga ay ang pagkakasundong gagamitin ito para sa ikauunawa at pagkakaisa ng lahat. Subalit hindi lamang usapin ng nasyonalismo ang isinasaalang alang sa kasalukuyang diskurso. Kasama na rin dito ang nasyonalismo, edukasyon, ekonomiya, at globalisasyon sa pangkalahatan.

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Filipino Philosophy and Culture

Ang Diskurso ni Feorillo Petronilo Demeterio Tungkol sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino: Isang Pagsusuri

Ben Carlo N. Atim

Abstract: This paper has two objectives: first, to highlight the salient points of F.P.A. Demeterio's discourse on Filipino philosophy; and second, to clarify some arguments from his critical discourse. I hope to do this by firstly, accentuating the important points of Demeterio's discussion on Filipino philosophy. The paper, in addition to providing observations of my own, shall consider the following: a) the state and direction of studies on Filipino philosophy; b) an interdisciplinary methodology for Filipino philosophizing; c) the task of philosophers doing Filipino philosophy; and d) analyzing which philosophical traditions, areas, and/or schools of thought should scholars focus on in order to further develop Filipino philosophy. Afterwards, I wish to present what Demeterio calls as *Kritikal na Pilosopiyang Filipino* (*Critical Filipino Philosophy*). Lastly, in my conclusion, I endeavor to provide a critical examination of Demeterio's discourse on Filipino philosophy. I shall argue that the challenges he brought to light in his studies are to be considered as important and valuable contributions to the study of Filipino philosophy itself.

Keywords: Demeterio, Filipino philosophy, critical theory, critical Filipino philosophy

Panimula

Walang nagkakaisang pananaw tungkol sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino sa sumusunod na usapin: a) konsepto at kahulugan, b) kairalan, at c) estado at direksyon.¹ Sa usaping konseptuwal o kahulugan,

¹ Iba-iba ang pananaw ng ilang Pilipinong pilosoper sa tatlong kategorya na nabanggit. Halimbawa, sa unang kategorya nandiyan sina Napoleon Mabaquiao, Rolando Gripaldo, at Florentino Timbreza na nagbigay ng magkakaibang pananaw sa kahulugan o konsepto ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Sa pangalawang kategorya, pinangungunahan nina Rolando Gripaldo,

umiikot ang usapin sa tanong na: *Ano ba ang ibig sabihin ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino?* Sa usaping kairalan naman ay ang tanong na: *Mayroon bang Pilosopiyang Pilipino o wala?* Habang sa usaping estado ay: *Saan patutungo ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino? Mayabong na ba ito o hindi pa?* Sa tatlong nabanggit, nabibilang sa pangatlong kategorya ng usapin ang kabuuang diskurso ni Feorillo Petronilo A. Demeterio habang ang unang dalawang usapin naman ay pahapyaw niyang binigyang pansin. Ngunit sa pag-unawa sa diskurso ni Demeterio, ang unang dalawang usapin ay hindi maiiwasan dahil sa una, mahalaga na maintindihan at malaman kung ano ang kahulugan ng salitang Pilosopiyang Pilipino kapag ito ay ginagamit sa diskurso at pangalawa, ang di-mapaghiwalay na ugnayan ng kahulugan-kairalan at estado o direksyon.

Pangunahing hangarin ng papel na ito ang magbigay ng isang pag-unawa o palagay sa diskurso ni F.P.A. Demeterio tungkol sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino sa pamamagitan ng pagbigay-pansin sa mahahalagang puntos ng kanyang diskurso. Layunin din ng papel na ito na ilahad ang kahulugan ng Pilosopiyang Kritikal na kanyang isinusulong.

Nahahati ang papel sa mga sumusunod na bahagi: ang una ay tungkol sa mga mahahalagang palagay o puntos sa diskurso ni Demeterio tungkol sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ang mga puntos na ito ay: una, tungkol sa estado at direksyon ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino; pangalawa, tungkol sa metodolohiya at estruktura sa pag-aaral na kanyang pinapalagay ay mahalaga sa pag-aaral ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino; pangatlo, ang mga dapat gawin ng mga Pilipinong pilosoper sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino; at pang-apat ay ang pagbigay-riin sa paglisan sa iilang tradisyon ng pilosopiya na walang magandang maidudulot sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Kalakip ng mga nasabing puntos ay mga mahahalagang puna rito. Ilan sa mga puna ay ang sumusunod: a) ang interdisiplinaryong metodo na dapat gamitin ng pilosopiya sa sarili nitong pagsusuri sa mga pilosopikal na suliranin; b) ang ugnayan ng kahulugan at estado sa usaping Pilosopiyang Pilipino; c) ang limitadong sakop ng tungkuling etikal at ideyolohikal ng mga namimilosopiya sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino; at d) ang pagtingin sa ibang pilosopiya bilang walang pakinabang at dapat lisanin na lamang. Samantala, ang pangalawang pangkalahatang layunin ng papel na ito ay ang paglalahad hinggil sa kahulugang gamit ni Demeterio sa tinawag niyang Kritikal na Pilosopiyang Pilipino (KPP). Sa aking palagay mahalaga ang ginagampanang tungkulin ni Demeterio sa pagpapaunlad ng diskurso sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Bilang tanda ng kanyang mahalagang kontribusyon sa pilosopiyang Pilipino ay ang mga bagong mahahalagang sibol na mga pananaliksik sa

Leonardo Mercado, at Romualdo Abulad ang usapin dito. Sa panghuling kategorya masasabing binigyan ng masusing pagsusuri ang estado ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino ni F.P.A. Demeterio at Rolando Griपालdo. Habang si Emerita Quito naman sa aking pagkakaalam ang nagsimulang sumuri sa paksang ito.

pilosopiyang Pilipino na ang gamit na batayan, metodolohiya o modelo ay hango sa gawa ni Demeterio. Nariyan ang mga panulat halimbawa nina Emmanuel C. De Leon² at Leslie Anne L. Liwanag³ na gumamit ng pananaw at batayan, o modelo ay ang taksonomiya na Demeterio.

Mga Mahahalagang Puntos at Puna sa Diskurso ni Feorillo Petronilo Demeterio tungkol sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino

Sa puntong ito, nais kong bigyan-pansin ang mga mahahalagang palagay na isinusulong ni F.P.A. Demeterio sa kanyang diskurso tungkol sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ngunit, bago ito, bibigyan pansin ko muna ng kaunti ang akademikong buhay ni Demeterio bilang isang mahalagang aspekto para mas maunawaan ang kanyang pananaw hinggil sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Si Feorillo Petronilo A. Demeterio ay nakapagtapos ng kanyang doktorado sa Araling Pilipino sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas noong 2004, habang ang masteral at undergradweyt diploma sa Unibersidad ng Sto. Tomas. Siya ay nakapagturo sa iba't ibang pamantasan tulad ng San Beda College-Manila, Unibersidad ng Sto. Tomas, at De La Salle University-Manila. Ang panghuli ang siyang kanyang kasalukuyang pamantasan kung saan siya ay direktor ng pananaliksik ng unibersidad at nagtuturo sa iba't ibang asignatura sa pilosopiya at Araling Pilipino.

Siya din ay nakapaglimbag ng mga akda. Ang ilan sa mga ito ay ang *From Exceptionality to Exceptional: Inclusion of Differently-Abled Persons in the Workplace* (2014), *Ferdinand Blumentritt and the Philippines: Insights and Lessons for Contemporary Philippine Studies* (2013), *Ang mga Ideolohiyang Politikang Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines: Isang Pag-aaral sa mga Piling Pahayag mula sa Limang Panahon ng Kontemporaryong Eklesiastiko-Politikang Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas* (2012). Maliban sa mga nabanggit, mahalaga sa pag-aaral na ito ang kanyang mga sanaysay sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino tulad ng mga sumusunod: *Quito, Ceniza, Timbreza, Gripaldo: DLSU Professors' Contributions to Filipino Philosophy* (2014), *Assessing the Development Potentials of some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy* (2014), *Status of and Directions for "Filipino Philosophy" in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo, and Co* (2013), *Ang Kallipolis at ang ating Kasalukuyang Lipunan: Isang Pakikipagdiyalogo ng Kritikal na Pilosopiyang Filipino sa Ang Republika ni Platon* (2011), *Thomism*

² Emmanuel C. de Leon, "Ang Pilosopiya at Pamimilosopiya ni Roque J. Ferriols, S.J.: Tungo sa Isang Kritikal na Pamimilosopiyang Filipino," in *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 9:2 (2015), 28-50; Emmanuel C. de Leon, "Emerita S. Quito (1929--): Ang Ugat ng Isang Panibagong Direksiyon ng Pamimilosopiya sa Pilipinas," in *Malay* 29.2 (2017): 30-46.

³ Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, "Ang Pilosopiya ni Sr. May John Mananzan, OSB," in *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 9:2 (2015): 51-76; Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, "Ang Pilosopiya ni Emerita S. Quito," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 10:1 (2016): 54-82.

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Para sa gamit ng papel na ito, hahatiin ko ang mga nabanggit na sanaysay sa dalawang yugtong-diskurso: ang unang yugto ay tatawagin kong *problematique stage*. Ito ay mga sanaysay na sinulat niya simula noong 2000-2004; at ang pangalawang yugto naman ay tatawagin kong *probing stage*. Sa yugtong ito nabibilang ang kanyang mga sanaysay na nasulat simula noong 2005-2014.⁴ Kung bakit ko sinabing *problematique stage* ang unang yugto ay dahil sa ang mga ito ay nagbibigay-riin sa pangunahing suliraning teoretikal ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Sa unang mga sanaysay makikita ang pangunahing adhikain ni Demeterio tungkol sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Itong adhikain ay ang paghain ng sagot sa tanong na kung bakit: una, *underdeveloped* ang pilosopiyang Pilipino ayon kay Emerita Quito, at pangalawa, bakit walang maituturing na tunay na masasabing pilosopiyang Pilipino. Sa kanyang sanaysay, halimbawa, na *Re-Reading Emerita Quito's Thoughts on the Underdevelopment of Filipino Philosophy*⁵ sinentro ni Demeterio ang usapin sa pananaw ni Quito hinggil sa mga dahilan kung bakit mabagal ang pag-usbong ng pilosopiyang Pilipino sa bansa at lalo't hinggit ang tanong na kung bakit wala pang masasabing isang umiiral na tunay na pilosopiyang Pilipino. Dito nagsimula at nakaugat ang diskurso ni Demeterio. Habang ang mga patunay sa mga dahilan ng mabagal na pag-usbong o pagka-walang tunay na pilosopiyang Pilipino ay makikita sa pangalawang yugto ng kanyang diskurso. Dito, sa *probing stage*, ipinakita ni Demeterio sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng bibliograpikal na tala maraming pilosopikal na akda na ang nailimbag. Ayon pa sa kaniyang pag-aaral, mayroong mahigit na labimpitong uri ng pilosopiyang Pilipino⁶ ang lumutang at labing-dalawa sa mga ito ay mga uring pilosopikal na kapaki-pakinabang na linangin para sa pagpapaunlad nang husto ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.

⁴ Ang kategoryang ito ay isang arbitraryong gamit lamang upang maipakita nang malinaw ang daloy at sistematikong programa ng diskurso ni Demeterio.

⁵ F.P.A. Demeterio III., "Re-Reading Emerita Quito's Thoughts Concerning the Underdevelopment of Filipino Philosophy," in *Academia*, <https://www.academia.edu/7340197/Re-Reading_Emerita_Quitos_Thoughts_Concerning_the_Underdevelopment_of_Filipino_Philosophy>. Hereafter cited as "Re-Reading Emerita Quito."

⁶ F.P.A. Demeterio III., "Status of and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy' in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo and Co," in *Φιλοσοφία: International Journal of Philosophy* 14:2 (2013), 185-214. Hereafter cited as "Status of and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy.'"

Samantala, ang unang pangkalahatang layunin ng papel na ito ang magbigay ng mahahalagang puntos sa diskurso ni Demeterio. May dalawang bahagi ang layuning ito: una, ang ipaliwanag ang mga mahahalagang puntos na ito; at pangalawa, ang magbigay ng puna tungkol sa nasabing puntos.

Ang Estado at Direksyon ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino

Mayabong na marahil ang pilosopiyang Pilipino ayon sa pag-aaral ni Demeterio. Sa usaping ito, dalawang sanaysay ang dapat tignan: ang *Assessing the Development Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy* at ang *Status of and Directions for "Filipino Philosophy" in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo, and Co.* Nabibilang ang mga sanaysay na ito sa pangalawang yugto (*probing stage*) ng diskurso ni Demeterio. Pangunahing usapin dito ay ang pagbibigay ng isang komprehensibong datos at pagsasalarawan sa estado at direksyon ng pamimilosopiyang Pilipino. Ngunit, para mas maunawaan ang pinanggagalingan ng pananaw ni Demeterio tungkol rito, mahalagang suriin ang unang yugto ng kanyang diskurso dahil dito nagmumula ang dahilan sa pagsasalarawan ng estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Tingnan natin ang unang yugto ng diskurso ni Demeterio na siyang pinanggagalingan ng kanyang diskurso sa direksyon at estado ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Dito sa unang yugto makikita ang teoretikal na suliraning bumabalot sa usapin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino tulad ng: a) *underdevelopment* ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ayon kay Quito, at b) ang kawalan ng tunay na tinatawag na pilosopiyang Pilipino. Nakapaloob sa dalawang suliranin na ito ang pagtatangka ni Demeterio na maghain ng sagot at patunay.

Ang unang suliranin ay tungkol sa *underdevelopment* ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Maiuugnay ito, ayon sa kanya, sa apat na mahahalagang problema na kailangang bigyan ng konkretong solusyon. Ito ay ang historikal, ekonomikal/institusyunal, kultural, at linggwistikong suliranin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.⁷ Habang ang pangalawang suliranin naman ay patungkol sa kawalan ng tunay na pilosopiyang Pilipino na maiuugnay din sa unang nasabing mabigat na problema ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Bigyan natin ng maiksing paliwanag ang dalawang mahahalagang suliranin na ito.

Ayon kay Demeterio, sinasabi ni Quito na ang historikal na suliranin kung bakit wala o mabagal ang pag-usbong ng pilosopiyang Pilipino noong kapanahunan niya ay dahil sa uri ng pamimilosopiya sa bansa na nakasentro sa pilosopiyang Tomistiko. Sang-ayon si Demeterio rito, ngunit may mas malalim pang dahilan ang suliraning ito ayon sa kanya. Ito ay ang baluktot

⁷ Demeterio, "Re-Reading Emerita Quito," 6-8.

na pananaw o konsepto ng pilosopiya na maaaring maiugnay ang bakas nito sa Tomistikong pilosopiya ng bansa.⁸ Pinapalagay ni Demeterio na ang Tomistikong pamimilosopiya ay binabalewala ang ilang elementong nakapaloob sa ideyal na estruktura ng pilosopikal na pagsusuri. Ito ay ang pagtatanong (*question*), paghahanap (*search*) ng sagot sa tanong, sagot sa tanong (*answer*), at paglalagay ng sagot sa teorya o tradisyon kung saan ito puwedeng maiuuri.⁹ Subalit hindi ito nasusunod. Madalas, ayon kay Demeterio, humihinto ang lahat sa isang elemento lamang—sa sagot.

Sa pagsusuri ni Demeterio sinasabi ni Quito na ang ekonomikal/institusyunal na suliranin ay tumutukoy sa mahinang suporta ng mga akademikong institusyon sa gawaing akademiko tulad ng pananaliksik sa bansa. Ngunit sa paglipas ng panahon, unti-unti itong napunan. Ang problema na lamang ayon kay Demeterio ay kung papaano aktibong magtutulongan at magpapalitan ng mga diskurso at palagay ang mga pilosoper para magkaroon ng tunay na pilosopiyang Pilipino. Dagdag pa niya, ang kailangan sa ngayon ay katalista na siyang pagmumulan ng lakas sa pagsisimula o pagbubuo ng diskursibong gawain.¹⁰ Walang ibang nakita si Demeterio bilang puwedeng maging katalista kundi ang mga Pilipinong namimilosopiya at nagtuturo ng pilosopiya sa bansa.

Ang kultural na suliranin naman ayon kay Quito na binanggit ni Demeterio ay dahil sa *Pilosopo Tasyo syndrome*. Ang pagtingin sa pilosopiya bilang isang pangangatuwirang nakaka-pikon ng kausap at labas-sa-mundong usapin. Subalit, ayon kay Demeterio, hindi dahilan si “Pilosopo Tasyo” kung bakit walang umuusbong na tunay na pilosopiyang Pilipino, kung hindi dahil sa *oral culture* na siyang sagabal sa pagpapaunlad nitong pilosopiya. Sinasabi ni Demeterio na ang natira (*residual*) ng *oral culture* sa kamalayan ng mga Pilipino ay siyang humahadlang para hindi makausad o yumabong ang pilosopiya sa bansa. Ito ay maituturing na isang hamon para sa mga namimilosopiya na baguhin ang kamalayan tungo sa *literate culture* na sinasabing hindi pa tuluyang nangyayari sa ngayon. Ang panghuling dahilan ay ang kakulangan ng linggwaheng pilosopikal (*philosophical language*) ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Sinabi ni Demeterio na ayon kay Quito, ito ay dahil kulang ang mga nag-aaral sa pilosopiya na marunong magbasa ng mga pilosopikal na akda ng mga tanyag na pilosopo sa pangunahing wika nito tulad halimbawa nina Immanuel Kant at Martin Heidegger (Aleman), Rene Descartes at Alain Badiou (Pranses), Plato at Aristoteles (Griyego), o Santo Tomas at San Agustin (Latin). Ngunit, hindi sang-ayon dito si Demeterio. Sinasabi niya na hindi ito ang talagang suliranin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino kundi ang kasalatan sa linggwaheng pilosopikal na siyang

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

pangunahing pangangailangan para sa isang pilosopikal na diskurso. Para matugunan ang pangangailangan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino na maipaangat ang pagkakakilanlan nito, kailangan ng sapat na mga teorya, metodo, paradaym at konseptong pilosopikal. Nagbigay ng ilang sanhi si Demeterio kung bakit salat sa lenggwaheng pilosopikal ang pilosopiyang Pilipino. Una, ito ay dulot ng walang matatag na tekstwal na tradisyon kung saan pwedeng humugot ng mga kailangang teorya o metodo sa pamimilosopiya. Ang malinaw na dahilan ay ang pananatili ng *culture of orality* sa kamalayan ng mga Pilipino; pangalawa, ang baluktot na pag-unawa sa pilosopiya dulot ng pagsakop sa pilosopikal na kamalayan ng Tomistikong pamimilosopiya sa bansa; pangatlo ay ang pag-alinlangang gumamit ng mga kanluraning teorya at metodo sa pilosopiya, sosyolohiya, at pag-aaral kultural (*cultural studies*) bilang mga epektibong instrumentong makatutulong sa pag-unawa at pagdalumat sa karanasan at pangkalahatang pananaw ng mga Pilipino.¹¹

Sa pangalawang yugto ng diskurso ni Demeterio kung saan ang kanyang puna ay nakatuon sa estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino, dalawang mahahalagang bagay ang dapat tandaan: una, ang pagpapakita ng positibong pagtingin sa pilosopiyang Pilipino sa pamamagitan ng pagsipat sa mga naging posisyon ng mga respetadong pilosoper tulad nina Quito, Abulad, Gripaldo, Timbreza, Zialcita, Co, at Mabaquiao.¹² Dito pinakita ni Demeterio na may mga ilang uri ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ang naitatag na at ang mga ito ay may malakas na potensyal ng pag-unlad katulad ng mga sumusunod: *critical philosophy (both academic and non-academic), interpretation of Filipino worldview, phenomenology/existentialism, logical analysis, appropriation of foreign theories, appropriation of folk philosophy, breakthrough writing, discourse on local themes, at discourse on universal and foreign themes.*¹³ Pangalawa na dapat tandaan: ang di-direktang pahiwatig ng pagyabong ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ayon na rin sa mga natuklasang samu't-saring uri ng pamimilosopiya sa bansa. Ayon kay Demeterio, mahalaga na pagtuunan ng pansin ang mga ilang uri ng pilosopiyang may malakas na potensyal na lumago at umunlad, pansinin ang kahinaan at kalakasan nito at magbigay na karampatang pagsusuri para mas lalong pang mapaunlad ang mga ito. Samakatuwid, masasabi natin na para kay Demeterio may malinaw na estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino batay na rin sa kanyang pagsusuri at pagkakategoriya o pag-uuri ng mga akda ng mga Pilipinong pilosoper. Dito sa yugtong ito, lumabas na mayroon nang matibay na mga tradisyon ng pilosopiya sa bansa kahit noong panahon pa ni Emerita Quito.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹² Ngunit kapuna-puna rin dito ang hindi pagkabilang sa listahan nina Roque Ferriols at Leonardo Mercado.

¹³ Demeterio, "Status of and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy,'" 212.

Sinasabi ng papel na ito na may dalawang yugto ang diskurso ni Demeterio. Ang una ay ang yugtong tumatalakay sa konseptwal o teoretikal na usapin sa suliranin ng estado ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Nabanggit din ng papel na ito na ang diskurso ni Demeterio ay nakatuon sa usaping estado at hindi sa kahulugan at kairalan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ang pangalawang yugto ay tumatalakay sa konkretong sagot at programa para sa pagpapayabong ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Nakatuon ang usapin sa yugtong ito sa mga lumutang na iba't ibang uri ng tradisyong pilosopikal sa bansa.

Ngunit may mga ilang puna na gustong ipahayag ang papel na ito. Maliban sa mga mahahalagang puntos na nailahad sa itaas, mahalaga din na suriin ang ilang mga di-kapansin-pansin na kahinaan ng unang puntong nabanggit. Ilan sa mga kahinaan ng punto na ito ay ang sumusunod:

Una, ang komento niya hinggil sa tanong kung mayroon nga bang pilosopiyang Pilipino o wala bilang isang 'walang silbi' at insulto sa mga tagapanday ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. May koneksyon ang komentong ito sa kabuuan ng kanyang diskurso sa pangawalang yugto dahil kung atin itong papansinin, ang dahilan kung bakit pinapakita ni Demeterio sa kanyang diskurso ang materyal na datos ay para patunayan na mayroong pilosopiyang Pilipino at masasabi din na sa simula't simula pa lamang ay naniniwala na siya na mayroong masasabing pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Sa pananaw ni Demeterio isang pagsasayang ng lakas at oras ang pag-isipan, pagsuri, at paghanap ng sagot sa ganoong uri ng tanong. Sa kanyang akda na *Status of and Directions for "Filipino Philosophy in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo, and Co*, naging laman ng kanyang panimula ang tanong na *Meron bang Pilosopiyang Pilipino?* Hindi man tahasan at kategorikal ang kanyang tugon dito, kapansin-pansin naman ang positibo nitong pagtingin sa kairalan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ang kanyang positibong posisyon ang nagtulak sa kanya para pasaringan ang iilang may duda o hindi naniniwala na mayroong umiiral na pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ayon sa kanya, ang tanong ay walang silbi at isang pang-iinsulto sa kamalayan at kakayanang intelektuwal ng mga Pilipinong namimilosopiya. Sang-ayon ako kay Demeterio sa kanyang palagay hinggil dito, na ang tanong sa unang pagtingin ay nakaiinsulto. Subalit ito lamang ay kung ang gamit natin ng salitang pilosopiya ay di-istrikto.¹⁴ Kontra Demeterio, sa aking palagay ang tanong na kung mayroon bang pilosopiyang Pilipino o wala ay hindi isang pang-iinsulto kung uunawain natin ang kahulugan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino sa istrikto nitong gamit. Ang tanong ay lehitimo at may

¹⁴ Napoleon Mabaquiao, "Isang Paglilinaw sa Kahulugan at Kairalan ng Pilosopiyang Filipino," in *Malay* 24:2 (2012), 39-56. Sang-ayon din ako sa pananaw ni Mabaquiao na ang gamit sa pilosopiyang Pilipino ay dapat istrikto. Malinaw ang pahayag ni Mabaquiao rito. Hindi maaaring lahat ng kaisipan ay maituturing na pilosopiyang Pilipino dahil kung magkagayon, wala nang dapat pang disiplinang matatawag na pilosopiyang Pilipino.

kawastuhan. Ang layunin ng tanong ay maghanap ng malinaw na pagunawa sa mga konseptong napapaloob rito. Isa din itong hamon na kailangan pagtagumpayan. Mas mauunawaan ang kahalagahan ng nasabing tanong kung atin ito ilalagay sa kanyang tamang konteksto at layunin. Sa puntong ito, dapat malinaw kung ano ba ang pinapalagay ng nagtatanong kung bakit niya tinatanong kung mayroon bang pilosopiyang Pilipino o wala? Mahalaga din na itanong natin kung ang tanong ba na *Meron bang Pilosopiyang Pilipino?* ay pilosopikal o hindi. Ito ay nakadepende sa kung ano ang ibig natin sabihin ng pilosopikal at di-pilosopikal na tanong. Ang tanong ay pilosopikal kung ito ay *foundational* at nangangailangan ng masusing pag-unawa at pagsuri sa paksa na napapaloob sa tanong gamit ang katuwiran at argumento. Ang pilosopikal na tanong ay hindi nangangailangan ng eksaktong sagot, ang mahalaga ay ang pagbubuo ng argumento sa pagsagot ng tanong. Balikan natin ang tanong na *Is there a Filipino philosophy?* Ito ba ay pilosopikal o hindi? Nakaiinsulto o hindi? May halaga o wala? Masasabing pilosopikal ang tanong, hindi nakaiinsulto, at may halaga. Pilosopikal dahil dinadala tayo nito sa pinakaugat—ang kairalan ng isang bagay na nangangailangan ng pananaw at palagay o argumento bilang pagpapatunay. Hindi nakaiinsulto dahil ang pilosopikal na tanong ay hindi dapat nakapokus sa emosyonal na aspekto bagkus ay dapat kognitibo. Mahalaga sapagkat ito ay humahamon sa kakayahan ng pilosopiya na magbigay linaw sa mga konseptong binubuo at isinusulong nito.

Ano ngayon ang implikasyon nito sa unang mahalagang punto ni Demeterio? Bagaman mahalaga ang naiambag ng pananaliksik ni Demeterio sa estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino, mayroon din naman itong kakulangan pagdating sa pagbibigay ng matibay na pundasyon sa pag-unawa ng malinaw sa tinutukoy nitong estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Sa maikling sabi, binigyan-pansin sana ni Demeterio ang usapin sa katuturan, kahulugan, at kairalan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino para mas lalong mapatibay nito ang diskursibong kakayanan ng kanyang mga puntos.

May dalawang mahahalagang konsiderasyon kung bakit dapat binigyan-pansin nito ang suliranin sa kahulugan at kairalan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Una, malinaw na konteksto at kahulugan sa paggamit sa salitang pilosopiyang Pilipino, at pangalawa, malinaw na batayan sa pag-uuri ng mga akda na maituturing na pilosopikal. Sa diskurso ni Demeterio ang mga dahilang ito ay walang malinaw na pagpapahayag o kung hindi man ay wala siyang hayagang pahayag tungkol sa uri ng kontekstong ginagamit sa salitang “pilosopiyang Pilipino” at ganoon din sa batayan sa pag-uuri ng mga akda.

Pangalawa, sa unang tingin may kontradiksyon na namamagitan sa kanyang dalawang magkaibang puna na makikita sa dalawang yugto ng kanyang diskurso. Sa unang yugto, sinasabi ni Demeterio na walang sapat o

salat sa pilosopikal na wika ang pilosopiyang Pilipino kaya kakaunti lamang ang mga teorya, metodo, o konsepto na maaaring gamitin sa pag-aaral rito. Ang implikasyon ay walang matatag na tradisyon kaya walang nangyayaring pag-usbong ng tunay na pilosopiya sa bansa. Samantalang sa pangalawang yugto, pinakita niya na may labinpitong uri ng pilosopiyang Pilipino at ilan dito ay may malakas na potensyal na paunlarin at pagyabungin. Ibig sabihin, pinatunayan din ni Demeterio na ang una niyang suri sa suliranin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ay wala ng bisa o di kaya ay hindi totoo na may suliranin sa pilosopikal na lengguwahe ang pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ngunit sa kabuuan, masasabing pa din na ang puna ni Demeterio tungkol sa suliraning konseptuwal o teoretikal at sa estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ay mahalaga sa pagpapanday ng mas matibay na saligan sa pamimilosopiyang Pilipino. Bagaman may kakulangan sa iilang aspekto, ito naman ay madaling matugunan sa pamamagitan ng mas masusing pagsusuri pa rito na pwedeng gawin ninuman na interesado sa ganitong usapin.

Kaugnay ng unang punto sa diskurso ni Demeterio, ang susunod na bibigyan pansin ng papel na ito ay tungkol sa uri ng metodohikal na estrakturang ginamit ni Demeterio sa kanyang diskurso at ang isyu sa ugnayan ng pilosopiya at sa ibang disiplina katulad ng Araling Panlipunan (*social science*).

Metodolohiya, Pilosopiya, at Araling Panlipunan: Tungo sa Mayabong na Pananaliksik sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino?

Isang interdisiplinaryo na maituturing ang metodolohiya na ginamit ni Demeterio sa kanyang diskurso tungkol sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Para maunawaan kung bakit ko ito nasabi, tingnan muna natin ang kanyang intelektwal na pinanggagalingan at akademikong kapaligiran.

Tulad ng aking nabanggit sa itaas, mapapansin na siya ay hindi lamang hinubog ng pilosopiya kung hindi pati na rin ng iilang sangay ng disiplina sa araling panlipunan at araling Pilipino. Sa kanyang sanaysay na *Speculations on the Dis/Junction Point between Philosophy and the Social Sciences* sinabi niya na ang kanyang pagkamulat sa interdisiplinaryong pag-aaral ay nagsimula pa noong siya ay nasa kolehiyo pa lamang hanggang sa napunta siya sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas (Diliman) para kumuha ng doktorado sa Araling Pilipino (Philippines Studies).¹⁵ Mahalagang isaalang-alang ito dahil

¹⁵ F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Speculations on the Dis/Junction Point between Philosophy and the Social Sciences," in *Academia* <https://www.academia.edu/7340224/Speculations_on_the_Dis_Junction_Point_between_Philosophy_and_the_Social_Sciences>. Hereafter cited as "Speculations."

mayroong itong kaugnayan sa uri ng kanyang pamamaraang pananaliksik at metodolohiya sa pagsusuri sa mga suliranin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Masasabing interdisiplinaryo ang metodolohiya ni Demeterio dahil una, ang kanyang pilosopikal na pananaliksik ay ginagamitan ng ibang metodo at teoryang likas na hindi pilosopikal, at pangalawa, nakabatay ito sa kritikal na tradisyon na kanyang sinusulong. Sa *Speculations* sinasabi ni Demeterio na ang pilosopiya at araling panlipunan ay may parehong hangarin at maaaring magsanib puwersa para mas lalong mapatibay ang mga pananaliksik ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ang pilosopiya, ayon sa kanya, ay maaring humiram ng mga epektibong pamamaraan o metodolohiya sa ibang disiplina para sa sarili nitong mga gawaing akademiko, gayon din naman ang araling panlipunan sa pilosopiya. Ibig sabihin, makakakuha ng aral ang bawat disiplina sa ganitong sistema at mas mapapaigting pa nito ang kanilang kanya-kanyang mga adhikain kung nagbibigayan sila ng mga pahayag at pagtingin sa iba't ibang paksa maging teoretikal o praktikal man ito. Sang-ayon ako kay Demeterio sa pananaw na dapat interdisiplinaryo ang pilosopikal na pananaliksik dahil hindi naman talaga ito maiiwasan sa pagsusuring pilosopikal. Ang mga pilosopikal na pananaw halimbawa nina Descartes, Heidegger, Husserl, Marion, Chalmers, at Searle ay binubuo ng mga pahayag at suporta na hindi lang nanggagaling sa pitak ng pilosopiya kundi sa ibang disiplina tulad ng *natural science* at iba pa. Ibig sabihin, silang mga pilosopo ay tumatawid sa ibang teritoryo para mangalap ng mahahalagang pananaw para gamitin bilang suporta o panlaban sa sinusulong nilang argumento. Sina John Searle at David Chalmers, halimbawa, ay mga kilalang pilosopo sa larangan ng *Philosophy of Mind*. Upang maisulong ang kanilang pilosopikal na pananaw, kailangan nila masuri ang mga natuklasang datos sa likas na agham (*natural science*) o *neuroscience* para malinaw nilang maipahayag ang kanilang isinusulong na argumento tungkol sa malay (consciousness) at isip. Samakatuwid, likas sa pilosopikal na diskurso ang pagiging interdisiplinaryo nito.

Pinapalagay rin ni Demeterio na puwedeng humiram ng metodolohiya o teorya ang pilosopiya upang mapatibay nito ang sariling mga posisyon, pananaw at adhikain. Hindi kailangan ng pilosopiya na ikulong ang sarili nito sa abot-tanaw ng kanyang teritoryo at sa pagiging pagka-ekklusibo. Bagkus, kailangan nitong lisanin ang nakagisnang paniniwala na nasa sarili lang nito makakakuha ng sapat na konsepto at teorya upang maglinang ng mga bagong pananaw o pahayag. Ginamit ni Demeterio ang pananaw ni Jürgen Habermas para magbigay ng kritikal na pagtingin sa kalagayan ng pilosopiya at sa pagiging malaya nito sa ibang disiplina. Ayon kay Demeterio, upang mapanatili ng pilosopiya ang kahalagahan nito, kailangang payagan nito ang sariling makipag-alyansa sa

ibang disiplina tulad ng araling panlipunan.¹⁶ Kung tama si Demeterio sa kanyang pananaw, mahihirapang panatilihin ng pilosopiya ang sarili nitong pagkakilanlan kung hahaluan nito ang sarili ng mga instrumentong magdudulot ng unti-unting paglaho ng pagkapuro ng diskurso nito. Sa puntong ito, kontra Demeterio, naniniwala akong kayang panatilihin ng pilosopiya ang sarili nitong mundo at umiral na may kabuluhan at kahalagahan bilang isang malayang disiplina na hindi nangangailang ng kaisahan sa ibang disiplinang pang-agham. Katulad ng sinasabi ni Habermas, ayon kay Demeterio, ang pilosopiya ay siyang tagalikha ng mga palagay na pinaghahanguan ng katuwiran at hypotesis na siyang ginagamit ng ibang disiplina sa kanila sariling mga adhikaing pragmatiko.¹⁷ At malinaw rin kay Habermas na dapat mapanatili ang pagkakaiba ng pilosopiya sa ibang disiplina kahit pa may nangyayaring pagpapalitan (*cross-fertilization*) ng mga pananaw at pahayag. Malaki ang kaibahan ng pilosopikal na diskurso o pananaliksik sa uri ng pananaliksik ng ibang disiplina. Ang kaibahan ay batay sa sumusunod: (a) uri o kalikasan ng paksa, at (b) metodo. Ang unang uri ay tumutukoy sa paksang pilosopikal. Ang pilosopikal na pananaliksik ay nakainog sa usapin tulad ng metapisika, epistemolohiya, etika, lohika, at iba pang uri na nabibilang sa sangay ng pilosopiya. Ito ay pilosopikal kung ito ay kabilang o may kinalaman sa mga sangay ng pilosopiya. *Speculative* at argumentibo ang kalikasan ng suliraning pilosopikal at may kinalaman sa kalikasan ng mga bagay-bagay. Hindi nito sakop ang usapin ng agham panlipunan, likas na agham, relihiyon, sosyolohiya, sikolohiya, kasaysayan, at antropolohiya ngunit para magsimulang umusad ng usapin sa mga disiplinang ito, kailangan ng mga ito ang pundasyon na siyang ginagawa ng pilosopiya.¹⁸ Halimbawa, hindi pilosopikal na usapin kung papaano umiikot ang mundo, kung bakit mayroong langit, kung tayo ba ay produkto ng lipunan o hindi, kung bakit maraming kabataan ang nahuhumaling sa kulturang Koreano, kung kailan o paano at bakit pinatay ang bayaning si Jose Rizal. Maituturing na usaping pilosopikal ang paksa kung ito nagtatanong ng mayroon bang Diyos o wala, may kahulugan ba ang buhay o wala, kung tayo ba ay parehong katawan at isip o isip lamang o katawan laman, at kung mayroon ba tayong matatawag na personal na pagkakakilanlan (*personal identity*). Ibig kung sabihin, ang likas na agham (*natural science*), relihiyon,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷ Ito din ang pananaw nina Deleuze at Guattari na ang pilosopiya bilang isang malayang disiplina ay responsable sa paglikha ng mga konseptong magagamit hindi lang sa sarili nitong diskurso kundi pati ng ibang disiplina. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 7.

¹⁸ Malinaw sa pilosopiya ni Rene Descartes na ang lahat ay nagmula sa iisang ugat at ito ay pilosopiya. See Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. by John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

sosyolohiya, at iba pa ay may kanya-kanyang mga suliranin na nagsisilbing bakod o tanda ng kanilang disiplina.

Ang pangalawang uri ng kaibahan ng pilosopiya ay metodo na nababatay sa argumento. Kung ang ibang disiplina ay may tinatawag na *qualitative* o *quantitative* na uri ng pananaliksik na gumagamit ng instrumentong tulad ng serbey, interbyu, *focus-group*, at pagdodokumentaryo ng mga anekdota, ang pilosopiya ay hindi kailangan gumamit ng alinman sa mga nabanggit sapagkat ang pilosopikal na pananaliksik ay sinasagot ang pilosopikal na mga tanong gamit lamang ang katuwiran sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay o pagbubuo ng argumento na isinusulong ng may akda nito. Tingnan natin ang mga sinulat nila Platon, Aristoteles, Russell, Wittgenstein, Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, at iba pa. Nakasandal lamang ang kanilang pilosopikal na mga pananaw sa argumento na kanilang isinusulong. Habang ang ibang disiplina naman ay nananaliksik sa pamamagitan ng pagsisiyasat sa mga pangyayari gamit ang mga empirikal na instrumento na siyang saligan ng kanilang paliwanag ng kanilang paksa. Ang ganitong pagtingin sa pilosopikal na pananaliksik ay may mahalagang tungkuling ginagampanan sa buhay ng pamimilosopiya at ito ay ang paggamit sa katuwiran bilang gabay sa pagtuklas ng mga ideya o kaalaman. Hindi ko sinasabi na ang ibang pananaliksik ay hindi nakabatay sa katuwiran. Ang punto lamang ay ito: hindi tulad ng ibang disiplina tulad ng *natural science* na ang hypotesis ay batay sa pisikal na pangyayari at bagay sa mundo, ang pilosopikal na tesis o suliranin ay nakabatay lamang sa katuwiran na nahahasa gamit ang lohika.

Sa kabuuan, sinasabing interdisiplinaryo na maisalalarawan ang metodolohiyang ginamit ni Demeterio. Ngunit kung ang tinutukoy niyang interdisiplinaryo ay paggamit ng ibang metodo o teorya ng ibang disiplina, nilulusaw nito ang saklaw ng pilosopiya at nang araling panlipunan. Gaya ng pananaw ni Habermas na ginamit ni Demeterio, hindi kailangan ng isang pagsasanib ng pilosopiya sa ibang disiplina upang maging makabuluhan at kapaki-pakinabang ito sa panahon ngayon. Ang pilosopiya sa sarili nito ay makabuluhan na. Masasabi din na hindi maiuuri ang pilosopikal na metodo sa pananaliksik na *qualitative* o *quantitative* dahil hindi nangangailangan ang pilosopikal na pananaliksik ng ganitong instrumentong empirikal maliban sa pangangatuwiran na inihahayag sa pamamagitan ng argumento at lohika.

Sa konteksto ng diskurso ni Demeterio binigyan pansin ang kahalagahan ng alyansa ng pilosopiya at agham-panlipunan. Sa kanyang pananaw walang tunay at konkretong saklaw ang bawat disiplina dahil ito ay diskursibo lamang.¹⁹ Ang dahilan kung bakit mayroong inilalagay na tanda o saklaw ang iba't ibang disiplina ay dahil, ayon kay Demeterio,

¹⁹ Demeterio, "Speculations," 9.

hangad ng bawat isa ang magkaroon ng sariling pagkakakilanlan. Kaugnay nito, iminumungkahi ni Demeterio na mas maging epektibo ang paglinang ng pilosopiyang Pilipino kung gagamit tayo ng metodolohiyang hindi man saklaw ng pilosopiya ay epektibong makatutulong sa pagtuklas o pagsusuri ng suliraning pilosopikal. Dito, mahalaga ang palagay ni Demeterio sa pragmatikong antas. Ngunit ang proposisyon ba na ito ay tunay na makatutulong sa pag-angat ng pilosopiyang Pilipino? Kung ang basihan ni Demeterio ay ang pangangailangang kritikal sa pagkilatis sa kondisyong politikal, sosyolohikal, o ekonomikal, malinaw na hindi na kailangan ng pilosopiya ang mga instrumentong panuri ng ibang disiplina para magampanan ang tungkuling pilosopikal nito. Magandang halimbawa ay sina Karl Marx at Hannah Arendt na nagbigay ng mga palagay sa panlipunan o politikal na suliranin sa pamamagitan lamang ng paggamit ng katuwiran at argumento. Hindi naman gumamit si Karl Marx ng empirikal na instrumento para sabihin at patunayan na mayroong hindi pagkakapantay-pantay sa lipunan dahil sa kapitalismo na inaabuso ang kakayanan at lakas ng bawat manggagawa.²⁰ Hindi kailangan ni John Searle ang empirikal na instrumento sa pananaliksik para sabihin na hindi maituturing ang isang kompyuter o robot na may malay o *intentionality* dahil wala silang kakayanang maghangad o malaman na sila ay naghahangad o nakararamdam ng pagkagutom o uhaw. Kung tama ang pananaw na ito, ano ang implikasyon nito sa pananaw ni Demeterio? Isa sa maaaring hindi magandang dulot ay ang paglabo ng saklaw o pagkakaiba sa pagitan ng pilosopiya at ng ibang disiplina. Mahalaga na dapat maging malinaw ang ating pananaw sa usapin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Kung, halimbawa, sa pag-aaral ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ay gagamit tayo ng mga metodolohiyang hindi pilosopikal para isulong ang argumento nais nating patunayan, masasabi pa rin ba na pilosopikal ang ginagawang pananaliksik? At papaano natin masasabi na ito ay pilosopiyang Pilipino? Dito, babalik tayo sa suliraning konseptuwal tulad ng pagbibigay ng tamang kahulugan ng gamit ng salitang pilosopiya at pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Walang problema sa pagiging interdisiplinaryo ng pilosopiya ngunit kung ang pagiging interdisiplinaryo nito ay nangangailangan din ng interdisiplinaryong metodolohiya upang saliksikin ang mga pilosopikal na problema at magsulong ng argumento gamit ang mga instrumentong pang-aghham, nilalabo nito ang pag-unawa sa pilosopiya lalo't higit sa saklaw na sakop nito. Dagdag pa rito ay ang paglabo ng batayan sa pag-uuri ng mga Pilipinong akda na pilosopikal at di-pilosopikal. Kung gayon, bilang mga namimilosopiyang Pilipino mayroong tungkuling dapat gampanan ang mga

²⁰ Raymond Geus, *The Idea of Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (London: Cambridge, 1981), 1.

namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino at iba pa para maayos na maipanday ang ating sariling tatak ng pilosopiya. Mismo si Demeterio sa kanyang diskurso ay hindi nagkulang sa pagpapa-alala sa atin nito. Sinasabi niya na mayroon tayong tungkuling etikal na gampanin bilang mga namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Ang mga Dapat Gawin ng mga Namimilosopiya sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino

Ayon kay Demeterio, may dalawang mabigat at mahirap pero magkaugnay na tungkulin ang mga namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino: a) etikal, at b) ideyolohikal. Ang etikal na tungkulin ay tumutukoy sa pangangailangan ng paggamit ng interdisiplinaryong metodolohiya sa pagsusuring kritikal ng pilosopiyang Pilipino sa mga pangyayaring politikal, sosyolohikal, ekonomikal, kultural, at maging sa relihiyon. Ang ideyolohikal na tungkulin naman ay tumutukoy sa tungkuling maipakita ng wasto ang tunay na kondisyon ng lipunan gamit ang kritikal na salamin ng pagsusuri halimbawa ng *Frankfurt School*. Ang mga usaping ito ay may mahalagang gampanin sa diskurso ni Demeterio.

Sa aking palagay, kaakibat ng kanyang mga pahayag tungkol sa etikal at ideyolohikal na tungkulin ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ay ang pagpapa-alala na magkaugnay ang etikal at ideyolohikal na gampanin na dapat mabatid ng mga namimilosopiya. Batay sa diskurso ni Demeterio, umiikot ang mga tungkuling ito sa isang aspekto o sangay ng pamimilosopiya—at ito ay sa panlipunan o politikal na sangay. Ngunit hindi lamang dapat umiikot sa nasabing sangay ang pamimilosopiyang Pilipino kung ang hangarin ay mas mapapaunlad at mapakinang pa ang kaanyuan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Hahatiin ko ang usapin na ito sa dalawang bahagi. Una, bilang isang mahalagang punto sa diskurso ni Demeterio, susubukan kung magbigay ng kaunting detalye ukol sa kanyang di-hayagang pahayag sa tungkulin ng mga namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Pangalawa, ang magbigay ng puna sa nasabing punto ng kaniyang diskurso.

Sa kanyang akda na *Defining the Appropriate Field for Radical Intra-State Peace Studies in Filipino Philosophy*²¹ sinabi ni Demeterio na: “*Filipino philosophy has the ethical burden of spearheading the inter-disciplinary project of the theory and praxis of critique and counter-critique*”²² at ito ay makatutulong na

²¹ F.P.A. Demeterio III, “Defining the Appropriate Field for Radical Intra-State Peace Studies in Filipino Philosophy,” in *Academia*, <https://www.academia.edu/7340208/Defining_the_Appropriate_Field_for_Radical_Intra-State_Peace_Studies_in_Filipino_Philosophy>, 25. Hereafter cited as “Defining the Appropriate Field.”

²² *Ibid.*

lampasan ang patolohikal na kondisyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Inilarawan ni Demeterio ang pilosopiyang Pilipino sa ganitong paraan:

Indeed, Filipino philosophy can be easily pictured as a philosophy that is dispassionate, cold, and devoid of libido; a philosophy that is lulled by some plenitude of innocuous things, such as the lofty tenets of scholasticism and humanism, the endless mazes of language and logical reasoning, and the exoticism of oriental thought.²³

Sa kanyang pananaw, ganitong uri ng pilosopiyang Pilipino mayroon ang ating bansa. Itong kritikal na pagsasalarawan sa katayuan o kondisyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ay may mahalagang ugnayan sa kanyang mga ilang akda sa pangalawang yugto ng kanyang diskurso. Dito sa pangalawang yugtong ito pinagtuunan ng pansin ni Demeterio ang pagbibigay ng konkretong larawan sa katayuan o estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Makikita na ang: a) paggamit ng interdisiplinaryong pagsusuri gamit ang magkahalong metodolohiya ng dalawang magkaibang disiplina tulad ng pilosopiya at agham panlipunan, b) ang kanyang pagsasalarawan tungkol sa pilosopiyang Pilipino, at c) pagsulong sa kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino bilang isang mapagpalayang (*emancipatory*) uri ng pilosopiya na hindi dayuhan sa tunay na kondisyon ng lipunan, ay mga palatandaan ng mabigat na tungkuling etikal ng mga gustong mamilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Ang etikal na tungkulin ng mga namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino ay nakasentro sa pagiging kritikal nito sa pagsusuri sa sosyolohikal, ekonomikal, kultural, at politikal na kalagayan ng isang lipunan. Masasabi din natin na may ideolohikal na layunin ang ganitong uri ng tungkuling etikal at ito ay ang ipakita ang totoong nangyayari sa lipunan sa pamamagitan ng pag-aalis sa kamalayan ng tao ang mga huwad na paniniwala at interes dulot ng mapaniil na mga sistemang panlipunan. Mahalaga sa diskurso ni Demeterio ang ideolohikal na programang isinusulong nito. Ibig sabihin ang pilosopiyang Pilipino ay dapat pilosopiyang nagsusuri sa kondisyon ng lipunan at tinutugunan nito ang kakulangan sa pag-unawa sa kondisyon ng lipunan sa pamamagitan ng pagkilos. Kung papaano ang konkretong pagkilos nangyayari ay sa pamamagitan ng pag-impluwensiya sa kamalayan o pag-iisip ng tao para kumilos. Bagaman maganda ang adhikain ni Demeterio ukol sa mga dapat

²³ Demeterio, "Thought and Socio-Politics: An Account of the Late Twentieth Century Filipino Philosophy," in *Academia*, <https://www.academia.edu/7340249/Thought_and_Socio-Politics_an_Account_of_the_Late_Twentieth_Century_Filipino_Philosophy>, 15.

gawin ng mga namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino, sa aking palagay hindi sapat ang etikal at ideyolohikal na tungkulin lamang para maisakatuparan ang pagpapa-unlad ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Una, kailangan din gawin ng mga namimilosopiya ang maghawan ng konseptuwal na kaligiran ng pilosopiyang Pilipino upang sa ganoon ay magkaroon ng malinaw na direksyon at maplano ng pulido ang mga hakbangin na gagawin para mapaunlad ito. Upang magawa ito, mahalaga ang pagkakaroon ng isang malinaw na pamantayan sa paggamit ng salitang 'pilosopiya' at 'pilosopiyang Pilipino' dahil kung wala, hindi maiiwasang maging sabog ang dakilang gawaing ito. Para mangyari ito, ang pagbibigay-linaw sa kung ano ang gamit at pag-unawa natin sa salitang 'pilosopiyang Pilipino' ay mahalaga. Hindi mahirap mangyari ito dahil ang pilosopiya mismo ay may natatanging kakayanan na bumuo ng matibay nitong pundasyon. Sinasabi nga na ang pamimilosopiya ay isang pagpapanday ng mga konsepto (*conceptual engineering*)²⁴ at sa pananaw naman nila Deleuze at Guattari ay sinabing ang pilosopiya ay taga-gawa ng konsepto.²⁵

Pangalawa, hindi lamang nakasalalay sa etikal at ideyolohikal na tungkulin ng mga namimilosopiya ang kapalaran ng pilosopiyang Pilipino kundi pati na din sa kakayanang intelektuwal ng mga namimilosopiya na ipamalas ang angking galing upang sa ganun ay maramdaman ng tao ang kahalagahan nito sa kanilang buhay. Sa ganitong paraan ay makakakuha tayo ng malasakit sa kanila na maaaring tulay para mapansin ng pamahalaan ang kahalagahan ng pilosopiya sa bansa. Mahalaga ang tungkuling ginagampanan ng gobyerno para sa pagpapayabong ng pilosopiya at ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Pangatlo, ang mga namimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino ay dapat masipag manaliksik upang makapagpalimbag ng mga akda tungkol sa pilosopikal na Pilipinong pananaw sa mga problemang may pangkalahatang (*universal*) interes. Dagdag pa rito ay ang pagsali sa mga makabuluhang pilosopikal na diskusyon o debate ng mga kilalang pilosoper ng bansa. Sa ating akademikong buhay bilang mga namimilosopiya, madalang tayo nakatatagpo ng mga nagtutunggaling o nagsasagutang mga pilosoper gamit ang sulat sa ilang pilosopikal na isyu. Marahil hindi pa tumalab sa kulturang akademiko ng bansa ang ganitong makabuluhang gawain.

Bilang paglilinaw, hindi naman sinasabi ni Demeterio na itong uri ng tungkuling etikal lamang ang makapag-papaunlad sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ang konteksto ng kanyang pagtingin sa pilosopiyang Pilipino at sa patolohikal na kondisyon nito ay maaaring magamot kung ang pilosopiyang Pilipino ay aktibong makisangkot sa usaping panlipunan kaysa maglaan ng

²⁴ Simon Blackburn, *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 3.

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 7.

panahon sa mga pilosopikal na gawaing walang praktikal na pakinabang. Sa madaling sabi, maliban sa ideyolohiyakal at pagsesentro ng tungkulin etikal sa pilosopiyang panlipunan at politika sa bansa, maaari din tingnan ang iba pang bagay na makatutulong sa mga namimilosopiya. Ibig sabihin, maaari ding sakupin ng tungkuling etikal ng mga namimilosopiya ang pagsusuring pilosopikal sa ilang suliranin sa ibang sangay nito. Halimbawa, maari tingnan ang ilang sangay ng pilosopiya tulad ng epistemolohiya, lohika, estetika, metapisika, relihiyon, at wika sa pagsusuri ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.²⁶

Kung ang pilosopiyang kritikal ng Frankfurt ay may malakas na potensyal sa pagpapaunlad ng pilosopiyang Pilipino ayon kay Demeterio, may ilang pilosopikal na diskurso naman na dapat nang lisanin pati ang mga pamamaraan nito.

Paglisan sa Ilang Pilosopikal na Diskurso at Ang mga Pamamaraan Nito

Anong pilosopiya ang dapat nang lisanin at ano naman ang dapat pang pagtuunan ng pansin, lakas, at oras ayon kay F.P.A. Demeterio?

Ang kontemporaryong panahon ay maihahalintulad sa isang bahay-gagamba o di kaya ay yaring-lambat kung saan walang masasabing pinakasentro, pundasyon o saligan ang batayan ng lahat ng ginagawa ng tao. Sa isang desentralisadong lipunan, ang hamon sa pilosopiya ay ito: Papaano nito maibabahagi ang sarili upang maging kapaki-pakinabang? Sinabi ni Stephen Hawking sa kanyang akda na *The Grand Design* na ang pilosopiya sa kabuuan ay isa ng patay.²⁷ Marahil nakita ni Hawking na walang pag-unlad na nangyayari sa pilosopiya hindi katulad ng sa likas na agham. Sa madaling sabi, ang pilosopiya ay isa ng *passé* o bakya (*out of fashion*). Ngunit, ano nga ba ang tinutukoy ni Hawking sa pagsabi na wala ng silbi ang pilosopiya? Ano man ang tinutukoy ni Hawking dito ay hindi na kailangan palawakin pa dito. Ang mahalaga ay ang malaman ang kahalagahan ng kanyang deklarasyon laban sa pilosopiya sa kontemporaryong panahon. Una sa lahat ang deklarasyon ni Hawking ay isa ding *passé*. Bago pa man niya napagtanto ito, nakita at naramdaman na ng ilang pilosopo tulad nila Heidegger, Carnap, Rorty, at Wittgenstein ang nalalapit na pagtatapos ng pilosopiya.²⁸ May ilang kontemporaryong pilosopo din ang tumingin sa katayuan ng pilosopiya sa

²⁶ Bagaman ito ay makikita sa mga talang ipinakita ni Demeterio sa mga ilang mga akda, ito ay hindi hayagan dahil batay sa tala, gumamit si Demeterio ng ibang marka ng pilosopiya at hindi marka na tumutukoy sa sangay ng pilosopiya.

²⁷ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (London: Bantam Books, 2011), 1.

²⁸ Ang dahilan ni Hawking sa kanyang sinabi ay hindi maituturing pilosopikal.

makabagong panahon. Isa na dito ay si Alain Badiou. Sa kanyang akda na *Infinite Thought*, sinasabi niya na may tatlong orientasyon ang pilosopiya sa kontemporaryong panahon. Ito ay hermenyutika (Heidegger at Gadamer), analitikal (Wittgenstein at Carnap), at postmodernismo (Lyotard at Lacan).²⁹ Sa tatlong magkakaibang orientasyon na ito, sabi ni Badiou, magkakaiba man ang mga pinanggagalingan at pananaw sa iba't ibang pilosopikal na paksa ay mayroong naman silang pinagkakasunduang dalawang mahahalagang bagay, at ito ay: a) negatibong pananaw sa kalagayan ng pilosopiya tulad ng pananaw sa metapisika at katotohanan. Sinasabi ni Badiou na nagkakaisa ang tatlong orientasyon sa paniniwala sa katapusan ng metapisika at ng klasikal na ideya ng katotohanan; b) sa positibong pananaw naman, nagkakaisa ang tatlo sa paniniwala tungkol sa kahalagahan ng wika (*language*). Halimbawa, ang hermenyutika ay binubuo ng interpretasyon ng *speech acts*, ang analitikal naman ay tungkol sa mga *utterances at rules* ng wika sa pagbubuo ng kahulugan; at c) panghuli, ang postmodernismong orientasyon ay pinapalaganap ang ideya ng iba't-ibang klase o pluralismo o *fragments*, at mga uri ng diskurso sa pagkawala ng pagkakaisang-uri (*homogeneity*).³⁰ Makikita sa negatibong pananaw sa pilosopiya ng tatlong orientasyon ang problema ng pilosopiya pagdating sa gamit at papel nito bilang isang akademikong disiplina.³¹ Ayong kay Badiou ang tradisyonal na pilosopiyang nakasentro sa metapisika at katotohanan ay ang dahilan ng unti-unting paghina o pagwala bilang isang disiplina.

Ito din marahil ang tinutukoy ni Demeterio sa kanyang puna na para umusad at umunlad ang pilosopiyang Pilipino kailangan ng lisanin ang ilang mga pilosopikal na tradisyon na wala naman naidudulot na maganda. Ayon sa kaniya: "In their³² dramatic novelty and exotic foreignness, it became very easy for the Filipino philosophy professor to be lost in their profundity, forgetting in the process that *philosophy is ought to be a theoretical engagement with reality*.³³ Tinukoy ni Demeterio ang uri ng mga tradisyon ng pilosopiya na kanyang tinawag na "dispassionate, cold, and devoid of libido; a philosophy that is lulled by some plenitude of innocuous things, such as the lofty tenets of *scholasticism and humanism*, the *endless mazes of language and logical reasoning*, and the *exoticism of oriental thought*."³⁴ Mapapansin rito ang tatlong magkakaibang tradisyon o diskurso na maituturing may mababang

²⁹ Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, trans. and ed. by Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (London: Continuum, 2004), 43-44.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

³¹ Sa katunayan sinabi ni Heidegger na ang pilosopiya ay natapos kay Nietzsche.

³² Tinutukoy dito ni Demeterio ang tradisyong pilosopikal ng Ateneo de Manila (*existential/continental philosophy*) at Unibersidad ng Pilipinas (*logical positivism/linguistic philosophy*).

³³ Demeterio, "Thought and Socio-Politics," 18. Italics mine.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5. Italics mine.

halaga sa gawain ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ito ay ang *scholasticism, logical positivism/analytic philosophy, at oriental philosophy*. Sa puntong ito, mababatid na natin kung alin sa mga pilosopikal na diskurso o gawain ang dapat lisanin dahil wala itong konkretong maitutulong sa paglago ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ito ay pinatunayan ni Demeterio sa kanyang akda na makikita sa pangalawang yugto ng kanyang diskurso.

Pinatunayan ni Demeterio na ang mga nabanggit na tradisyon sa itaas ay may mababang potensyal sa pagpapaunlad ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ayon sa kanya, ang mga ito ay ang mga sumusunod: a) Skolastiko/Tomistikong pilosopiya, b) Pag-aaral ng mga banyagang sistemang pilosopikal, at c) Tekstuwal na paglalahad ng banyagang sistemang pilosopikal.³⁵ Ang huling dalawang (b & c) diskurso napapaloob ang *logical positivism/analytic at oriental philosophy*. Malinaw sa nabanggit na ang diskursong Tomistiko ay ang pangunahing diskurso na may mababang potensyal sa pagpapaunlad ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Sa katunayan, sang-ayon si Demeterio sa pananaw ni Quito na ang *Tomistikong pilosopiya* ay isang hadlang sa pagpapalago ng pilosopiya sa bansa lalo't higit ng pilosopiyang Pilipino: "Thomism is a great stumbling block for Filipino philosophy."³⁶

Sa isang akda naman, batay sa mga nakalap niyang datos, pinakita ni Demeterio na mayroong labing-dalawang diskurso sa pilosopiyang Pilipino.³⁷ Ang kanyang layunin ay maipakita, gamit ang talaan na mayroong limang diskursong may mataas na potensyal na mapapaunlad nito ang pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ito ay ang mga sumusunod: a) *Filipino Philosophy as the Appropriation of Foreign Theories*, b) *Filipino Philosophy as Academic Critical Analysis*, c) *Filipino Philosophy as Research on Filipino Ethics and Values*, d) *Filipino Philosophy as the Appropriation of Filipino Spirit*, at e) *Filipino Philosophy as the Study on the Presuppositions and Implications of the Filipino Worldview*.³⁸ Kung titingnan ng maigi ang limang diskursong nabanggit, makikita na tatlo lamang rito ang maituturing na pilosopikal (sa istriktong gamit ng salita). Ito ay ang *a, b, at e*. At ang mga ito ay maaring may kinalaman o walang-kinalaman sa *scholasticism, logical positivism/analytic, at oriental philosophy*. Sa kabuuan, pinapalagay ni Demeterio na mayroong ilang diskursong pilosopikal na walang pakinabang sa pag-unlad ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. At

³⁵ Demeterio, "Status of and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy,'" 22-23.

³⁶ Demeterio, "Re-Reading Emerita Quito," 6.

³⁷ Ang mga nasabing datos ay nakuha ayon sa kanya sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng google scholar, interbyu off-line-online, at sa ilang babasahin sa pilosopiyang Pilipino.

³⁸ F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Assessing the Development Potentials of some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy (Abstract and Introduction of a Paper Published in *Philippiniana Sacra*," in *Academia*, https://www.academia.edu/12035138/Assessing_the_Developmental_Potentials_of_Some_Twelve_Discourses_of_Filipino_Philosophy_Abstract_and_Introduction_of_a_Paper_Published_in_Philippiniana_Sacra >.

kung bakit walang pakinabang ang mga ito ay dahil hindi nakatutulong sa pag-unawa at pagsusuring kritikal ng lipunan.

Ngunit kung susuriin natin ng maigi, hindi matibay ang batayan ng puna ni Demeterio. Una, hindi nasusukat ang kabuluhan o di-kabuluhan ng isang tradisyon sa dami o kaunti na gumagawa nito. Pangalawa, bawat pilosopikal na tradisyon ay may kanya-kanyang kahinaan. Pangatlo, hindi maaaring ikahon sa kanyang historikal na panahon ang tradisyon para masabing wala ng halaga ito sa ngayon kung ito ay panahon pa ni Aquinas. Ang pang-apat ay konteksto. Kung ilalagay sa tamang konteksto ang bawat tradisyon makikita na ito ay may kanyang angking kabuluhan. Halimbawa, sa usaping pilosopiya ng relihiyon maaaring gamitin ang Tomistikong pananaw sa pagsusuri ng karanasang relihiyoso ng mga Pilipino, o dili kaya ang *ordinary-language philosophy* ni J.L. Austin o Paul Grice o John Searle sa pagsusuri ng mga pananalita ng mga kabataan Pilipino ngayon. Samakatuwid, pinapalagay ni Demeterio na mayroong mga diskursong pilosopikal na kailangang lisanin pati ang mga pamamaraan nito.

Ang Uri ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino ni Feorillo Petronilo Demeterio: Kritikal na Pilosopiyang Pilipino

Sa unang tingin payak ang konsepto ng Kritikal na Pilosopiyang Pilipino (KPP) ni Demeterio. Sa katunayan, walang wastong pagkakahulugan na makikita sa kanyang diskurso tungkol dito. Gayunpaman, mauunawaan natin ito sa pamamagitan ng kanyang paniniwala na ang pilosopiyang Pilipino ay dapat nakasentro sa kritikal na pagsusuri sa kalagayan o kondisyon ng lipunan. Ang pilosopiyang 'kritikal' ay mayaman sa pananaw at tradisyon. Katunayan, maririnig sa kabuuang diskurso ni Demeterio ang boses ng mga kritikal na pilosopo ng Frankfurt School tulad ni Habermas.

Sa kanyang sanaysay na *Defining the Appropriate Field for Radical Intra-State Peace Studies in Filipino Philosophy*, sinabi ni Demeterio na mayroong apat na malinaw na tradisyon ang pilosopiyang Pilipino at ito ay ang mga sumusunod: "1) scholasticism, 2) the influx of western philosophical theories, 3) Filipino philosophy as interpretation of Filipino identity and world-view, and 4) Filipino philosophy as critique of the Philippine social and economic structures."³⁹ Ngunit sa apat na tradisyong ito ang pang-apat (4) na tradisyon ang sinasabi ni Demeterio na makapagbibigay ng nararapat at matibay na tradisyon sa pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ito ay dahil sa:

³⁹ Demeterio, "Defining the Appropriate Field", 9.

Scholasticism could not provide an appropriate tradition *because scholasticism in first place emerged prior to the Durkheimian discovery of society and the Marxist formulation of structural analysis.* The influx of western philosophical theories could also not provide an appropriate tradition, *because it is not even a single tradition in itself but a collection of some purposeless expounding of one foreign philosophy after another ...* Lastly, Filipino philosophy as interpretation of Filipino identity and world-view could also not provide an appropriate tradition *because of its descriptive ethnographic concerns which is different from the diagnostic and prescriptive concerns of radical peace studies.*⁴⁰

Sa konteksyon ng usapin ni Demeterio ukol sa araling kapayapaan (*peace studies*), sinasabi niya na ang kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino ay may sapat na tradisyon at karapat-dapat na magbigay ng masusi at kritikal na pagpupuna sa sosyolohikal, politikal, at ekonomikal na estado ng lipunan ng bansa. Subalit, hindi man binigyan ni Demeterio ng malinaw na kahulugan ang kanyang paggamit sa salitang Kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino sa nasabing akda, makikita naman ito sa ilan niyang akda na nagpapaliwanag sa kung ano ang tinutukoy ng kanyang sinasabing 'kritikal' na pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Sa sanaysay na *Thought and Socio-Politics* ni Demeterio, ipinaliwanag niya ang kanyang pananaw tungkol sa KPP. Napapaloob dito ang ilang mga pahayag at puna tungkol sa katayuan at kalagayan ng pilosopiyang Pilipino.⁴¹ Sinasabi ni Demeterio na ang KPP ay may matatag na tradisyon dahil ito ay nagsimula pa noong panahon ng kilusang Propaganda sa panahon ng pananakop ng mga Kastila sa Pilipinas at lalong umusbong pagsapit ng panahon kung kailan namayagpag ang *Critical Theory* sa Europa.⁴² Ngunit naputol ito noong panahon ng Batas Militar sa bansa. Dahil ayon kay Demeterio, bago pa ang pagdeklara ng Batas Militar ni Marcos noong Septyembre 21, 1972 na humantong sa hindi kanais-nais na mga kaganapan hanggang matapos ito noong Enero 17, 1981, malakas ang puwersa ng kritikal na pamimilosopiya sa bansa. Ngunit ito ay pansamantalang humina at bumalik ang sigla nito pagkatapos ng rehimeng Marcos. Dagdag pa niya, sa apat na tradisyong nabanggit, ang kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino ang may kongkretong programa sa pagsusuring

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Italics is mine.

⁴¹ Sa katunayan, maaaring sabihing ang akdang ito ay pangunahing tanda at reperensya sa kanyang diskurso tungkol sa KPP.

⁴² Demeterio, "Thought and Socio-Politics," 3. Ito ay maituturing pangunahing reperensya ng kanyang pananaw sa konsept ng 'Kritikal na Pilosopiyang Pilipino'.

panlipunan: “critical philosophy comes with a definite agendum which is to critique the Philippine cultural, social, economic and political structures.”⁴³ Ito rin ay may pambansa at teoretikal na layunin—ang gamutin ang patolohikal na estado ng bansa at ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Dagdag pa ni Demeterio: “the urgency of a critical Filipino philosophy to finally emerge from its pathological state is not a mere academic desire of some armchair intellectuals, but is something that is actually premised on a social, cultural and national interest.”⁴⁴

Tinuturing din ni Demeterio ang kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino bilang isang diskursong mas makabuluhan kumpara sa ibang uri ng pamimilosopiya sa bansa. Ito ay dahil ang kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino ay may praktikal na tingin at gamit sa mga pangyayari sa paligid, tumutulong na pakilusin ang mga tao sa tulong ng ideolohikal nitong estruktura, at higit sa lahat may direktang epekto sa pamumuhay ng tao. Bukod pa sa nabanggit, ang pilosopiyang kritikal ay umaangkop sa panahon na kinalalagyan nito at sumasabay sa agos ng postmodernismong kondisyon ng lipunan. Kaya naman ganoon na lamang ang pagkahumaling ni Demeterio sa pilosopiyang kritikal sapagkat maliban sa nabanggit na mga dahilan, ayon sa kanya, ito rin ay magsisilbing tagapagligtas ng pilosopiyang Pilipino: “The salvation for Filipino philosophy may come from retrieving and reliving the forgotten movement of the early indigenous phase of critical Filipino philosophy.”⁴⁵ Samakatuwid, ang gamit ng pilosopiyang kritikal ni Demeterio ay sumasaklaw lamang sa politikal na karakter nito. Hindi saklaw ng pilosopiyang kritikal ni Demeterio ang ibang aspekto tulad ng epistemolohiya, estetika, at etika. Gayunpaman, sinasaklaw pa din ng konsepto ng pilosopiyang kritikal ni Demeterio ang mga pangunahing tesis ng teoryang kritikal. Ayon kay Raymond Geuss mayroong tatlong esensyal na anyo ang teoryang kritikal at ito ay ang sumusunod: a) bilang gabay para sa pagkilos (*human action*), b) bilang anyo ng kaalaman (*knowledge*), at c) bilang isang *reflective* na gawain.⁴⁶

Sa kabuuan, tinuturing ni Demeterio na mahalaga ang ginagampanang tungkulin ng pilosopiyang kritikal sa diskurso ng pilosopiyang Pilipino. Ito ay isang pilosopikal na metodo sa pagsusuri ng tunay na kalagayan ng lipunan kung saan ang tao ay umiiral. Dito din maaring maiuugnay ang pananaw ni Roland Theuas Pada sa kanyang artikulo na *The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy* at ni Emmanuel De Leon. Sinusundan at sinusupportahan ni Pada at De Leon ang pananaw ni

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁶ Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory*, 2.

Demeterio pagdating sa pamimilosopiya sa pilosopiyang Pilipino.⁴⁷ Pangunahing layunin ng pilosopiyang kritikal na isinusulong ni Demeterio ay ang makisangkot sa pagsusuri sa kondisyon ng lipunan at bumuo ng kritikal na mga puna tungkol dito. Layunin din ng pilosopiyang kritikal ang gabayan ang bawat tao na nabibilang sa isang lipunang kontrolado ng iilan na mag-isip at alamin ang mga totoo nitong interes upang sa ganun ay maiwasan ang mapanlinlang na sistema nito. At panghuli, ang pilosopiyang kritikal ay nagbibigay pag-unawa sa kung ano ang ibig sabihin ng lipunan. Sa diskurso ni Demeterio, nakasentro ang pilosopiyang kritikal sa pagmamasid at pagsusuri sa politikal, sosyolohikal, at ekonomikal na suliranin ng lipunan. Sa ganitong paraan, ayon sa kanya, mas napapaunlad natin ang pilosopiyang Pilipino.

Konklusyon

May dalawang pangunahing layunin ang papel na ito. Una, ang magbigay ng mahahalagang puntos sa diskurso ni F.P.A. Demeterio tungkol sa pilosopiyang Pilipino at ito ay ang sumusunod: a) ang pagbibigay ng malinaw na pahayag tungkol sa estado at direksyon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino, b) ang kahalagahan ng interdisiplinaryong metodo sa pananaliksik sa pilosopiyang Pilipino, c) ang mga dapat gawin ng namimilosopiya, at d) ang paglisan sa ilang pilosopikal na gawain at pamamaraan nito. Ang pangalawang layunin ay ang pagbigay pansin sa konsepto, kahalagahan, at gamit ng kritikal na pilosopiyang Pilipino. Bagaman ipinakita din ng papel na ito ang kahinaan at kakulangan ng matibay na argumento ang mga puntos ng diskurso ni Demeterio, hindi ito nangangahulugan ng paglisan sa kanyang mga panukala. Bagkus ito ay isang panawagan sa mga nagsusumikap na maunawaan pa lalo at mapalago ang pilosopiyang Pilipino na maglaan at gumugol pa ng maraming panahon para sa malalimang pagsusuri at paghahanap ng matitibay na sagot o solusyon sa panloob na suliranin ng Pilosopiyang Filipino.

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⁴⁷ Roland Theuas DS. Pada, "The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy," in *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 8:1 (2014), 24-44. See also Emmanuel C. De Leon, "Ang Pilosopiya at Pamimilosopiya ni Roque J. Ferriols, S.J."

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Ang Pagkilos ng Pananampalataya at Utang na Loob: Si Hornedo sa Etnograpiya ng Popular na Paniniwala

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Abstract: The essay is a humble contribution to the commemoration of the second death anniversary of the ethnologist, philosopher, and linguist Florentino Hornedo. This aims to illustrate his analysis of "utang na loob" as culture and its relevance to faith in the context of popular belief. It further justifies that utang na loob is more than a "system of obligation" but a lifetime decision which is greater than its usual connotation. Albeit the study is just an exploration of the existing discourses, it is distinct in the manner of approach as it views this unique Filipino trait under the lens of "freedom" formulated by Hornedo.

Keywords: Hornedo, popular religiosity, *utang na loob*, ethnography

I. Konteksto

Utang na loob

Noong buwan ng Hunyo 2015, nagtala ang Oxford English Dictionary ng 40 salitang Filipino bilang opisyal na bahagi ng kanilang leksiko. Isa sa mga ito ay ang "utang na loob" na may pakahulugang "*sense of obligation* to return a favor owed to someone."¹ Ang salitang "utang" ay ginagamit noon pa man simula ng nakaraang siglo sa mga bansang Timog Silangang Asya upang tukuyin ang ipinagpalibang kabayaran ng isang bagay

¹ Danica Salazar, "Release notes: new Filipino words," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (June 2015), <<http://public.oed.com/the-oed-today/recent-updates-to-the-oed/previous-updates/june-2015-update/release-notes-new-filipino-words>> (29 October 2016). Emphasis added.

o serbisyo.² Maging sa kasalukuyan, mas malapit ang kulturang ito sa usaping pang-komersiyo at pananalapi. Ang salitang “loob” naman ay may mayamang pakahulugan sa wikang Filipino. Kung ito ay tumutukoy sa materyal na bagay, ito ay nangangahulugang “taliwas ng labas.” Ngunit sa konteksto ng utang na loob, ang “loob” ay sumasaklaw sa higit na pisikal na depinisyon nito. Halimbawa ay ang pagsasalarawan ni Dionisio Miranda: “loob needs kapwa to be loob: its continued responding to kapwa is the condition for its own existence and authenticity as *loob*.”³ Ayon dito, sa pamamagitan lamang ng kapwa mas tunay at malilinang ang isang kalooban. Si Albert Alejo ay nagwika rin ng kahalintulad nito: “ang loob ay isang tahanan (na kung saan) dito ang kapwa ay kasambahay.”⁴ Sinang-ayunan ito ni Jose de Mesa nang kanyang banggitin na “*loob* is a relational understanding of the person.”⁵ Sa mga pagsasalarawan na nabanggit, ang salitang “loob” sa utang na loob ay hindi maaaring gamitin sa material na pakahulugan nito bagkus ay higit na mauunawaan sa konteksto ng lokal na karanasan nito, partikular, sa perspektibo ng pakikipag-ugnayan ng sarili sa “kapwa.” Samakatuwid, ang utang na loob ay ang pagkilala sa kagandahang loob na ipinagkaloob sa isang indibidwal. Ang pagkilala ay sa pamamagitan ng mataas na tungkuling maibalik ang kabutihang loob na natanggap. Dahil dito, ang utang na loob ay parating may pinagtutuunan: ang *kapwa*.

Utang na loob bilang obligasyon

Ang mataas na tungkulin sa kapwa na maibalik ang natanggap na kabutihang loob ay nagiging isang obligasyon. Ito ang nakita ni Mary Holnsteiner sa ugnayan na namamagitan sa magulang at anak: “... the **children’s obligation** to respect and obey their parents and show their gratitude by taking care of them in old age ... continues even when the parents’ duties have been largely fulfilled.”⁶ Ang sistematikong pagsusuri nito ay isinagawa ni Charles Kaut noong dekada ‘60 at ayon sa kanya, “*utang na loob* reflects a social system of sentiments of deep and strong affective nature and expressively symbolizes a **whole configuration of reciprocal**

² Charles Kaut, “Utang Na Loob: A System of Contractual Obligation among Tagalogs,” in *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17:3 (1961), 257.

³ Dionisio Miranda, *Buting Pinoy: Probe Essays on Value as Filipino* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1992), 84.

⁴ Albert Alejo, *Tao po! Tuloy!: Isang Landas ng Pag-unawa sa Loob ng Tao* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1990), 111.

⁵ Jose de Mesa, *In Solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-Rooting* (Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology, 1987), 46.

⁶ Mary R. Holnsteiner, “Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines,” in *Four Readings on Philippine Values*, ed. F. Lynch and A. de Guzman (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1973), 76. Emphasis added.

obligations.⁷ Nilinaw niya na ang salitang “utang” ay may katumbas na kahulugan tulad sa isang regalo o gift. Ito ay sa kadahilanang ang obligasyon ay hindi batay sa pagsasauli ng hiniram, bagkus ay sa pagtalima sa isang *kaloob*.⁸ Bagama’t mahalaga ang paglilinaw na ito, kapansin-pansin ang elemento ng obligasyon o tungkulin sa pagsusuri ni Kaut.

Tulad ng paglilinaw ni Kaut, ang inuutang sa utang na loob para kay Leonardo Mercado, ay ‘di matutumbasan ng materyal na halaga. Hinalimbawa niya ang kawikaan at ang sitwasyon ng pagsagip ng isang buhay: “*Ang utang na loob ay hindi mababayaran ng salapi*’... ordinary debts where stipulations are made, utang na loob makes no condition. If X saves Y’s life from drowning, Y has an everlasting ‘debt of volition’ to X. X does not give any terms. But out of his own will (*kusang loob*) Y tries to show his goodness to X whenever he can and at his own discretion.”⁹ Ang pagtanaw ng utang na loob, samakatuwid, ay sariling kakayahang magbalik ng kagandahang loob bilang kabayaran. Sa kabila nito, mababakas, maging sa karanasan at kultura ng marami, na ang elemento ng obligasyon ay ‘di maaaring iwasan. At dahil dito, patuloy niya, “*loob* becomes an **interior law** which tells Y to behave generously and amiably to X even **for a lifetime**.”¹⁰

Maging sa kasaysayan, ang obligasyon ay makikita din bilang manipestasyon ng utang na loob. Ipinaliwanag ni Vicente Rafael na ang utang na loob ay naging kasangkapan ng pagpapalaganap ng Kristiyanismo noong mga unang daan-taon ng pananakop. Wika niya: “Caught up in what seemed like an unending stream of undecipherable words put forth **in terms of reciprocal obligations**, the natives ‘converted’, that is, availed themselves of the **sacraments as a way of entering into a debt transaction** with the Spaniards and their God.”¹¹ Ang pananaw na ito ay masasaksikhan din sa *Pasyon and Revolution* ni Reynaldo Ileto ngunit bilang kasangkapan ng paghihimagsik. Isinalarawan niya ang malalim na ugnayang nagbibigkis sa pagitan nina Felipe Salvador at ng kapatiran laban sa hukbong Amerikano noong panahon ng pananakop: “The presence of the word loob points to something other than simple economic relationship between lender and debtor, giver and receiver. In Salvador’s idiom, the gift is a mode of strengthening the bonds about the loob of **men**. Begging and the acceptance of food, shelter and protective care create, not a subordinate-superordinate

⁷ Kaut, “Utang Na Loob,” 258. Emphasis added.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Leonardo N. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban: Divine Word Publications, 1976), 65.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

¹¹ Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 127. Emphasis added.

relationship, but a horizontal one akin to love.”¹² Para kay Virgilio Enriquez, ang malalim na ugnayang ito ay nag-uugat sa katutubong kamalayan ng mga Pilipino na ang “kapwa” ay ang mismong pagkakakilanlan bilang “ako.” Paliwanag niya, “kapwa is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others ... The ako (ego) and the iba-sa-akin (others) are one and the same in kapwa psychology.”¹³

Bagama’t ang paggamit sa salitang “utang na loob” ng mga ekspertong nabanggit ay nagluluklok sa mas mataas na antas ng ugnayan sa pagitan ng indibidwal at kapwa, bakas ang (tuwiran man o hindi) pagtatangi sa “obligasyon” kung saan ang isang indibidwal ay may katungkulang maibalik ang natanggap lalo pa at kung ito ay mayroong masidhing halaga, mapa-paniniwala sa Kristiyanismo man o laban sa mga pagpapalaganap nito. Ang malinaw sa mga paglalarawang ito ay ang masidhing tungkulin upang magkaroon ng tugunan (reciprocity) sa pagitan ng nagkaloob at pinagkalooban. Bagama’t nilinaw ni Kaut (at iba pang mga iskolar tulad nila Mercado,¹⁴ Jocano,¹⁵ Ileta,¹⁶ at Miranda¹⁷) na ang utang na loob ay isang uri ng “debt of volition (that) cannot be paid by money,”¹⁸ ‘di maikakaila na ang transaksyon ay itinatakd pa rin ng obligasyon.

Obligasyon bilang kalabisan

Isa sa mga negatibong epekto ng pamumutawi ng obligasyon sa utang na loob ay ang pagkasira ng orihinal nitong kahulugan. Sa paliwanag ni Kaut:

Utang na loob is built on a set of firm social expectations ... **failure on the part of the person of whom particular behavior is expected can generate ill, humiliation, shame, and most importantly, desire for retaliation** on the part of the one expecting ... **breakdown at any point threatens more than immediate relationship between**

¹² Reynaldo Ileta, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 287. Emphasis added.

¹³ Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1992), 52-54.

¹⁴ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 48-49, 65, 100, 191.

¹⁵ F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino Value System: A Cultural Definition* (Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1997), 83.

¹⁶ Ileta, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 287. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ Miranda, *Buting Pinoy: Probe Essays on Value as Filipino*, 185.

¹⁸ Kaut, “Utang Na Loob,” 260.

two individuals; it threatens the functioning of a whole network of relationships.¹⁹

Ang utang na loob ay maaaring magbunga ng kalabisan, katiwalian, o kawalan ng hustisya. Sa halip na tumulong at magbigay dahil sa kagandahang loob, ang iba ay “nagmamalasakit” upang sa pagdating ng panahon ay maaari din siyang “mag-obliga” ng tulong mula sa kapwa. Ayon kay Jaime Bulatao, ang senaryong ito ay nag-uugat sa nawawalang puwang na dapat sana ay nagdurugtong sa pagpapahalaga (*values*) at aktuwal na karanasan na nagreresulta ng “split-level” na kaisipan at pagkilos.²⁰ Sa kahalintulad na puna, binanggit ni Felipe Landa Jocano na maaaring iba ang tono ng utang na loob sa harap ng pamilya (kinship) at iba rin naman sa harap ng publiko.²¹ Sa kanyang konklusyon, winika niya na “**utang-na-loob which originally means ‘obligation’** is construed to be ‘corruption’.”²² Ganito rin ang pananaw ni Vitaliano Gorospe na tumukoy sa utang na loob bilang ugat ng suliranin sa maraming aspeto sa pamayanang Pilipino:

In the Philippines utang na loob has in the past largely worked against the individual. Within the family, it has come to mean that children are expected to provide for their parents in their old age since they owe not only their life but also their entire education to their parents. The worst thing that can be said of the child who does not pay this debt of gratitude is that he is an “ingrate” (walang utang na loob) or that he is without shame (walang hiya)... Utang na loob permeates and influences all facets of the Filipino way of life—business, education, politics, morality and religion—and has been blamed for almost all the evils of Philippine society such as the “lagay” system (bribery and extortion), graft and corruption in politics and in the government, smuggling, and so forth ... utang na loob is to blame.²³

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 269. Emphasis added.

²⁰ Jaime Bulatao, *Split-Level Christianity* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1966), 2.

²¹ F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino Social Organization: Traditional Kinship and Family Organization* (Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1998), 63.

²² F. Landa Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation: Punlad Research Paper no. 1* (Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1992), 8. Emphasis added.

²³ Vitaliano Gorospe, “Christian Renewal of Filipino Values,” in *Philippine Studies* 14:2 (1966), 219.

Marami na rin ang mga nanawagan upang maibalik ang positibong katangian ng utang na loob. Kabilang na si Leonardo de Castro na nagsabi: “ang pagbabayad ng utang na loob ay hindi isang tapos na hakbang ... katulad ng pagbabayad sa utang sa bangko na tumatapos sa anumang obligasyon ... Ito ay nagsisilbing hudyat lamang ng patuloy na ugnayan na kinapapalooban ng pagpapalitan ng mga kabutihang loob.”²⁴ Sa bersyon ni Miranda, “*utang na loob* therefore is no degradation or humiliation by *kagandahang-loob*; in fact, it is a dignification since one is given the occasion and possibility of responding in kind.”²⁵ Sa kabila nito, bagama’t malinaw ang layuning maibalik ang *kagandahang loob* bilang sangkap, mapapansin pa rin ang pamumutawi ng elemento ng obligasyon (materyal man o hindi) bilang isang integral na katangian ng utang na loob. Ang katanungan sa puntong ito ay: *posible pa kaya ang kalayaan sa karanasang utang na loob sa ilalim ng obligasyon?*

II. Ang Popular na Paniniwala at mga Kalabisan Nito

Ang utang na loob ayon kay Hornedo ay higit na mauunawaan sa aspeto ng popular na paniniwala.²⁶ Sa halos lahat ng bahagi ng bansa, mayaman ang mga Pilipino pagdating sa ritwal na nag-uugat sa pinagsamang katutubo at banyagang pag-uugali. Bagaman at makailang dekada na rin ang pagkilala ng Simbahang Katoliko sa pamamaraan ng pananampalatayang ito,²⁷ hindi pa rin ganap ang pagsang-ayon dito ng nakararami. Ayon kay Segundo Galilea, isang eksperto sa popular na paniniwala:

Popular religiosity is the religious expression of our great majorities whose faith has not been validated enough. Their evangelization has been shallow, either for lack of opportunity, or because they believe that the level of their Christian life is good enough and they are no longer interested in evangelization ... (It) has a particular affinity with the poor because it is only in this level that *people’s religiosity is consistent with their culture* ... Therefore, popular religiosity is found at its best

²⁴ Leonardo de Castro, *Ang Utang na Loob bilang Konsepto ng Etika* (Quezon City: College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines, 1995), 19-20; 211.

²⁵ Miranda, *Buting Pinoy: Probe Essays on Value as Filipino*, 185.

²⁶ Florentino Hornedo, “Notes on Filipino Religious Symbolic Action,” in *The Favor of the Gods* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2001), 153-160.

²⁷ Paul VI, “*Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*,” in *The Holy See* (4 December 1963) <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html>. § 7-13.

among simple people ... becomes paradigm in the poor classes.²⁸

Tinutukoy na karamihan sa mga tagasunod ng popular na paniniwala ay nabibilang sa mga mananampalataya na matatagpuan sa laylayan ng lipunan na karaniwan ay hikahos at mayroong di-mataas na antas ng edukasyon. Sa kawalan ng alternatibo, sila ay mayroong mataas na pagtitiwala sa mga debosyon na masasaksihan sa mga popular na ritwal at ekspresyon ng pananampalataya. Sa karanasanag ito, sila ay “very affective and sentimental... intuitive, very concrete, and not ruled by rational logic.”²⁹ Ang Simbahang Katoliko ay makailang ulit na sa pagpapaala-ala sa mga panganib dulot ng labis na pagtangkilik nito.³⁰ Ayon kay Bernhard Raas, may ilang panganib na dala ang popular na paniniwala: una, “it can become more important than the liturgy;” pangalawa, it “can be one-sided and as such they can cause people to develop false priorities and values;” pangatlo, “the danger of too much subjectivism, externalism, and sentimentalism may disregard the creedal truths and liturgical practices of the Catholic Church;” pang-apat, “popular devotions can give wrong feeling of security in the presence of the living God for it may bring false hopes and at the same time degrades the perfection and supremacy of God in a level of commerce; as if faith is a matter of depositing prayers and withdrawing granted wishes;” pang-lima, it may “easily degenerate into magical or superstitious practices or even idolatry;” at panghuli, “popular rituals can be abused for other purposes like moralizing or didactic intentions.”³¹ Sa pag-aaral na isinagawa ni Wilfredis Jacob sa mga deboto ng Poong Itim na Nazareno ng Quiapo, kanyang napag-alaman na minsan ang mga “... devotion and the devotional prayers, specifically the novena prayer, do not provide any specific attention to the role of Christ's resurrection and glorification... there are also devotees who lead questionable moral lives, who take devotion as a means of material and temporal assistance.”³² Sa madaling sabi, ang popular na paniniwala ay nananatiling kabalintunaan sa modernong panahon ng Kristiyanismo sa bansa.

²⁸ Segundo Galilea, *The Challenge of Popular Religiosity* (Quezon City: Clarentians Publications, 1988), 16.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 17–18. Emphasis added.

³⁰ Tumutukoy na tanging ang Banal na Liturhiya lamang ang opisyal na panalangin samantalang ang “popular piety is properly optional.” Paul VI, “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*,” § 11.

³¹ Bernhard Raas, *Popular Devotions: Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicles of Spiritual Growth* (Manila: Divine World Publications, 1992), 21–22.

³² Wilfredis B. Jacob, “Religious Experience in the Quiapo Black Nazarene Devotion,” in *Filipino Religious Psychology*, ed. by Leonardo N. Mercado (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1977), 88–89.

III. Ang Popular na Paniniwala at “Utang na Loob” ayon kay Hornedo

Sa akdang “Philosophy in Culture and Culture in Philosophy,” tinukoy ni Hornedo na ang pangunahing hamon ng pilosopiyang Filipino ay ang pagsusuri sa kulturang lokal at mga detalyeng kaakibat ng mabilis na pagbabagong-anyo ng kapaligiran ng tao.³³ Isang tugon sa hamong ito ay ang kanyang akda na *The Favor of the Gods* (2001) na sumusuri sa mga ritwal na nakapaloob sa mga popular na paniniwala sa kanayunan at maging sa kalungsuran sa bansa. Ayon sa kanya, isa sa masidhing dahilan ng mga ritwal sa popular na paniniwala—mapa-kapistahan man o simpleng seremonya bago mangisda, magtanim, o mag-ani sa kabukiran—ay ang pagtanaw ng utang na loob sa nakatataas na kapangyarihan. Sinabi niya: “In Philippine fiestas, patrons and sponsors of the festivities have varied motives in relation to gift-giving. Some give generously with the hope of the return blessings ... But there are others who give because of affective devotion or love for the sacred other. The giving is unconditional and has no ulterior motive than a reciprocal benevolence from the sacred other.”³⁴ Ang utang na loob sa puntong ito ay ang pag-aalay nang walang hininhitay na kapalit, bagkus isang uri ng pasasalamat sa nakakamtam na biyaya. Pinupunto ni Hornedo sa pangalawang uri na hindi tuwirang kinikilala ang materyal na aspeto ng biyaya, sa halip, ay ang kabutihang loob ng pagkakaloob ng biyaya. Sapagkat, para sa kanya, ang utang na loob ay isang “indebtedness” o pagkakautang na hindi materyal bagkus isang kabutihan loob na natanggap mula sa obheto ng pananampalataya.

The sense of indebtedness referred to does not imply obligation to pay a material debt. It is an *utang na loob*. The debt is not material but a good-will, a benevolence ... what is acknowledged as the primary good received is not the material token but the personal internal disposition of benevolence. The return gift is the moral donation of goodwill signified by a material token which, therefore, is not in principle expected to be identical of material value.³⁵

³³ Florentino Hornedo, “Philosophy in Culture, Culture in Philosophy” *Pagpapakatao and Other Essays in Contemporary Philosophy and Literature* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2002), 62–63.

³⁴ Florentino Hornedo, *In Favor of the Gods*, 155.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 154; Florentino Hornedo, *Culture and Community in the Philippine Fiesta and Other Celebrations* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2000), 45 (emphasis added); Florentino Hornedo, “Punas-Punas: The Filipino Idea of the Holy,” in *The Filipino Popular*

62 PANANAMPALATAYA AT UTANG NA LOOB

Bagaman at hindi ito bago sa mga pag-aaral ng mga ekspertong nabanggit sa unang bahagi, binibigyang-diin sa puntong ito na ang utang na loob sa kamalayang Pilipino ay higit pa sa isang transaksyon o obligasyong panlipunan, bagkus, ay isang uri ng malayang pagpapahayag ng pananampalataya. Ang “kalayaan” na tinutukoy dito ay tatalakayin sa susunod na bahagi.

Isang lehitimong paliwanag sa konsepto ng “obligasyon” ay ang lokus ng usapin ng utang na loob. Ang mga depinisyon nabanggit sa unang bahagi ay makikita sa lente ng historikal, sikolohikal, sosyolohikal, politikal, at antropolohikal na pananaw. Subalit, para kay Hornedo ang utang na loob sa Pilipinong karanasan, ay maaari din, at lalong higit, na nauunawan ng isang indibidwal sa kanyang personal na pakikipag-ugnayang sa Diyos na kung saan, para sa popular na paniniwala, ay sumasakop din sa kapwa.

With regards to man’s relation with God, there is an ambivalence discernible in the vertical-horizontal relationship. This deity is seen both as lord and peer/friend/ brother. In Christianity, this is expressed in the dual nature of Christ as God-man. He is lord and brother. In other religions, this appears in similar forms of incarnation.³⁶

Dahil dito, ang “sacred other” ay hindi lamang ang Diyos bagkus tumutukoy din sa kapwa ng isang indibidwal. Ito ang konteksto ng “good will” o kagandahang loob na kinapapalooban ng utang na loob ayon kay Hornedo. Hindi ito masusukat sa halaga ng nakamtam o naipahiram, bagkus ang pagtanaw ng utang na loob ay sumasalamin sa pakikitungo ng indibidwal sa Diyos at kapwa. Ito ang nagtatangi sa panananaw ni Hornedo sa hanay ng mga naunang pagsusuri na kumikilala sa utang na loob bilang “social process” o obligasyong dapat tupdin kung nais ng indibidwal na maging katanggap-tanggap sa mata ng lipunan. Ang balangkas na ito ni Hornedo ay nagmumula sa Pilipinong kaisipan na “pangkabuan.” Dito walang paghahati na umiirial sa pagitan ng obheto at suhetong kalagayan tulad ng nakagawian sa Kanluraning ontolohiya. Ito ang tinukoy ng konsepto ng “sakop” ni Mercado, “kapwa” ni Enriquez, ang ‘di maiiwasang pagtugon

Devotions: The Interior Dialogue Between Traditional Religion and Christianity, ed., Leonardo N. Mercado (Manila: Logos Publications, Inc., 2000), 50–51.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 154. Emphasis added.

ng “loob” sa kapwa nina Miranda³⁷ at Alejo,³⁸ maging ang “kagandahang loob” ni De Castro³⁹ at De Mesa.⁴⁰

Kung sususugin ang balangkas na ito, mauunawaan na ang mga kalabisan sa pagganap ng popular na paniniwala na madalas punahin ng mga eksperto ay isa lamang pagpapahayag ng marubdob na pagtugon ng utang na loob sa obheto ng kanilang pinanampalatayaan. Samakatuwid, ang pagpapahayag ng popular na paniniwala ay sukduhan sa karanasang utang na loob. Ito ay konkretong naipamamalas sa paggunita ng mga maraming kapistahan sa bansa katulad ng sa Itim na Nazareno ng Quiapo sa Maynila, Santo Niño sa Cebu, Birhen ng Peñafancia sa Naga, Ina ng Piat ng Tuguegarao, at iba pa; na kung saan ang paghawak at pagpunas ng tuwalita sa karosa o sa imaheng-ukit ay nangangahulugang ganap na pagkakahawak kay Hesus o sa Birheng Maria.⁴¹

Sa mga okasyong ito, makikita din ang pagbabayanihan ng mga tao na hindi magkakakilala o kabilang sa isang antas ng lipunan, bagkus isang bukluran na may iisang mithiin. Para kanino ang kagandahang asal na ipinakikita ay hindi tuwirang nakatuon sa kapwa ngunit sa kagandahang loob sa kanila’y ipinagkaloob ng kanilang pinaniniwalaan (personal na Diyos). At dahil dito, walang lohikal na katuwiran ang makakaunawa hangga’t hindi nararanasan ang dinamikong galaw ng pananampalataya ayon kay Hornedo.

Matatandaan na ang utang na loob bilang isang “contractual reciprocal obligation” (Kaut, Jocano, at Gorospe) ay maaaring magpuwang ng kalabisan, kawalan ng hustisya, at katiwalian. Ngunit ang balangkas na *pangkabuuhan* ni Hornedo ay hindi nagpapahintulot ng anumang bahid ng pag-abuso sapagkat ang ugnayang pantao (horizontal) ay walang pinagkaiba sa ugnayang pang-Diyos (vertical). Walang sinuman ang magnanais na gawan ng kasamaan ang isang pinipintuho lalo pa’t ito ay ang obheto ng pananampalataya. Ito ang dahilan na sa kabila ng sakitan o kamatayan man sa pagganap ng ritwal, walang demandahan o asultong naitatala na tuwirang may kinalaman sa pagdedebosyon. Ito ay sapagkat ang pakikitungo sa Diyos

³⁷ Miranda, *Buting Pinoy: Probe Essays on Value as Filipino*, 84.

³⁸ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!*, 111.

³⁹ De Castro, *Ang Utang na Loob bilang Konsepto ng Etika*, 211.

⁴⁰ De Mesa, *In Solidarity with Culture*, 35.

⁴¹ Hornedo, “Punas-punas: The Idea of the Holy,” 50. Isinalarawan ni Hornedo ang mga dotobong Ivatan sa isla ng Batanes tuwing Mahal na Araw pagkatapos ng prusisyon: “start cutting with a nail clipper the hair of the Nazareno ... they can (even) cut with scissors parts of the robe of the statues.” Ito, para sa kanya, ay hindi isang uri ng kalapastanganan; bagkus, itoy’s mahalagang bahagi ng kanilang paniniwala. Patuloy pa niya, “the basic principle is that the holy is transmissible and things can become sacred by association, by touch. And punas-punas, I think, is like the handkerchief with which you touch something holy becomes holy too.” *Ibid.*, 51.

ay pakikitungo din sa kapwa. Ito ang utang na loob na para kay Hornedo ay isang:

... social gift-giving rooted in the dual aspect of the divine as lord and friend. While to God's lordship, any offering is to be regarded as tribute-giving of vassal to lord, to his **humanized reality, gift-giving as from friend to friend is the paradigm.**⁴²

Ang kawalang ng dikotomiya sa pagitan ng Diyos at kapwa ay nakahayag sa relasyong utang na loob. Dito ang ugnayan ay walang inaasahang kapalit o obligasyong magbigay. Sa halip, tanging kagandahang loob at kabutihan lamang na masasaksihan sa kanilang pagganap ng popular na paniniwala.

Ang kabalintunaan sa popular na paniniwala at ang kalayaan sa utang na loob

Ang kawalan ng malinaw at tiyak na dikotomiya sa pagitan ng Diyos at kapwa dulot ng "pananaw na pangkabuuan" ay nagreresulta sa masalimuot na pagtingin mula sa lohikang pangangatwiran. Ngunit ang kabalintunaan nito ay isang "paradox" na maituturing: *di-maunawaan ngunit makabuluhan*. Sa popular na paniniwala, ang indibidwal na mananampalataya ay nag-aalay ng higit pa sa kanyang kinikita, oras, at minsan, ay ang kahandaang ibuwis ang kanyang buhay. Ito ay hatid ng masidhing pagtanaw ng utang na loob.

Para kay Hornedo, ang tunay na batayan ng pagiging relihiyoso ay ang pagkilala sa utang na loob, at gayundin naman, ang tunay mananampalataya ay ang pagtanaw ng utang na loob. Ang pagpapasalamat sa utang na ito ay nararanasang lubos sa popular na paniniwala kung saan walang hinihintay na kapalit. Hindi ito madaling maintindihan sa lohikal na pag-iisip sapagkat ang kawalan ng katuwiran ay ang siyang ang nagbibigay kahulugan. Ito'y, para sa mananampalataya, ang kapasyahang 'di maaabot ng pag-iisip. Maging ang salitang "pananampalataya," na may salitang-ugat na "sampalataya," ay maaaring tingnan sa kilos ng "pagtaya," Pagtaya na walang kasiguraduhang mapapantayan at 'di maaaring tumbasan ng

⁴² Hornedo, "Punas-Punas: The Filipino Idea of the Holy," 155. Emphasis added.

anumang kabayaran ang “utang” na ipinagkaloob mula sa pananampalataya.⁴³

Hindi ito nangangahulugan ng pagka-alipin o pagpapasailalim sa isang sistemang relihiyon, bagkus isang kalayaan mula sa dikta ng lipunang nakagawian nito. Halimbawa na nga dito ay ang hindi pagsunod sa mga atas ng simbahan upang magpuri sa kaparaanang siya lamang ang nakakaunawa. Ito hindi kaaya-aya sa marami ngunit wagas na nagpagpapahayag nito. Kung bakit marami ang nakayapak at nagsusuot ng saya kagaya ng sa imahe o pagsasayaw sa kainitan ng araw ay paraan ng pagpapahayag ng utang na loob bilang walang hanggang pasasalamat sa nakamit na kagalingan ng kalusugan, pagsumpong sa nawawalang mahal sa buhay, ‘di inaasahang biyaya, at iba pa. Ang indibidwal sa pagkakataong ito ay ‘di maituturing na panatiko sapagkat siya ay may sariling pagpapasya at naghahayag sa paraang nais niya. Kalayaang walang kinatatakutan na paghuhusga ng lipunan at mga institusyon nito. Kung kaya’t para kay Hornedo, ang utang na loob ay isang pagpapahayag ng kalayaan at hindi obligasyon:

The Filipino notion of *utang na loob* cannot be regarded as is generally done, as “debt inside.” It is a debt of goodwill, that is, what is owed is goodwill and it invites reciprocation with goodwill. This reciprocation is to an appeal rather than to demand. It is an appeal to freedom rather than obligation.⁴⁴

Kung ang utang na loob ay mananatili sa aspeto ng obligasyon (Kaut), ito ay isa lamang “never-ending involving reciprocal gift giving and a constantly alternating state of indebtedness.”⁴⁵ Dito, walang kalayaan na mararanasan bagkus ay isang kumunoy ng pagpapalitan ng pabor na maaaring maging pabigat sa ugnayan at kadalasan ay ugat ng korupsiyon. Ipinaliwanag ni Hornedo na sa konteksto ng popular na paniniwala, ang

⁴³ Ang utang na loob bilang kagandahang loob sa lente ng pananampalataya ay makikita rin sa paliwanag ni Jose De Mesa. Ayon sa kanya, ang utang na loob ay isang uri ng pagtugon ng tao sa pagkaloob ng Diyos ng kaligtasan sa sanlibutan: “Faith as utang na loob is an appropriate response to God’s eminent kagandahang-loob ... to use kagandahang-loob to describe God’s salvific activity for our sake is to emphasize that God in relating with us is always kagandahang-loob for us. He is wholly intent on our salvation, wholeness and wellbeing.” De Mesa, *In Solidarity with Culture*, 38; 50. Bagama’t may pagkakahalintulad sa konklusyon ni Hornedo, magkaiba ang dalawa sa pamamaraan ng pagtanto. Ang kay De Mesa ay teolohiya samantalang ang kay Hornedo ay sa pamamagitan ng etnolohiya at pilosopiya ng relihiyon. Bukod dito, naisalarawan ni Hornedo ang kawalan ng katuwiran sa ilang mga popular na ritwal samantalang ang kay De Mesa ay nakatuon sa doktrina at katuruan ng Katolisismo na may pag-aalinlangan sa pamamaraan ng pagsampalataya sa popular na paniniwala.

⁴⁴ Hornedo, “Punas-Punas: The Filipino Idea of the Holy,” 155.

⁴⁵ Kaut, “Utang Na Loob,” 260.

utang na loob na nakabatay sa obligasyon ay huwad na pagtangi sa Diyos at kapwa. Ito ay nagaganap kung ang pagtingin sa “sacred other” ng indibidwal ay kapantay lamang ng antas ng isang pisikal na bagay. Sinabi niya:

There is ever present threat of magic in which acts of gift giving on this plane become regarded as **manipulation of the sacred other** with the hope that **every act of gift-offering obliges the Other to act automatically** magically. It follows the formula “I do this to obtain this, and things happen as I wish them to.” This springs from an I-It view of religious relationship, whereas it should remain I-Thou since the **Other is not object but Subject**. It is from this criterion that authentic religion is judged.⁴⁶

Sa pangkaraniwan, nananalangin ng marubdob ang isang tao, dahilan upang siya ay magkaroon ng “karapatan” at mag-obliga sa Diyos ng biyaya. Sa sitwasyong ito, ang obheto ng kanyang dalangin ay katulad ng isang refrigerator na bumubukal ng pagkain o kaya naman ay ang “bangko” na tinutukoy ni Paulo Freire kung saan dineposito/binabawi ang kaalaman.⁴⁷ Ito ang dahilan kung bakit minsan ang isang deboto (gayun din ang indibidwal sa pakikitungo sa kapwa) ay naghihinakit kapag hindi nakamit ang hinihiling. Ito ay sa kadahilanang ang utang na loob ay nasa pamantayan lamang ng “obligasyon.” Hinalimbawa ni Hornedo ang pagbibigayan ng handog o regalo:

The folk understanding of duty in the face of blessings received is gift giving ... involves an unspoken custom which says that the receiver of a gift must, in appropriate time, be a gift-giver. The cultural perspective, however, does not allow gifts to be regarded as obligating reciprocation. It is seen as a free, and therefore, non-obligatory action. But in the cultural context, everyone is expected to perform such free act as gesture of good will. And while it is true that custom can get perverted as when spontaneity in gift-giving degenerates into a tradition of obligatory reciprocation every time one receives a gift, this degeneration is a decadence of the custom and is below the cultural ideal.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Hornedo, *The Favor of the Gods*, 155. Emphasis added.

⁴⁷ Paulo Freire, “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education,” in *Ways of Reading*, ed. by, D. Bartholomae and A. Petrosky (Boston: Bedford-St. Martin’s, 2008), 247.

⁴⁸ Hornedo, *The Favor of the Gods*, 154–155.

Tuloy, marami ang umiiwas na mapagkakalooban ng tulong mula sa kapwa upang pagdating na panahon ay hindi malagay sa 'di kaaya-ayang sitwasyon hatid ng obligasyon. Subalit, ito ang sumisira sa kultura ng utang na loob na dapat sana ay taimtim ang layuning magkakaloob at mapagkalooban. Ang pagkakaloob ay malaya sa obligasyong sapilitang nagpapawalang saysay sa kabutihang loob na nakapaloob dito. Samakatuwid, ang “obligasyon” ay taliwas sa tunay na halaga ng “utang na loob.” Sa babala ni Hornedo, “The line of distinction is thin but real,” sapagkat para sa kanya, “gift-giving is that free gift-giving that, by the fact of its gratuity, expects no return—an attitude that remains intact even when the same gift-giver in his turn graciously receives a gift from the one to whom he had previously given a gift.”⁴⁹

IV. Konklusyon

Ang akdang ito ay isang pagpapayabong sa mga naunang pakahulugan ng “utang na loob.” Ayon, sa etnolohiya at pilosopiyang pag-aaral ni Hornedo, maaaring idagdag ang mga sumusunod na tuklas: una, ang utang na loob ay higit pa sa obligasyong panlipunan lalo na kung sisipatin sa popular na paniniwala. Sa kontekstong ito, ang kulturang ito ay bunga ng isang malayang pagpapasya na nagmumula sa *indibidwal* na kalooban. Pangalawa, mayroong paradoksikong katangian ang utang na loob. Para sa karamihan, ang pagtaya sa walang katiyakan ay malabong usapan, malayo sa katotohanan, at madalas ay “kahibangan” lamang. Ngunit sa isang mananampalataya, ito ay malinaw at puno ng kabuluhan sapagkat tukoy niya na kailan man ay hindi niya maaaring tumbasan ang kabutihang ipinagkaloob sa kanya ng Diyos (maging ng kanyang kapwa). Ito ang dahilan ng sari't saring ritwal ng mga popular na paniniwala laganap sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa. Dito ay patuloy sila sa pagtupad ng panghabang-buhay na panata kapalit man nito ay diskriminasyon, pagkalugi, at kung minsan pa ay pagkasawi. Ikatlo, ang pagganap ng utang na loob sa konteksto ng popular na paniniwala ay may kakaibang katuparang taglay para sa mananampalataya. Mula sa kanila ay kadalasang maririnig ang katagang “walang hanggang pasasalamat.” Para kay Hornedo, ito ay sa dahilang, “‘gratitude’ (*grata*) indicates the pleasure at receiving benefice.”⁵⁰ Sa pagganap ng utang na loob, mayroong kasiyahan at katuparang nararanasan na siyang nagpapanatili ng mainit at marubdob na pananampalataya habang ginaganap ang mga popular na ritwal. Samakatuwid, ang utang na loob sa konteksto ng popular

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Hornedo, *The Favor of the Gods*, 156.

na paniniwala ay nararanasan hindi sa lebel ng isang obligasyon lamang, bagkus ay sa pinakamataas na antas ng kabutihang loob nagmumula sa ng kanyang pinananampalatayanan.

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Ang Pilosopiya ng Laman ni Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Christian Joseph C. Jocson and Marvin Einstein S. Mejaro

Abstract: Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology opens up the interpretation that human beings are social and intersubjective by nature. First, his concept of the flesh presents a solution against the solipsistic tendency of Cartesian philosophy. The perception of one's own being implies a perception of the shared flesh. Even the perception of the pain of another person elicits a feeling of pain that is not totally alien to one's own flesh. Second, the concept of perception is a dialectic between proximity and distance, such that perception of the being of another person is not solely given through proximity, but perception is primarily characterized by distance. To perceive is to perceive at a distance, never imposing one's structure of understanding or categories to the object of perception, but letting the thing be itself. Furthermore, this perceptual distance can also be interpreted as an ethical distance that allows the Other to be free from the confines of one's own perception.

Keywords: Merleau-Ponty, ethical distance, flesh, perception

Introduksyon

Isa sa pinakamahalagang ideya na binahagi sa atin ng penomenolohiya ni Maurice Merleau-Ponty ay ang pagkakaintindi na ang kalayaan ay hindi nagpapahayag ng pagkasarili kung hindi isa itong pagtuklas ng ating pagiging umiiral-na-nilalang-sa-mundo kasama ang ibang katawang umiiral-na-mga-nilalang-sa-mundo.

Katunog sa konsepto ng kalayaan na ipinakita ni G.W.F. Hegel sa kaniyang *Phenomenology of the Spirit*: nagiging malaya ang tao na nanahanan sa mundo. Ngunit, upang itala ang nasabi ni Hegel, kapag sinabing 'pagtahan sa mundo,' hindi nito kubling pinapahayag na lumilikha ang isang tao ng mundo na wangis sa kaniya; o bilang kaniyang pagmamay-ari. Ngunit, ang 'pagtahan sa mundo' ay pagiging-kaisa at malayang pagkikipagugnayan sa

iba pang mga tao at ng pananahan sa mundo kasama ang ibang mga tao. Sa pagsunod sa gayong ideya, ipinapamalas ni Merleau-Ponty na ang kalayaan ay hindi dapat mahigpit na pinipigilan ng presensiya ng ibang mga pag-iral. Hidwa sa posisyong antagonistiko ni Jean Paul Sartre na 'impiyerno ang ibang tao.' Tinatalakay ni Merleau-Ponty ang isang ideya ng kalayaan na kadaloy sa ideya ni Hegel ng pagiging-bukas na malaya at nagpapaanyaya sa presensiya ng ibang-mga-umiiral-na-nilalang.

Laban sa Solipsismo

We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit behavior in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity.¹ (Dito natutuklasan natin ang pagiging nilalang sa dalawang aspekto, na kung saan ang ibang tao ay hindi nananatiling sa labas ng aking sarili at sa katulad din na paraan, ang aking sarili ay hindi nananatili sa labas ng ibang tao, sapagkat, ang bawat isa sa amin, ay nakikibahagi sa bawat isa sa isang proyekto ng relasyon ng paglalaman ng bawat isa.)

Isa sa mga panimulang punto ni Merleau-Ponty sa kaniyang pilosopiya interkorporeal na katawan ay ang pilosopiya ni Rene Descartes. Proyekto ni Merleau-Ponty ay maibaling ang pag-iisip na ang tao ay naninirahan lang sa sarili niyang pag-iisip. Dagdag pa niya, ang ibang tao na naninirahan sa mundo, ay hindi lang isang likha ng ating imahinasyon, sapagkat naninirahan sila sa mundo kasama natin. May persepsyon ako hindi lamang ng mga ideya o sariling ilusyon ngunit ang persepsyon mismo ng mga bagay na ito ng daigdig. Batid ko na ang siyang nararanas ay ang buhay-na-mundo na puno rin ng mga buhay na pagdanas ng maraming mga buhay na laman na nakapaligid sa akin.

Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system. (Ang ating katawan ay nasa mundo katulad ng puso sa isang nilalang. Ito ang nagpapanatili na laging buhay ang mga bagay na maaaring masilayan.²

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London; New York: Routledge, 1958), 413. Henceforth cited as *PP*.

² *Ibid.*, 235.

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“Ano ang laman ng iyong laman? Ang laman lang ba ng iyong laman ay iyong sariling laman?” Isa sa mga sinusuri ni Merleau-Ponty sa kaniyang pilosopiya ay ang kinagawiang pagtingin sa konsepto ng sarili na tungkol lamang sa sarili at naiisang-tabi ang anomang tungkol sa ibang mga nilalalang. Katulad din ng ating pananaw tungkol sa iba, hinihiwalay natin ang anomang may kinalaman sa sarili. Ang layon ni Merleau-Ponty sa kaniyang ideya ng mapag-ugnay na paglalaman ay maipakita ang sarili at ang iba ay hindi mga tunay na magkasalungat, sapagkat ang sarili at ang iba ay dapat maging bukas sa bawat isa upang maging tunay na kamalayan ng sarili at iba.

Things are an annex or prolongation of Itself; they are encrusted into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made up of the same stuff as the body.³ (Ang mga bagay ay mga nagpapalago at nagpapalayo ng maaring matanaw ng kaniyang sarili, sila ay nakapaloob sa kaniyang laman. Ang mga bagay na ito ay bahagi ng kabuoang kahulugan niya; isang katangian ng mundo ay binubuo ito ng katulad sa ating mga katawan).

Para kay Merleau-Ponty ang matikas na pagsasabi na ang aking katawan ay sa akin lang ay isang maling pananaw. Ang tunay na laman ay *nilalaman* ng ibang laman at *naglalaman* ng ibang laman. Sa ibang salita, ang tinatagurian natin na laman ay hindi pagmamay-ari ng sarili o ng iba. Pinapahayag ng ideya ng laman na ang pagiging ng isang nilalang ay lagpas sa kaniyang tinatanaw na sarili. “A proper conception of self and other must not be grounded on the idea of exclusion but instead it must resound inclusion.” Mas mabuti na ang ang sariling kamalayan ay hindi lamang simpleng kamalayan na nasa kontemplasyon ng sarili nitong pusod.⁴

Solitude and communication cannot be the two horns of a dilemma, but two ‘moments’ of one phenomenon, since in fact other people do exist for me.⁵ (Ang pag-iisa at pakikipagtalastasan ay hindi mga magkasalungat na mga bagay, ngunit ang dalawang ito ay bahagi ng isang

³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. by James M. Edie (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 163. Henceforth cited as *PrP*.

⁴ Peter Singer, *Hegel: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 75.

⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *PP*, 418.

pangyayari, dahil ang ibang tao ay tunay na nadarama ko.)

Para kay Merleau-Ponty, kung ang pang-unawa ko sa isang penomenolohikal na laman ay nasa hangganan lamang ng aking sarili, kung sa gayon, hindi ito ang angkop na laman sa isang penomenolohikal na bagay. “Ang laman na nalalaman lang ang sariling laman ay wala talagang nalalaman.” Ang kaalamang paglalaman ay laging nagpapahayag ng pag-uugnay, laging tumatawag sa iba.

Ang naging dahilan ng trahedyang ni Narcissus ay hindi dahil masyado niyang minahal ang kaniyang sarili, ngunit dahil inipit niya ang kaniyang sarili ay sarili lang niyang larawan. Kapag nararanasan ng taong harapin sa salamin ang kaniyang sariling repleksyon, dapat niyang maabot ang pananaw na mayroong mundo na kasama sa kaniyang repleksyon. Mahalaga rin na bigyan ng pansin na ang mundo na kasamang nasisilayan sa sariling repleksyon ay nagpapahiwatig na ang tinatawag na sarili ay bahagi ng mundo at hindi ang mundong bahagi lang ng sariling repleksyon. Ang tunay na nilalang na naglalaman ay nakikita ang larawan na lumalagpas at umaapaw sa sarili niya—waring unang patikim lang ng tunay na kamalayan ng paglalaman.⁶

My flesh is of a piece with that of both things and other persons: “That is why we say that in perception the thing is given to us ‘in person,’ or ‘in the flesh.’”⁷ (Ang aking laman ay bahagi ng mga bagay ng ibang mga tao. Ito ang dahilan kung bakit ang pagdama ng isang bagay ay nararanasan natin sa katauhan niya mismo o sa laman mismo.)

Ang pagiging isang nilalang na naglalaman ay maaring maabot lang sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa mundo kasama ang ibang mga nilalang na naglalaman. Katulad ng sinabi ni Fichte, nagiging tao lang ang isang tao kapag kasama niya ang iba pang mga tao.⁸ Sinundan ito ni Merleau-Ponty at pinahayag naman niya, na sa pamamagitan ng paglayo sa sarili, mas

⁶ Inasmuch as he (Narcissus) had life, he always had the ‘whole world’ in his flesh. Frank J. Macke, “Seeing Oneself in the Mirror: Critical Reflections on the Visual Experience of the Reflected Self,” in *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 36:1 (2005), 37.

⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *PP*, 320; cf. Merleau-Ponty, *PrP*, 163. Quoted in Andrew Cutrofello, *Continental Philosophy* (New York; London: Routledge, 2005), 67.

⁸ J. G. Fichte. *Foundations of Natural Right*, ed. by F. Neuhouser, trans. by M. Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37 as cited in Robert Stern, “Is Hegel’s Master-Slave Dialectic a Refutation of Solipsism?” in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 20:2 (2012), 355.

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magkakaroon siya ng kamalayan ng kaniyang sarili. Ngunit, ang pagkakataon na makalayo tayo sa ating sarili ay hindi dahil sa sarili nating kakayahan. Sa pamamagitan ng napagpapalayang-presensiya ng ibang tao nagiging posible ang kamalayan ng ating sarili.

As such, consciousness starts from a position where it does not fully understand itself, consciousness is, initially, alienated from itself. The phenomenological development of consciousness discloses the logical journey consciousness must take to overcome its self-alienation.⁹ (Ang kamalayan ay nag-uumpisa mula sa bahagi na hindi niya tunay na naiintindihan ang kaniyang sarili; kamalayan na napalayo sa kaniyang sarili. Ang penomenolohikal na kaunlaran ay isang paglalakbay ng kamalayan mula sa kaniyang pagkaligaw.)

Sa pag-iisip na ang tinatagurian ko na aking laman ay hindi naabutan ko ng buong-buo na aking nalalaman, nagkakaroon ako ng pagkakataon na makita ang aking sarili na hindi lang umiikot sa sarili kong laman. Sa ibang salita, sa pamamagitan ng hindi nagiging ganap ang pagpapakita ng aking sariling laman, nagiging posible ang muling pagkatuklas ang pagkilala sa aking sariling laman. Katulad ng pinapahayag ni Hegel, na ang katanagian ng espiritu na maligaw, malayo, at mawala ang sarili upang muling matagpuan ulit.¹⁰

Isang magandang halimbawa na maaaring ipakita rito ay ang kapag nanonood tayo ng isang pelikula at makita na nabaril ang protagonista, nasaksak, o nakaranas ng anomang uri ng karahasan. Mapapansin natin na parang nagkakaroon din tayo ng karanasan na nararanasan rin natin ang paghihirap na nangyayari doon sa tauhan sa pelikula. Na masasabi natin na kahit ang sakit na nararanasan ay hindi atin ngunit sa ating sariling laman nararanasan natin na hindi iba ang sakit ng ibang tao sa atin.

Adam Smith already recognized in the 1750s that people naturally respond to the others with gestures appropriate to the person suffering: "When we see a

⁹ Gavin Rae, "Hegel, Alienation, and the Phenomenological Development of Consciousness," in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 20:1 (2012), 24.

¹⁰ G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. by T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 80 as cited in Rae, "Hegel, Alienation, and the Phenomenological Development of Consciousness," 30.

stroke aimed and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm.”¹¹ (Nagawang matuklasan ni Adam Smith na noong 1750s na ang mga tao ay may likas na reaksyon sa pagdurusa ng ibang mga tao na matutunghayan sa mga galaw at mga senyales ng katawan. Kunyari naiisip na natin ang isang bagay na babagsak at makasakit sa binti o braso ng isang tao, napapansin natin na may likas tayo na reaksyong pakiramdaman at ilayo ang sarili nating binti o braso.)

Ang sakit o pagdurusa ng isang tao ay hindi lubos na iba sa akin, sapagkat sa pamamagitan ng aking katawan, nagiging posible na maintindihan at maranasan ko ang dinaranas ng ibang tao. Iba ang katawan ko sa katawan niya at iba rin ang pagtanggap namin sa sakit mula sa bawat isa. Ngunit dahil nilalang kami sa laman, nagagawa naming makipag-ugnayan sa bawat isa. Kasabay dito, ang pag-iintindi namin, na sa pamamagitan ng pag-uugnay namin sa bawat isa, sa pamamagitan ng aming laman, ay dumarating kami sa pagkakaiba at pag-uugnayan sa isa’t isa.

Etika ng Espasyo at Kalayaan

Isang mahalagang etikal na ideya na ipinapahayag ni Merleau-Ponty sa kaniyang pilosopiya ng paglalaman ang kahalagahan ng pagbibigay ng espasyo at panahon para sa sarili at sa iba. Itong pagbibigay espasyo at panahon ay mapapansin sa kaniyang paglalahad ng kabalintunaan sa pagitan ng immanence at transcendence sa pagkakamalay.

Thus there is a paradox of immanence and transcendence in perception. Immanence, because the perceived object cannot be foreign to him who perceives; transcendence, because it always contains something more than what is actually given.¹² (Mayroong kabalintunaan ng immanence at transcendence sa pagkakamalay. Immanence, dahil ang bagay na namamalayan natin ay hindi maaring maging ganap na ibang-iba sa kaniya na namamalayan ang mga bagay. Ang pagkakamalay din ay transcendence dahil lagi ito

¹¹ Taylor Carman, *Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 141.

¹² Merleau-Ponty, *PP*, 16.

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nagbabahagi ng lubos-lubos na nilalaman, lumalagpas kung ano ang namamalayan.)

Ang kamalayan para kay Merleau-Ponty ay naglalaro sa pagitan ng paglapit at paglayo. Ang namamalayan nating mga bagay ay hindi maaring maging malayong-malayo sa ating kamalayan, na darating na sa punto na walang pagkakataon na malaman at maabot natin. Ang mga bagay na namamalayan natin ay nakakasalubong natin na mukhang kilala, ngunit sa pagkakakita natin sa mga bagay ng ating kamalayan, nararanasan natin na may mga pagkakataon na nakakalaya ang mga bagay sa ating pagkakagapos sa kanila.

“Ang pag-aalam ay isang pamamaalam.” Ang pagkakamalayan ay laging naglalaro sa magkabilang-dulo ng mga aspekto na kaya nating malaman at mga aspekto na lumalagpas sa ating kakayahan. Mahalaga rin na bigyan-pansin, na ang malimit na dapat na maging katapusan ng kamalayang pag-aalam ay ang ugali na hinahayaan ang bagay na mamalayan siya kung ano mismong bagay.

Binibigyan-diin ni Merleau-Ponty na ang pagrerespeto ng pagkakaiba ng bawat isa ay nagpapanatili ng pagiging sarili ng sarili at pagiging iba ng ibang tao. Anomang gawain na pinipilit ang sarili sa ibang tao ay nagdudulot ng karahasan hindi lamang sa katauhan ng ibang tao ngunit kasama rin ang sarili sa nakakaranas ng karahasan. Ang pagkakamalay ay masasabi natin na parang pagbabalanse sa pagitan ng pagkakasama at pagkakaiba, paglapit at pagkalayo, at immanence at transcendence.

Ang pagrerespeto sa pagkakaiba ng bawat isa ay nagiging haligi rin ng sarili ng bawat isa. Ngunit, hindi dapat humantong ang pagkakaiba sa pagkamanhid, na ang labis na layo natin sa bawat isa, wala na tayong pakialam sa kalagayan at katauhan ng bawat isa.

“Ang tinatawag ba natin na laman ay nasa loob nasa labas.” Hindi lubusang nasa labas o ganap na nasa loob ang ipinahihiwatig ni Merleau-Ponty patungkol sa laman, sapagkat ang sinasabi niyang laman ay kapwa nagpapahiwatig ng labas at loob. Sa madaling salita, ang laman ay laging nakaturo sa sarili at sa ibang tao; ang laman ng aking laman ay nag-uugnay sa akin sa laman ng iba pang laman.

Ang Pranses na terminong ‘milieu’ ay mas malinaw na naipapahayag ang ideya ng Meron kay Merleau-Ponty. Ang pagtalunton sa etimolohiyang salitang milieu ay nagmula sa *mi* na gitna at *lieu* na lugar. Itinuturing ng mga iskolar kay Merleau-Ponty ang ideyang ito bilang kaniyang nosyon ng hyperdiyalektiko na humahagilap sa malawakang ideya ng diyalektikang pilosopiya. Mula sa nosyong ito ng hyperdiyalektika na natutukoy ang Meron sa isang purong estado, bagaman ang Meron, ay parating na sa

sagandaan ng maraming meron. Kung gayon, bumubuo ang mga bahagi ng aking katawan ng isang sistema, kaya't ang aking katawan at ang iba pa ay isang kabuuan, kambal na bahagi nag-iisa at magkamukhang penomenon.¹³ Ngunit, maobserbahan din na ang urong-sulong na pag-uugali ng isang lamang umiiral kay Merleau-Ponty ay nagpapamalas din ng isa pang pundasyon sa kaniyang ideya ng etikal na kalayaan.

Kalayaan: Ang Pagbabahagi ng Espasyo at ng Panahon

It seems to me that we can also say of other institutions that they have ceased to live when they show themselves incapable of carrying on a poetry of human relations — that is, the call of each individual freedom to all the others.¹⁴ (Sa aking pananaw, masasabi na ang mga institusyon ay napatigil na sa kanilang mga gawain kapag hindi na nila kayang bigkasin ang tula ng pagkakaugnay ng bawat tao. Ito ang tinatawag natin na tawag ng kalayaan ng bawat isa sa bawat isa.)

Kailangang hayaan ang iba sa sarili natin, ipakita kung paano niya gusto ipahayag ang pagkakaiba niya nang hindi umiikot sa sariling larawan. Ang pag-iwas na hindi madaganan ng sarili ang katauhan ng ibang tao ay masasabi natin na nagpapahayag ng konsepto ng etikal na buhay at kalayaan para kay Merleau-Ponty.

Ang kamalayang pagtanaw para kay Merleau-Ponty ay hindi lang tungkol sa paglapit ngunit sa ating paglayo. Dito, mayroon tayong natatanaw na bago. Itong pananaw ni Merleau-Ponty ay nakatuon din para sa pag-iintindi ng ating mga sarili, sapagkat ang pagkilala ng ating sarili at ng sarili ng iba pang tao ay hindi nakasalalay sa ating kakayahan lamang na lumapit. Bahagi ng ating kakayahan na matanaw at maintindihan ang mga tao at bagay sa ating paligid ay nakabase sa ating pagtanggap na hindi natin malalaman ng ganap ang mga bagay.

Dito ipinapakilala ni Merleau-Ponty ang konsepto ng *chiasm* bilang isang mahalagang aspekto ng ating pagtanaw at paglalaman sa mundo ng laman. Para kay Merleau-Ponty, ang *chiasm* ay ang solusyon niya sa mga kinagawiang mga magkatungaling mga konsepto at ideya sa pilosopiya. Mula sa paghihiwalay ng labas at loob, katawan at isip, at ang sarili at ang iba, sa pamamagitan ng konsepto ng *chiasm* ni Merleau-Ponty na ang kanilang paghihiwalay ay isang diyalektiko na pumupulupot sa bawat isa.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 412.

¹⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *PrP*.

Sa pamamagitan ng konsepto ng chiasm, maaari natin makita na ang relasyon ng sarili at ang Iba ay hindi ganap na paghihiwalay o pag-iisa, ngunit ang may ginagamit na salita ni Merleau-Ponty ay may magkabahaging pagiging.¹⁵

Ngunit kung titingnan ang nosyon ng espasyo, mapapansin na hindi lamang ito siyentipiko o epistemolohikal na ideya ng laman. Bagaman hindi niya tuwirang tinukoy ito sa kaniyang diskusyon tungkol sa ideya ng etikal na laman, mauunawaan na mahalagang konsiderasyon dito ay ang pag-usapan ang nosyon ng laman at interkorporealiti. Ang hyperdiyalektika ni Merleau-Ponty kaiba sa diyalektika ni Hegel na humahagilap hindi para ikahon ang iisa at nagkakaisang layon ng Absolutong Geist. Ang hinahagilap na kaalaman ni Merleau-Ponty ay hindi lamang pagtatalaban ng mga abot-tanaw kundi ang paghahanap sa sala-salabin na mga abot-tanaw.

The solution to the problem of other bodies must be found within the identity within difference structure of reversibility. Here the Other functions as my mirror: he de-centers me, lets me see myself from another vantage. I do not coincide with the Other, but this experience of my being is not the undisclosed secret Sartre would make of it, either.¹⁶ (Ang solusyon sa problema ng pagiging ng ibang mga nilalang sa laman ay makikita sa pagkakaisa sa gitna ng pagkakaibang istruktura ng pagbabahagi. Dito ang Iba ay nagiging paraan kung paano ko nakikita ang aking sarili sa isang bagong pananaw—nilalayo niya ako mula sa aking sarili na parang tulad ng isang salamin. Ngunit, hindi dumarating sa punto na ang sarili at ang Iba ay nagiging isa, sa katulad rin na paraan, hindi naman masyadong makahiwalay ang sarili at ang Iba na walang na maaring posibilidad ng pakikitungo sa bawat isa, tulad ng pahiwatig ni Sartre.)

“Ang laman na nilalaman ang mga bagay sa mundo ay nakikita rin na may kinalaman siya sa ibang laman sa mundo.” Ang kaalaman ng isang umiiral na laman ay parating patungo sa tawag na makiisa o ang pagkakaroon ng pakialam patungkol sa kalagayan ng iba pang umiiral na laman. Ang isang korporeal na tao ay isang tao na may pakialam.

¹⁵ Cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis, ed. by Claude Lefort (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 214.

¹⁶ M.C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, 2nd ed. (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 168.

Ang kalayaan sa pilosopiya ni Merleau-Ponty ay nagpapamalas ng isang uri ng pag-uugali na may respeto sa Meron at mga ibang meron sa paligid nito. Habang mas nababatid ko ang isang hindi-destruktibong diyalektika ng sarili at ng Iba, mas nagagawa kong mapalaya ang sarili sa mga kalasag ng mismong sarili. Ang daigdig ng laman at ang presensya ng iba pang mga umiiral sa aking paligid ay nag-iimbita sa mas malawakang ontolohikal na pagtanaw. Ang pagiging malaya ay ang pagtingin nang lagpas sa sarili bilang mas mataas sa sarili ngunit nasa relasyon ng isang mundo na nagpapalawig sa posibilidad ng Meron. Ang pagbukas ng sarili sa interkorporeal na daigdig ay ang tunay na kalayaan para kay Merleau-Ponty.

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Article

The Notion of Pedagogical Authority in the Community of Inquiry

Peter Paul E. Elicor

Abstract: This article explores the notion of pedagogical authority as exercised in the *Community of Inquiry*, the method for facilitating *Philosophy for Children* (P4C). It argues that the teachers' pedagogical authority in a Community of Inquiry is not predicated on their intellectual superiority or status. Rather it finds its legitimacy in their role as instigators of students' thinking skills, which are assumed to be already possessed by the learners. This thesis is discussed in relation to Rancière's concept of the dissociation of the will and the intellect, which is treated here as conceptual complement to the existing interpretation of pedagogical authority as understood and practiced by scholars in the field of P4C.

Keywords: Lipman, Community of Inquiry, Philosophy for Children, pedagogical authority

Introduction

The *Community of Inquiry* (COI), the pedagogy for teaching *Philosophy for Children* (P4C), is a process that involves actual philosophizing where students wonder, analyze, exchange ideas, pursue questions, listen to each other, probe assumptions, and think creatively and caringly. For Garrison, the COI provides the "environment for individuals to stretch their depth and breadth of thinking and learning through collaboration."¹ Its assumption is that learning is essentially an activity of inquiry, and collaborative engagement is essential in nurturing thinking skills. One of its important characteristics is that it is a "shared experience" whereby all members, regardless of age and status, can possibly learn from each other's

¹ D. Randy Garrison, *Thinking Collaboratively: Learning in a Community of Inquiry* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 55.

insights.² Thus, the traditional role assigned to the teacher as a purveyor of knowledge is diminished. But, when the COI is contrasted with the traditional classroom setting, differences in the pedagogical relationship between teachers and students become obvious. In particular, one area that requires attention is the pedagogical authority that a teacher is supposed to exercise with the students. This is an important area to consider, for as Pace and Hemmings argue, “the character of teacher-student authority relations has great bearing on the quality of students' educational experience and teachers' work.”³ In the context of a COI, how should “pedagogical authority,” we ask, be understood?

This article is divided in four parts. The first part consists of a brief discussion of Philosophy for Children. This is followed by a discussion about the Community of Inquiry and its basic assumptions. The third part brings in Rancière's concept of the dissociation of the intellect and the will, which is treated here as a conceptual complement to the notion of pedagogical authority as understood and practiced by scholars in the field of P4C. Lastly, I explain that the pedagogical authority exercised in a Community of Inquiry necessarily requires the teacher's dissociation of his/her intellect and will.

Matthew Lipman and the Philosophy for Children

Matthew Lipman's *Philosophy for Children*, which began in the last quarter of the twentieth century, is one of the notable developments in philosophy and education today. Its conception was inspired by the educational theories of John Dewey, Charles Sanders Pierce, Lev Vygotsky, among many others, which then provided the theoretical foundation for exploring the possibility of teaching philosophy to children, not as a content-laden body of knowledge, but as an activity that, if taught well, nurtures philosophical thinking. According to Lipman, the primary aim of P4C is to “stimulate children to think carefully, to develop better reasoning and judgments, and to engage in the analysis of some very general but ill-defined concepts.”⁴ Obviously, this requires a method that is different from the traditional way of teaching philosophy within formal academic settings. Whereas traditional teaching is the “method of handing down knowledge from the teacher to the students,” in a COI, the learning agenda is determined

² Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs, *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 54.

³ Judith L. Pace and Annette Hemmings, “Understanding Authority in Classrooms: A Review of Theory, Ideology, and Research” in *Review of Educational Research*, 77:1 (2007), 4.

⁴ Matthew Lipman, “What is Happening with P4C?” in *Philosophy of Education*, vol. 3 of *Proceedings of the 20th World Congress of Philosophy*, ed. by David M. Steiner (Ohio: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1999), 22.

by the students and not by the teacher.⁵ For instance, in a P4C class, students read stories⁶ that are suffused with philosophical ideas from which individual questions are derived. From the questions raised, the students proceed by choosing one particular question to pursue while individually providing reasons for their choice. The students then engage in a collaborative discussion about the ideas and assumptions of the chosen question and its cognate concepts. In this process, a philosophy teacher has to sacrifice the “hermetic terminology” prevalent in philosophical discourses which has unfortunately caused philosophical themes to be obscure to a layperson and “barely intelligible to the undergraduate philosophy major.”⁷

P4C challenges the notion that Philosophy is proper only to adults, philosophy majors, professors, and researchers. As Murriss and Haynes note, P4C “calls into question many assumptions about age: it engages children (including very young ones) in kinds of thinking that have traditionally been reserved for adults and it proposes that adults who want to philosophize could benefit by becoming more childlike in their thinking.”⁸ This is derived from the assumption that the competence for philosophizing is inherently rooted from the basic human propensity to wonder, inquire, and pursue a question—a capacity that does not privilege a certain age, academic degree, or expertise. Consequently, it entails the need to rethink children’s capacity for thinking, meaning-making, communicating, and moral-valuing. In this regard, Matthews rightly observes that “a parent or teacher who doesn’t hear the questions [of a child or student], or doesn’t understand that they are more than, and different from, a mere request for information, misses a chance to do philosophy.”⁹ It is, therefore, not enough to repackage philosophy and make it intelligible to children for what is equally important is to get adults “recognize that children’s questions and concerns are philosophical.”¹⁰

⁵ Marella Ada Mancenido-Bolaños, “Philosophy of Education John Dewey’s Democracy and Education and the Problem of Education in the Philippines” in *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 10:2 (2016), 85.

⁶ Matthew Lipman has written a number of novels that are utilized to facilitate P4C classes. Other practitioners of P4C use picture books as stimuli for dialogue.

⁷ Matthew Lipman, *Philosophy Goes to School* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 5.

⁸ Joanna Haynes and Karin Murriss, “Intra-generational education: Imagining a post-age pedagogy” in *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49 (2016), 1-2.

⁹ Gareth Matthews, *The Philosophy of Childhood* (London: Harvard University Press, 1994), 39.

¹⁰ Michael J. B. Jackson and Walter H. Ott, “Children and Philosophy: A Comment on Ayim,” in *Canadian Journal of Education*, 5:4 (1980), 104.

The Community of Inquiry (COI)¹¹

There are four (4) basic features that characterize a COI: a) it has an aim, b) it moves where the argument takes it, c) it is dialogical, and d) it fosters varied ways of thinking.¹² Insofar as the community of inquiry is a group of individuals who share a common purpose of learning, it, therefore, has a direction. Primarily, it aims at producing an output, that is, “some kind of settlement or judgment, however partial and tentative this may be.”¹³ The procedure involved in a COI is not necessarily preconditioned by a certain trajectory. In other words, the usual process of guiding the students’ thinking, which is supposed to lead them to a definitive understanding, is the least of the teacher’s worry. Regardless of the source of stimuli and where the discussion may lead, the assumption is that what the students bring to his or her awareness is already meaningful, no matter how insignificant it may seem for others. What stimulates a student’s mind, therefore, is treated as a fertile ground for philosophical inquiry.

The role of the teacher, in this context, is not an adjudicator who, after several exchanges of ideas, aborts the flow of discourse and thereby silences the question. Instead, by way of questioning, he or she directs the students to constantly examine the implicit assumptions of their statements, determine the criteria for their answers, provide examples or analogies, and encourage alternative ways of looking at a topic. On this note, Lipman argues that “classroom philosophy teachers are conceived as facilitators of philosophical inquiry rather than as authoritative sources of philosophical knowledge.”¹⁴ In a COI, teachers create an intellectually nurturing space where students deliberately get involved in their own learning instead of simply relying on what the teacher says. By constantly prodding the students to think critically and reflectively, they become, as a consequence, mindful of the quality of their thinking.

In a COI, the discussion may start from seemingly trivial topics and proceed to ideas that have philosophical implications. In contrast to what Lipman calls “standard paradigm of normal practice,” the academic disciplines are wrongfully understood as compartmentalized, exhaustive and

¹¹ It may be well to note that there are various methods of facilitating P4C within the context of a COI. However, the usual process follows this structure: a) Stimulus, b) Questioning, and c) Dialogue. Lipman’s method, in particular, utilizes novels that contain philosophical meanings, which become the point of departure of the dialogue.

¹² See Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 83-84.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁴ Matthew Lipman, “The Educational Role of Philosophy (Original Article),” in Philip Cam, “Commentary on Matthew Lipman’s ‘The Educational Role of Philosophy,’” in *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*, 1:1 (2014), 12.

non-overlapping.¹⁵ For instance, the empirical sciences do not usually cross boundaries into religious studies or the humanities. If the goal of education is to teach students how to think well, Lipman writes, this means “giving students practice in reasoning, through classroom discussion involving concepts that reach across all the disciplines rather than only those that are specialized within each subject.”¹⁶ It must be noted, however, that this does neither require a teacher to have a prior knowledge of everything nor does s/he need to feign mastery. On the contrary, a teacher should genuinely immerse in the process of inquiry without restraining its flow and direction according to the confines of his/her expertise. According to Kohan,

a nice image that a teacher can offer is one who thinks with others—no matter what her age, race or gender might be; who stages and promotes and facilitates experiences of thinking; who has no models and promotes no models; who offers others something to think about; who does not obstruct the road of his or her students; who propitiates encounters that she cannot herself advance or foresee.¹⁷

But, one may ask, what is the difference between the dialogue that happens in a COI from a “nice conversation”? In contrast with conversation, dialogue does not aim at arriving at a consensus where, Lipman writes, “personal note is strong but the logical thread is weak.”¹⁸ Rather, in a dialogue, instability in the actual flow of arguments is actually important because such will implicitly move its course to branch off to other equally valid points of view. In other words, the dialogical exchange in a COI does not always presuppose a harmonious sharing of thoughts. It is rather naïve to think that the goal of the COI is simply to get one’s thoughts recognized and emotions satisfied. On the contrary, putting forward one’s ideas for examination and testing could be intellectually challenging and emotionally disturbing. However, it must be noted that this is based on the assumption that in order to efficiently exercise and develop thinking, one has to collaboratively engage in a dialogue within a non-hostile environment whereby a variety of arguments, including dissenting ideas, are acknowledged. In other words, the community’s emphasis on inquiry and

¹⁵ See Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 18.

¹⁶ Matthew Lipman and Ron Brandt, “On Philosophy in the Curriculum: A Conversation with Matthew Lipman,” in *Educational Leadership*, 46:1 (1988), 34.

¹⁷ Walter Omar Kohan, *Philosophy and Childhood: Critical Perspectives and Affirmative Practices* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

rational deliberation do not necessarily lead to hostility against each other's thoughts and feelings as a result of unavoidable disparities. On the contrary, since everyone knows that s/he could be "wrong" in his/her ideas, a certain degree of understanding and tolerance will develop. On this note, Lipman stresses that the community of inquiry

is not a community of solidarity where everybody feels the same and has the same ideas and sensations and so forth, but [a kind of community] where there's a division of feeling; there's a complimentary of feeling and of thinking. So they rely on each other, depend on each other. It's very much like a team where there are certain people who are good at passing and other good at running. And they depend on each other; they know they can count on each other.¹⁹

By and large, P4C has at its core the idea and practice of turning ordinary classrooms into vibrant communities of inquiry where students are empowered to engage in a philosophical discussion with other students under the facilitation of a teacher-philosopher. The primacy of dialogue among equal co-inquirers in a COI democratizes the basic capacity of both students and teachers for thinking, speaking and listening; and likewise, being spoken to and being listened to.

In the next section, I will discuss Jacques Rancière's concept of the dissociation of the intellect and *Wwill*, which, I think, can function as a conceptual complement in understanding the pedagogical authority a teacher should exercise within the context of a COI.

Jacotot's Intellectual Adventure

In his book, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons of Intellectual Emancipation*, Rancière recounts the "intellectual adventure" of Joseph Jacotot who, while teaching in Louvain, encountered several Flemish students who wanted to enroll in his class. Such would not have posed any problem if Jacotot himself could speak Flemish. Unfortunately, he could not, and these new students did not know how to speak French either. Nevertheless, sensing a learning opportunity, he took the challenge of teaching a language he could neither speak nor understand. The language rift did not deter the adventurous Jacotot from admitting these students in his class. Any practical

¹⁹ Matthew Lipman, "Philosophy for Children," YouTube video, 56:00, 29 March 2010, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp-8lI8h7gg>>.

teacher, being placed under such circumstance, would perhaps have chosen to find a translator or interpreter to bridge the language gap and therefore facilitate a mediated instruction. Jacotot, however, found another way. Totally unprecedented, he gave each student a bilingual edition of *Fenelon's Telemaque*, that includes both French and Flemish versions. In the entire course, he sought a way to command these students to learn the French version by means of comparing and contrasting it against the language they could understand. In Jacotot's account, after the students understood the first half of the book, he commanded them to repeat over and over until they could actually read and understand the French version. And much to Jacotot's surprise, after a certain period of time, the students actually began to speak and write in French without the help of a textbook, much less his own area of professional expertise.

From this pivotal experience, Rancière thinks that Jacotot created a "scandal" in the early nineteenth-century system of education by claiming that an "ignoramus could teach another what he himself did not know, asserting the equality of intelligence and opposing intellectual emancipation to popular instruction."²⁰ Prior to this experience, what Jacotot believed was that the role of a teacher is to guide young and uninitiated minds to an uncharted body of knowledge through his mastery and expertise. And like most critical teachers, Jacotot did not subscribe to the common notion that a teacher' job is simply to bombard students with information and to regurgitate them as a basis for evaluation. Rather, he believed that a student needs the constant guidance—hence, explication—of a knowledgeable teacher because of the assumption that a novice mind might get lost in the unfamiliar terrain of knowledge, possibly mistaking the right path from the unnecessary detours, the essential from the unnecessary, the truth from the untruth. Such possibility, in Jacotot's un-emancipated mind, warrants his valuable explanations whenever necessary, which also assumes his mastery over the subject under discussion. However, this conviction was challenged, if not shattered, by the very experience he had with the Flemish students. How could he, an individual who did not have the practical knowledge of the Flemish language, have caused the transformation of these students from being non-speakers of French to actual fluent users of the language?

Dissociation of the Intellect and Will

Inferring from Jacotot's intellectual adventure, Rancière argues that education is never simply a transmission of knowledge, information or skills

²⁰ Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. by Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 2011), 1.

from a master to a student. Oftentimes, education is wrongfully understood simply as a practice of indoctrination whereby the student abandons his/her intellectual autonomy to the master, who is assumed to be a source of reliable knowledge. In Rancière's parlance, "pedagogical logic" refers to the traditional ways of educating, whereby a teacher is considered a "master" whose explications are essential in the educational journey of the students who, at the onset, are considered "ignorant." In this sense, a promise of equality between the teacher and the student is implicitly presupposed to be a goal in the process of the educational transaction. Such promise of equality, however, never comes to fruition because the kind of authority assumed by a teacher in the pedagogical logic always eludes any attempt of equalizing its position with that of the student.

Moreover, the usual method behind almost all forms of educational practice is that of *explication*. What all conscientious professors believe is that "the important business of the master is to transmit his knowledge to his students so as to bring them, by degrees, to his own level of expertise."²¹ In other words, these well-meaning teachers think that their profession is to bring the students from the state of ignorance to enlightenment, from unfamiliarity to understanding, from stupidity to intelligence. Consequently, their assumed role involves the reduction, if not abolishment, of the distance between his/her adequate knowledge and the incompetence of the learner. However, if one were to examine the effects of such method, it actually breeds a very subtle type of intellectual subjugation—a *stultification*—whereby a student, after being immersed in this kind of pedagogy, will only understand one thing, that is, *understanding can happen only by explication*. In effect, this kind of pedagogical method perpetuates the practice of absorbing data rather than critical thinking, submission rather than emancipation. Students, therefore, are stultified not simply because of a particular procedure, but by an "explicatory order that tells them that they can't do it by themselves ... and that the master is the required condition of their learning."²²

Thus, for Rancière, education is not measured on the basis of how much knowledge the student "absorbs" from the teacher. On this note, Kohan believes that "there is no entrainment between teaching and learning"; that is, it is not a guarantee that "if someone teaches, another learns; and that if someone learns it is because another taught her."²³ In other words, teaching is not predicated on the relationship between one's intelligence and the intelligence of another, but on the relationship between one's will and the will

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² Richard Stamp, "Of Slumdogs and Schoolmasters: Jacotot, Rancière and Mitra on self-organized learning," in *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 45:6 (2013), 653.

²³ Kohan, *Philosophy and Childhood*, 39.

of another. It is, therefore, constitutive of the teacher's act of obliging the will of the student to exercise its own rational powers regardless of the teacher's actual possession or mastery of knowledge. The dissociation between the intelligences and will is practically the reason why Jacotot's teaching experiment worked. Indeed, the possibility of knowing and learning, despite the teacher's lack of mastery and knowledge, will only make sense when driving a student's will becomes the primary goal in the entire process of education.²⁴

Pedagogical Authority in the Community of Inquiry

P4C and COI redefine the notion of pedagogical authority and bring to light the importance of equality in the pedagogical relationship between teachers and students. The COI aborts the teacher's traditional role as a knowledge-provider, which unfortunately in some cases, causes intellectual passivity and stunts intellectual growth. In a COI, a teacher is a part of the entire process of inquiry. She does not "stand" outside the community. Thus, her role is as important and integral as that of the students. But the COI does not abolish the authority of teachers. It is *not* anti-authoritarian. On the contrary, it seeks to maintain the teachers' role of obliging the students to think for themselves. In other words, the transformation of traditional classroom environment to communities of inquiry does not entail the leveling off of the status of teachers and students. According to Lipman:

In the normal course of philosophical inquiry, such as in a classroom dialogue, the teacher may be presumed to possess authority with regard to the techniques and procedures by which such inquiry is to be prosecuted. It is the teacher's responsibility to assure that proper procedures are being followed. But with respect to the give-and-take of philosophical discussion, the teacher must be open to the variety of views implicit among the students.²⁵

²⁴ In ordinary circumstances, this is actually a very common experience that children get from their parents. Oftentimes, the parents who constantly remind their children to study, learn, do their assignments, and commit to their studies do not actually know, much less master, what their children are supposed to learn. A mother, for instance, does not need to have a prior expertise on a subject, say chemistry, before she can oblige her child to learn it. In other words, the obligation she imposes on her child does not necessitate her to have a pre-knowledge of it. The will to move another person's will, therefore for Rancière, is independent from what the latter is actually moved to do, learn and acquire.

²⁵ Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and Frederick Oscanyan. *Philosophy in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 45.

Teachers' authority is maintained on the basis of their knowledge of the techniques and procedures that philosophical inquiry abides by. It is incumbent upon the teacher to make sure that the students preserve and maintain the values of collaborative inquiry, dialogue, and the varied ways of thinking.²⁶ Thus, teachers are not supposed to terminate the progression of inquiry and exchange of ideas by imposing their own knowledge and demonstrating mastery on a topic. Instead of pre-empting the joy of wonderment and discovery (no matter how these may seem trivial to an adult), teachers are to encourage students to pursue more questions, constructively challenge others' position while being mindful of their own tacit assumptions, careful not to assume knowing the entire truth. In this regard, Lone and Burroughs assert that in a COI, there is a "consensus of 'epistemological modesty': an acknowledgment that all members of the group, including the facilitator, are fallible, and therefore hold views that could end up being mistaken,"²⁷ This is where a teacher's dissociation of his/her intellect and will becomes obvious. It is not important whether his/her intelligence is recognized by the class, for what is more essential is his/her capacity to drive the students' will to think for themselves. As co-inquirers, Murriss asserts that teachers should ask questions that "provoke philosophical enquiry, without knowing the answers to the questions s/he poses; and facilitating only where appropriate, that is, benefitting the community's construction of new ideas."²⁸ Thus, to deprive the students from exploring by themselves the richness of their imaginations, insights, and experiences is no less than to deny them of their inherent capacity to think independently even within the context of a community.

Therefore, to recognize a sense of epistemic equality between the teacher and students does not, in any way, diminish the former's pedagogical authority. Teachers hold a position that is equally important as the position of the students. A teacher's dissociation between his/her intellect and will provides the condition for the possibility of teaching without stultifying, that is, facilitating learning by supposing equality at the very beginning. Needless to say, COI will inevitably fall short from its objectives once educators fail at the outset to treat students from a position of epistemic equality and continue to acknowledge it as the course progresses. It is for this reason that the COI, I think, ultimately draws its critical potential from the recognition of epistemic equality, which also reconfigures the pedagogical authority of teachers.

²⁶ Thinking for Lipman is not only "critical thinking" but it also means "caring thinking" and "creative thinking."

²⁷ Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs, *Philosophy in Education*, 55

²⁸ Karin Murriss, *The Posthuman Child: Educational Transformation through Philosophy with Picturebooks* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 182.

Moreover, teachers who utilize COI as a pedagogy cannot exercise a hierarchical relation between their intelligence and that of the students. This means that their authority has to concretely manifest in their exercise of a horizontal (not top-down) pedagogical relation between their will and the will of the students. I follow here Mulloly who articulates that the definition of pedagogical authority should “not be approached as the property of a position or person that others must accept,” but rather as “a property of an interaction, constituted by the active work of all involved, regardless of the position they may display.”²⁹ Thus, teachers should avoid the mistake of thinking that the significance of their role is based on their intellectual superiority, because the legitimacy of their pedagogical authority holds only insofar as they instigate the students’ thinking skills which are assumed to be inherently possessed by the students.

Lastly, a teacher handling a P4C class must be open to an intellectual journey with the community that may possibly lead to conceptual highways, detours, stop-overs, and alleys. At one point, s/he may be in a position of an interlocutor; at another point, in a position of a student who willfully allows him/herself be taught; or in most cases, in a position of a concerned co-journeyer who constantly prods the students to dig deeper. In such intellectual adventure, it may be well to realize that no teacher solely steers the wheel. One of the ultimate goals of the COI, therefore, is never to lead a student to the false notion that a teacher’s role is indispensable in the process of education, but rather to make a student realize that s/he actually holds the reins of his/her education. In this regard, Canuto asserts that what the COI calls for “is a teacher who is ready to relinquish ultimate control of the student’s path of discovery and who can put faith into young children’s ability to grapple with abstract concepts.”³⁰ By letting students take responsibility for their learning, they can claim intellectual independence that empowers them to overcome the limits of the traditional pedagogical methods.

Conclusion

The assumptions of the COI destroy the intellectual hierarchy presupposed in traditional classroom settings. The COI, especially its

²⁹ James Mulloly, “Playing with Pedagogical Authority” in *Classroom Authority: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. by Judith L. Pace and Annette Hemmings (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2006), 62.

³⁰ Abigail Thea Canuto, “Reflections on Theory and Pedagogy of Challenges in Facilitating Children’s Dialogues in the Community of Inquiry” in *International Journal of Whole Schooling* 11:1 (2015), 10.

insistence on dialogue, positions all members on an equal footing in terms of collaboratively pursuing questions and sharing insights. This redefines the teacher's role from a position that holds the explicative and evaluative powers to a position of a *co-inquirer*. In other words, the COI reconfigures the traditional understanding of pedagogical authority from a teacher-know-it-all to a philosopher-facilitator. This paper has argued that such can be achieved by the dissociation of the intellect and will. It entails a transformation of the idea of authority that is progressively aligned to the values of collaboration, assistance, and journeying. It is for this reason that the understanding of the role of teachers in the context of a COI includes: collaborators, co-pilgrims, and co-learners. Finally, thinking and learning never occur in isolation. By thinking within the COI, both students and teachers make more sense of their individual experiences in the process of letting their dearly-held ideas open for critique. This basically requires a teacher who can sustain a thoughtful dialogue that proceeds from a process of deliberative, collaborative and meaningful interaction with the students.

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Why Intellectual Virtues Matter

Bernardo N. Caslib, Jr.

Abstract: Following Linda Zagzebski's pioneering work in virtue epistemology, intellectual virtues have been at the receiving end of great interest in several sectors of the philosophical world. Zagzebski largely thinks that the importation of the concept of virtue, primarily an ethical concept, into epistemology holds the key to problems in epistemology. A challenge to Zagzebski, however, is the question of the innate compatibility of the anatomies of the two realms, ethics and epistemology. Can the concept of virtue be applied to epistemology, too? Is there a real connection between moral and intellectual virtues? This paper attempts at providing a way by which this challenge can be dealt with. By examining Julia Annas' arguments, and the concept of *phronesis* as a key Aristotelian virtue, this paper forwards the position that there is a huge overlap between intellectual and moral virtues, that contrary to claims of incompatibility, one can even facilitate the attainment of the other, and that the life of truth may after all be the life well lived.

Keywords: Aristotle, virtue, intellectual virtues, ethics

I. Introduction

What is wisdom, as a virtue? In the Filipino context, wisdom is roughly translated as *karunungan*. A person who is *marunong* (or alternatively, *madunong*) is virtuous because he has a particular insight into the nature of truth and reality. Oftentimes, *karunungan* is ascribed to the elders who are assumed to be experienced in life (and sometimes, learned too). *Karunungan* is not something that one can attain through mere schooling, however. It is honed by one who goes through life: confronts problems, celebrates victories, and commits mistakes—someone who has done it all. It is one that is borne out of the different life tours and detours of a person. One who is *marunong* is deemed discerning. Oftentimes, the *marunong* may not be understood initially by many, but his pronouncements later on prove to be right and true. This kind of sharp discernment is seen in

one of Rizal's concocted characters in the novel, *Noli Me Tangere*: Pilosopo Tasyo. The old man is always misunderstood, and is even considered crazy by his contemporaries. In the end, his extraordinary insight into the nature of things in the society proved to be prophetic. As in the West, *karunungan* is an intellectual virtue, an example of "acquired character traits that involve appropriate epistemic motivations, appropriate epistemic actions, and reliable success in attaining true beliefs."¹

Moreover, the *marunong* paves the way for the *mabuti*. The *marunong*, owing to his sharp familiarity with reality and truth is most capable of knowing what is right and good. A *marunong* is expected to also be *mabuti*. He is expected to be more understanding of those who have not attained (yet) a considerable amount of *karunungan*. In fraternal conflicts, an elder sibling is expected to be more giving to the younger ones. Cases of inconsistency between *karunungan* and *kabutihian* are frowned upon in the Philippine society.² Someone who is deemed *marunong* but whose actions are considered brash is unacceptable in the Philippine context. This has been demonstrated perpetually by frustrations and disappointments over educated politicians who, after earning multiple degrees in renowned universities around the world, still succumb to corruption. Ideally, the intellectual virtue of being *marunong* leads all the way up to the moral virtue of being *mabuti*.

Horiuchi and Yamada convey that in Japanese,

... [i]t takes two words to define wisdom fully: *chie* and *eichie*. *Chie* refers to wisdom as it appears in the sphere of ordinary life, at home or at work. This is not just the fruit of practical experience, important as this may be. It also has a moral dimension, being defined as the 'mental activity that leads us to discern the truth of things and to judge what is right and what is wrong.' And since, in the Japanese worldview, there is no clear distinction between the sacred and the profane, it also has a religious flavor to it. *Chie* is the first part of the continuum of wisdom that ascends to *eichi*, which is the 'intelligence which enables men to understand profound

¹ Heather D. Battaly, *Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. and Metaphilosophy LLC., 2010), 4.

² In hindsight, I suppose Filipinos who are *marunong* but who are not *mabuti* are those who do not necessarily know what is right and good. They may be, for the most part, *akratic*. *Akrasia* as propounded by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is weakness of the will. An *Akratic* person is one who is aware of the moral blunder but whose will is too weak to do what he thinks is right. This may be better dealt with in another exposition.

truth,' and which is the essence of the higher range of existence, such as the ascetic religious life.³

In Japanese culture, the connection between the intellectual and the moral life is so intertwined that the intellectual disposition of an individual determines his action as well. Consistent with our own Filipino worldview, our Asian neighbor also sees intellectual virtues as closely intertwined with moral virtues.

In the West, this is also apparent. When Socrates said “know thyself,” he was reminding the Athenians that to know oneself is the key to living a moral life. Without proper knowledge of the self, incapable of monitoring the soul, one falls into the pit of moral decay. Bereft of opportunities to nail what virtues are, how can one be expected to do what is right? With his intellectualist ethics, Socrates has been trying to make Athenians reflect and examine their own lives for the purpose of making them stick to lives of virtue and as a consequence, looking after their own souls. He even calls himself a gadfly for constantly getting Athenians on their toes when they seem to be forgetting the road to a life well lived.

So, what is the connection of our intellectual temper and our moral life? What is the connection between moral virtues and intellectual virtues? Are intellectual virtues not facilitative of moral virtues, too?

II. The Line between Moral and Intellectual Virtues

Julia Annas affirms what Bloomfield earlier stated⁴: “Moral virtue is one kind of skill, intellect is another.”⁵ Annas is convinced that the two are discrete spheres of excellence that subsuming one under the other is not the best possible way of understanding the relationship between the two. Annas believes that the new approach in epistemology, Virtue Epistemology, espoused by Zagzebski, that utilizes the vocabulary of ethics in epistemology, may not at all be tenable. Referring to intellectual and moral virtues, she cautions that “[n]either should be seen as a sub-kind of the other — although of course any realistic account of the moral life will find many complex connections between them.”⁶

³ Kazunubu Horiuchi and Jun Yamada, “Wisdom,” in *Happiness and Virtue Beyond East and West*, ed. by K. Ryan, B. Lerner, K. Bohlin, O. Nakayama, S. Mizuno, and K. Horiuchi (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2011), 133.

⁴ Paul Bloomfield, “Virtue Epistemology and the Epistemology of Virtue,” in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60 (2000): 23-43.

⁵ Julia Annas, “The Structure of Virtue,” in *Intellectual Virtue*, ed. by M. De Paul and L. Zagzebski (New York: Oxford University press, 2003), 20.

⁶ *Ibid.*

In a series of contentions, Annas explains why there is no necessary connection between the two. Moral virtues are concerned with practical affairs of life, while intellectual virtues are concerned with truth. The ends of these two fields are essentially different. In her words, “[t]he real distinction emerges when we consider that moral virtue is essentially practical; it is the skill of living, where living, in the virtue tradition, is seen as essentially active, shaping your life so that it is ordered from within.”⁷

Using the notions of ‘virtue as a skill’ and ‘virtue and success’ as fulcrums of analysis, Annas confirms her hesitations with the relationship between the two and sets out to just show why.

For Annas, moral virtues and intellectual virtues, as skills, are distinctive. Their aims “can but need not converge.”⁸ Annas disagrees with her understanding of Zagzebski⁹ that the latter considers one kind of virtue as a subset of the other: that intellectual virtues are forms of moral virtues. Moral virtue is not a subset of intellectual virtue and definitely, intellectual virtue is not a subset of moral virtue. As a skill, the two are distinct, their aims different. “The real distinction emerges when we consider that moral virtue is essentially practical; it is the skill of living, where living, in the virtue tradition, is seen as essentially active, shaping your life so that it is ordered from within.”¹⁰ Intellectual virtues on the other hand, are not practical. The aims of intellectual virtues are theoretical. They are directed at goals other than good action. They are considered with truth, evidence, and justification. Considered from this vantage point, the two are distinct.

Annas adds that “moral virtues essentially involve emotions and feelings in a way not true of the intellectual virtues.” Moral virtues such as courage, justice, temperance all entail some appeal to man’s affect—a requirement that may not be present in intellectual virtues. While temperance, involves weighing in feelings of desire with other considerations (justice, fairness, etc.), wisdom does not seem to be concerned with any feelings, but only a cognitive operation that approaches truth.

Annas is quick to admit however that “... it would be a mistake to hold that development of an intellectual virtue like perseverance or intellectual honesty never involves such control and transformation of recalcitrant, not purely intellectual, elements of the person.”¹¹ Even intellectual virtues, or its employment at least, may involve some feelings on the part of an agent. Drawing the distinction in this light may prove futile.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹ Cf. Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Julia Annas, “The Structure of Virtue,” 21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

For Annas, the main difference of the two kinds of virtues, in terms of skill, is this: that moral virtues are practical skills aimed at a practical end: the good life. Intellectual virtues are targeting something else, at achieving truth. Even conceding that intellectual virtues “deepen the understanding which is the basis of the moral virtues,”¹² Annas still thinks that the two kinds of virtues are completely distinct sets, not necessitating the other.

For Annas, it would have been better if the two are mutually dependent or are aimed at one and the same thing. She even admits that some intellectual virtues are facilitative of, if not completely necessary for, the attainment of some moral virtues. *Phronesis* or practical wisdom as a key intellectual virtue, is a requisite in the Aristotelian system of ethics in attaining the mean between two extremes. Only a life lived and sharpened in practical wisdom can locate a mean between two excesses.

Even granting this however, Annas still thinks that cases such as the one mentioned above is an exemption rather than the norm. She even forwards that the search for truth may, in some cases, be antithetical to the search for a good life. Indeed, she thinks that “seeking truth can become an end indifferent to or even conflicting with the end of living according to moral virtue.”¹³ Citing the “way the ‘Guardians’ are forced to rule in the central books of the *Republic*” in Plato’s *Theaetetus*, and Aristotle’s ‘well-known conflict’ between the body of *Nicomachean Ethics* and the second part of ‘Book 10’, Annas claims that the search for truth may sometimes displace the aims of living a good life¹⁴. Subscription to this position can be a little difficult.

In terms of success, Annas elucidates that, on one hand, intellectual virtues are aimed at targets, immediate goals (truth of a proposition, for example) that may be achieved in discrete, piecemeal fashion. On the other hand, to be successful in achieving moral virtues, one has to experience a full life of mastering a particular virtue (honesty, for example).

Annas identifies two aims in acting of a virtuous person: *telos* and *skopos*. *Telos* is the “overall aim of living virtuously and acting from motives of virtue.”¹⁵ In the Aristotelian ethics, the *telos* is *eudaimonia* or human flourishing. One requires a lifetime of habit in order to attain a particular virtue. In addition to this, a virtuous person also aims at *skopos*, or the intermediate goal in any particular case of acting virtuously. The *skopos* are the little steps that one takes in order to eventually get into the *telos*.¹⁶

¹² *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶ The difference is reminiscent of a scene in Paulo Coelho’s novel, *The Witch of Portobello*. Talking of his character Athena learning the art of calligraphy and the importance of practicing, Coelho puts: “You know the effort it took to sit in the correct position, to quiet your soul, keep your intentions clear, and respect each letter of each word. Meanwhile, keep

Moral virtue requires both *skopos* and *telos*. In the analogy, this dual success is manifested in both being able to master calligraphy and succeeding in every individual attempt at writing the words. Contrary to this, intellectual virtues are concerned only with *skopos*, not with *telos*. When one attains a truth, one normally says that the knower has attained an intellectual virtue. One need not aim at a universal end or *telos* (be consistently hitting the truth with the right epistemic motivation) in order to be considered intellectually virtuous. This is the irreconcilability between the two kinds of virtues.

For Annas, the employment of the concept of virtue in epistemology is not just problematic because of the difference in success requirements (*skopos vs. telos*), but because of the innate nature of the concept of virtue that may not be applicable in the field of epistemology.

I disagree with this understanding of the relationship between moral and intellectual virtues. First, I do not agree with the position that Annas holds about moral and intellectual virtues as skills, and as a consequence, their difference in targets. While Annas holds that truth is the necessary end of intellectual virtues, I forward the position that there might be other possible ends of intellectual virtues. Not all intellectual virtues have truth as its end goal. The ability to draw clear ideas that can eventually transform one's predicament into a better one is surely an epistemic good. Likewise, the possession of insights does not just involve truth; and yet it is considered an epistemic good, especially because some insights can be robust, and therefore, enrich the epistemic agent who holds them. These two examples point to the fact that creativity as an intellectual virtue does not, unlike Annas' claims, target truth as its end.

Having what was laid down considered will bring us to disregard the second argument of Annas: that moral and intellectual virtues are different because the other one requires both *skopos* and *telos* while the latter, only *telos*. Like moral virtues, some intellectual virtues require a lifetime of manifestation in order to be considered present in the epistemic agent. Because the truth of propositions is not necessarily their end goal, their employment in uniform fashion is necessary in order for the epistemic agent who holds them to fully claim that he has them. These epistemic virtues are honesty, open-mindedness, humility and groundedness, intellectual courage, intellectual generosity, creativity, and passionate love for truth. These epistemic virtues are not necessarily attained by getting at their target once

practicing. After a great deal of practice, we no longer think about all the necessary movements we must make; they become part of our existence. Before reaching that stage, however, you must practice and repeat. And if that's not enough, you must practice and repeat some more... The moment will come when you no longer need to think about what you're doing. You become the letter, the ink, the paper, the word." Paulo Coelho, *The Witch of Portobello* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 81-82.

or twice, like *skopos*. These virtues, like the moral virtues, require consistent display. In addition, some of these epistemic virtues, like the passionate love for truth, may not necessarily attain truth, yet can still be an intellectual virtue. Certainly, the line between intellectual and moral virtues cannot be drawn in a clear-cut fashion.

In the next section, I will try to present another way of understanding the two virtues and their connection by going back to Aristotle's exposition of the intellectual virtues.

III. Going back to Aristotle

Consulting Aristotle sheds light onto the discourse by clarifying distinctions. According to him, in analyzing virtues, one can make a distinction between the "virtues of character and other excellence of thought or understanding."¹⁷ The second, he calls the intellectual virtues. All intellectual virtues are aimed at the same thing: truth.

However, there are two kinds of objects of the intellectual virtue. When one concerns himself with the truth of theoretical science, he is dealing with objective truths. A person who seeks truth by validating and checking for the veracity of his scientific findings can then be said to be concerned with this. However, one who is concerned with the truth of his ideals and practical choices can also be considered to be dealing with intellectual virtues. Although the kind of truth that is his object of concern is different, he is after the same goal, truth.

Aristotle adds that "truth is the function of both intellectual parts (of the soul). Therefore, those characteristics which permit each part to be truthful as possible will be the virtues of the two parts."¹⁸ What makes a man able to attain virtue is his capacity to discern and exercise deliberation to hit the mean between extremes. It is practical wisdom that guides man to attain what is morally excellent. Aristotle emphasizes that "practical wisdom is a truthful rational characteristic of acting in matters involving what is good for man."¹⁹ Listening to the voice of reason and considering all circumstances before making a decision seems to be the simplest way of understanding this. Importing Aristotle in understanding the wisdom of Confucius, one can understand what Dan mentions: "[e]very one of us has our own goals, but in the hurried, endlessly repeating cycles and rhythms of work, how much time and space do we have to pay attention to our inner heart? The part of ourselves that performs in a social role is plainly visible, but often we muffle

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962), 146.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

the voice of our own spirit.”²⁰ Despite the obvious differences between Confucius and Aristotle, here is one where they seem to agree: what Confucius might have meant by the summon of the heart, in Aristotle, this is the call of one’s soul to heed the use of practical reason.

It seems clear then that to Aristotle, the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom is a necessary condition for attaining moral virtues. “There is no virtue without wisdom.”²¹ Right action and dispositions are guided by correct reasoning, and right reason is determined by practical wisdom. When one has to decide what action to take, say, in between giving all his money to charity, and not giving at all, one decides after due consideration of past and present experiences. One consults one’s priorities and inclinations. What kind of man will this make of me? One communicates with one’s inner self and asks what kind of person he wants to become.

To do this, one has to hone one’s intellectual virtue of practical wisdom. Aristotle puts it best when he says that “[it] is now clear that we should still need practical wisdom, even if it had no bearing on action, because it is the virtue of a part of our soul. But it is also clear that (it does have an important bearing in action, since) no choice will be right without practical wisdom and virtue.”²² Aristotle’s position seems clear: one needs a particular kind of intellectual virtue to become morally virtuous: practical wisdom.

Practical wisdom, *phronesis*, requires a lifetime of practice in order to be truly present in a person. “To possess practical wisdom, in Aristotle’s view, is to be good at thinking about what one should do.”²³ To have practical wisdom then, is to have the capacity to think of what one should do in order to attain a fulfilled, *eudaimonic* life. *Phronesis* involves understanding, not just attainment of truth. Is the truth of the color of one’s socks as valuable as the truth about someone’s claim to be a hero? Practical wisdom allows the agent to discriminate. This intellectual virtue, as a representative virtue, almost akin to what we mean in Filipino by *karunungan*, does not simply concern itself with truth. It puts premium to the quality of deliberation that the epistemic agent has in relation with his life. Indeed, with *phronesis*, one sees the perfect blending of the moral and the intellectual, and the fact that they cannot be separated. *Phronesis* seems to act as a manager of possible conflicts between intellectual and moral virtues.

²⁰ Yu Dan, *Confucius from the Heart*, trans. by E. Tyllesly (Great Britain: Macmillan, 2009), 142.

²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 171.

²² *Ibid.*, 171.

²³ Gerard Hughes, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 114.

However, the hanging question remains: how many of the intellectual virtues have the same character and function as practical wisdom? Are all intellectual virtues considered moral virtues? Are they all eventually directed towards the same end as living a moral life?

IV. The Connection between Intellectual and Moral Virtue: An Alternative Way of Looking at It

Annas is convinced that the idea of intellectual virtues being subsumed to moral virtues or vice versa cannot hold because the anatomies of the two are highly different. I take the Aristotelian position and assert that there is a real relationship between the two virtues.

In terms of extension, some intellectual virtues are necessary in order to attain moral virtues. Some has functions that overlap with each other. The premise here is that moral virtues are deliberated on, and are decided by moral agents. One cannot attain moral virtues by simply going with the flow, acting randomly in every given occasion. This also assumes that actions are motivated by intellectual judgments, and not just emotional biases. Having said this, intellectual virtues such as practical wisdom and with it, corollary virtues such as reflection and deliberation, are necessary to attain moral virtues. Attainment of truth, true virtues in this case, is an imperative in order to attain moral virtues. Without knowing which virtues to hone, one is lost in a sea of tendencies. Attaining excellence and making it a part of one's system are, thus, rendered impossible.

There should be a forthright concession however, that not all intellectual virtues are necessary for moral virtues. Even Aristotle admits this. In summary, having a particular set of intellectual virtues is necessary for moral virtues. Having moral virtues presupposes having some kind of intellectual virtues. Having intellectual virtues however, does not necessarily point to the direction of moral virtues (as in cases of *akrasia*²⁴), but it will be odd to think of someone who has attained moral excellence without having intended such.

Moreover, some intellectual virtues, because of their close affinity to moral virtues, run parallel to intellectual virtues, which means that they may move towards the same object. Some intellectual virtues lead us to moral virtues, whether incidentally or otherwise. A paradigmatic case in point is the virtue of open-mindedness. In the *Problems of Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell claims that a man who has been trained in the ways of philosophy, incidentally, also enlarges his not-self—that aspect of existence that does not belong to him. By allowing for possibilities, a man of philosophy becomes a

²⁴ One knows what is right, but does not follow the dictates of such reason.

yes man who simply concedes to what the universe brings him on his plate, no matter how seemingly impossible they are.²⁵ This kind of openness, in turn, enlarges him, his self and turns his perspective 360°.

This openness to possibilities, which is intellectual, translates into action, according to Russell. A man who has been conditioned to be open to everything that comes his way becomes open not just to ideas but even to the people he meets along the way. An intellectually open-minded person therefore, is also a morally open, tolerant, ethical agent.

It is also difficult to conceive of intellectual virtues to be moving against the direction of the good. When Aristotle opens the *Nicomachean Ethics* with "Every art or applied science and every systematic investigation, and similarly every action and choice, seem to aim at some good; the good, therefore, has been well defined as that at which all things aim,"²⁶ he includes truth as a possible good. If every science or investigation is aimed at some good, is not that good the truth? If this reading is correct, then do intellectual virtues not run parallel to the moral virtues whose end is the good for the moral life?

There is another contrary position to Annas' that one could take in relation to virtue ethics. Truth need not be attained, as the *skopos*, in order for the agent to be considered intellectually virtuous. In the same manner that an agent could be considered morally virtuous simply because of the moral motivational component present, he may also be called intellectually virtuous owing to his having the right intellectual motivational component. "What makes intellectual virtues intellectual is that they (or most of them) include motive dispositions connected with the motive to get truth, and reliability is entailed by the success component of the virtue."²⁷ Hence, a person could be considered intellectually virtuous, not necessarily because of the attainment of truth, but because he possesses the motives and dispositions attached to intellectual virtue. An honest man may at a time, declare something untrue, not because he wanted to, but because truth was most carefully hidden from him. This man may still be considered intellectually virtuous. Indeed, "attaining good ends is not enough (or not even required) for virtue, since one can attain good ends, and even perform appropriate actions, but have vicious motives".²⁸ Hence, intellectual virtue is akin to moral virtue.

Annas' sentiment that moral and intellectual virtues are, indeed, two different kinds of virtues. However, the difference in their structures do not

²⁵ Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Hery Holt and Company, 1912), 274.

²⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.

²⁷ Abrol Fairweather and Linda Zagzebski, eds., *Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

²⁸ Heather D. Battaly, *Virtue and Vice*, 4.

deny the innate relationship between the two. Given the significant overlaps between them, and the success of the current campaign to see knowledge in terms of virtuous knowers, one should rethink huge contentions like Annas'.

The word that we use in Filipino for wise, '*marunong*' is a rich word as it connotes the intimate interplay between the intellectual virtue of wisdom and the moral virtue, goodness. The word presents virtue as holistic, not fragmented. It reminds us that it might be difficult to separate the good life from the life of truth because a good life, for the most part, is grounded on truth. Annas rightfully cautions us not to immediately jump into the bandwagon of using and appropriating virtue ethics into epistemology; but the blurring of lines that she makes in the process of cautioning us might be another object of caution to us, for after all, the similarity between intellectual and moral virtues—as probably detected by Zagzebski—outweighs the differences.

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The Motivating Influence of Emotion on Twisted Self-Deception

Mario R. Echano

Abstract: The question on whether self-deception is intentional or not has divided philosophers into two conflicting sides. Despite the disagreement, partisans of either side tend to converge on characterizing self-deception as a kind of motivated believing. They generally agree that self-deception is motivated by desire. In fact, the basis by which they classify cases of self-deception as straight or twisted is on how desire influences the acquisition of self-deceptive belief. In the former, the desire that p (or the desire to believe that p) influences the subject's acquisition of a belief that p . In the latter, despite not desiring that p to be the case, S still acquires the belief that p . Twisted cases of self-deception, however, pose themselves as challenge to the claim that self-deception is motivated by desire. They are problematic because desiring something undesirable is a contradiction. Taking the nonintentional side of the debate, I aim to explore the most viable explanation on how motivation works on self-deception. I argue that emotions are as responsible as desire in self-deceptive belief acquisition. Following the model of lay-hypothesis testing originally laid out by social psychologists, the self-deceiver is considered as someone testing her hypothesis for its confirmation rather than for its negation. On this model, the role of desire and emotions in self-deception can be seen in the generation of the hypothesis and its actual testing. The motivating influence of emotions in biased belief acquisitions is more obvious in twisted cases especially in the triggering of the hypothesis, whereas desire's influence dominates the triggering of a hypothesis in the straight ones.

Keywords: motivation, cognitive biases, motivated believing, lay-hypothesis testing theory

1. Introduction

The debate on whether self-deception (“SD”, from hereon) is intentional or not makes it difficult for theorists to agree on a definition. Most of those who favor that SD is intentional equate it with lying to oneself, while those who claim otherwise prefer to consider it as either nonintentional misleading or as possession of motivationally biased belief. Despite the above disagreement, both intentionalists and nonintentionalists coincide on the claim that SD is motivated, according to which desire or emotions have a lot to do with its acquisition.

The motivating influence of desire in SD is the basis of one of the ways by which philosophers classify its vast and various cases. They divide SD cases based on how desire exerts an influence in the acquisition of SD belief, namely, as straight and twisted. In the former, the desire that p (or the desire to believe that p) influences the subject’s acquisition of a belief that p (“ S ” refers to the subject, while “ p ” or “ q ” to the proposition that is believed or desired). In the latter, despite not desiring p to be the case, S still acquires the belief that p .

Examples of the straight cases are numerous: in spite of overwhelming evidence of her husband’s infidelity, Laura still believes that he is faithful; Sid has been pursuing Mary for years, but despite being rejected several times he still believes that his love is reciprocated; the emperor in Andersen’s tale (“The Emperor’s New Suit”) believes that he is wearing a unique dress even though it is clear to him that he is naked.¹ The main idea about desires and their role in SD is the following: because of the desire for those beliefs to be true, self-deceivers fail to recognize the available evidence contrary to their beliefs.

In the twisted cases, the object of SD is an undesirable belief: a jealous husband acquires a false belief that his wife is unfaithful despite not wanting her to be so; anorexic Trisha falsely believes that she has a plump body even though she is thin; or Sylvia, who without wanting that she left the gas stove on, ends up believing that she left it on when in reality she did not. These cases are problematic since they pose a challenge as to how they can fit within the desire-based accounts of both intentionalists and the nonintentionalists. The question arises as to how one can desire the undesirable belief.

In the light of the twisted cases, the role of desire in the process of acquisition of SD beliefs become kind of mysterious. The self-deceivers in the above cases seem to acquire a highly undesirable belief. It is apparent that in them, desire is not fit to give a satisfactory explanation and so emotions are

¹ Hans Christian Andersen, “The Emperor’s New Suit,” in *Fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen* (Auckland: Floating Press, 2014), 234–240.

to be called upon. But if we posit an explanation apart from desire's influence, we might also be forced to admit, like some theorists (e.g. Gardiner, Lazar, etc.), that indeed there is no homogenous explanation for SD and that each case must be treated as unique.² If it were so, it would be harder to identify what really counts as SD.

Other theorists (e.g. Pears, Dalglish, Mele) invoke the role of emotions for twisted SD.³ Indeed, Pears regards such instances of twisted SD as emotional cases.⁴ However, how exactly emotions work along the process of SD belief acquisition is still a matter of controversy. It becomes more problematic because some theorists equate motivation to desire and thus a line is drawn between the concepts of emotions and motivation. On the one hand, Dalglish, Lazar, and Mele speak of an emotional biasing influence different from motivational ones to refer to the biasing influence caused by desire. On the other hand, for most theorists (e.g. Scott-Kakures, Barnes, etc.), there is no such distinction.⁵ They are simply motivational states responsible for the SD belief acquisition.

In any case, the above distinction and the seeming impossibility to provide a unified approach to SD complicate the assessment of the role of emotions in SD. And so, even if desires and emotions can be both understood as motivations, there is a need to clarify their respective roles in the process of motivationally biased belief acquisition.

In this work, I aim to explore the role of emotions in SD, thereby exposing that both cases of SD undergo the same processes of biased belief acquisition. While this role is not apparent in those desirable cases, this role is more tangible in those undesirable ones. By adopting the model of lay-hypothesis testing originally introduced in social psychology in explaining the process of motivated belief acquisition, a homogenous explanation can be provided. In section 2, I will situate the problem within the debate. I will side with the nonintentionalists in their claim that SD is not necessarily intentional. In the third and fourth sections, I will consider how some intentional and nonintentional accounts have dealt with the problem of the

² See Patrick Gardiner, "Error, Faith, and Self-Deception," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 70 (1970), 221–240; and Ariela Lazar, "Deceiving Oneself or Self-Deceived? On the Formation of Beliefs Under the Influence," in *Mind* 108:430 (1999), 265–290.

³ See David F. Pears, *Motivated Irrationality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 41–50; Tim Dalglish, "Once More with Feeling: The Role of Emotion in Self-Deception," in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 20 (1997), 110–111; and Alfred Mele, "Emotion and Desire in Self-Deception," in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, ed., by Anthony Hatzimoysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 163–179.

⁴ Pears, *Motivated Irrationality* 43–44.

⁵ See Dion Scott-Kakures, "Motivated Believing: Wishful and Unwelcome," in *Nous*, 34:3 (2000), 348–375; and Annette Barnes, *Seeing Through Self-deception* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

twisted cases of SD. In the last section, I will attempt to sketch how emotions can trigger the processes for the cognitive endorsement of an undesirable belief which can thereby activate the acquisition of that motivationally biased belief.

2. Intentional and NonIntentional Self-Deception Debate

The intentionalists and the nonintentionalists have different ways of assessing cases of SD such as those examples above. Intentionalists often interpret them as modeled after deception of others. More colloquially, they speak of the self-deceivers as lying to themselves. For them, the self-deceivers, while believing that p , intend to make themselves believe that not- p . The emperor, for example, believes that he is naked while he tries to make himself believe that he has a wonderful suit on; or the jealous husband believing that his wife is faithful lies to himself when he believes that she is unfaithful.

But treating those cases of SD as a kind of lying to oneself is problematic. The problem will be clearer if we begin by taking a usual case of lying to others as an example: the case of my lying to Antonio for instance. When I lie to him that tomorrow is my birthday, my deceptive intention can be fulfilled only if he is not aware of my intention. Otherwise, I will not be able to deceive him. Moreover, if my lie succeeds, I believe that not- p while he believes that p (where p is “tomorrow is my birthday”). Once this scenario is applied to “lying to myself,” the difficulty becomes obvious. If I am going to lie to myself that p , I must not let myself know that I intend (or plan or try) to deceive myself, or else I won’t succeed. Also, if we accept the analogy between other-deception and SD, the self-deceiver will hold two contradictory beliefs, i.e., that p and that not- p . In other words, I would believe that it is my birthday tomorrow and that it is not my birthday tomorrow. Baghramian and Nicholson characterize the two conditions for SD modeled after lying to oneself as:

- A) Dual-belief condition: the self-deceived subject simultaneously holds (at least at one time point) two contradictory beliefs: p and not- p .
- B) Deceptive intention condition: the subject intends or tries to deceive herself.⁶

⁶ See Maria Baghramian and Anna Nicholson, “The Puzzle of Self-Deception,” in *Philosophy Compass* 8:11 (2013), 1018.

Mele effectively speaks of two fatal paradoxes which are the results of these conditions as: the *dynamic* or intention paradox, consisting in the difficulty to imagine how the self-deceiver can succeed in deceiving herself when she already knows what she is up to; and the *static* paradox, which is about the psychologically questionable state of the subject's holding of two contradictory beliefs.⁷

Intentionalists have offered several solutions to overcome the puzzles. The most common strategy is by introducing a certain partition within the self which could be of three types. The most moderate will be those of Demos, McLaughlin, and Bermudez, who in one way or another suggest that *S* believes that *p* and not-*p* at the same time while not being aware that *S* believes so.⁸ The most extreme partitioning strategy will be that of King-Farlow and Rorty who introduced several selves within the *S*, allowing each of them to be deceiver and deceived at different turns.⁹ At the middle will be those of Davidson whose mental partitioning allows *S* to believe that *p* because of her belief that not-*p*;¹⁰ and Pears whose division between a main system and a subsystem within *S* allows for the possibility of the subsystem to intentionally deceive the main system, and thus, *S* believes that *p* and that not-*p* at the same time.¹¹ Partitioning strategies apparently solve both the *dynamic* and the *static* paradoxes. It solves the former because it allows different centers of agencies within the self who are capable of deceptive intention. It also solves the latter because these different centers of agency within the self are also capable of holding beliefs that are contradictory.

However, these solutions have met a lot of criticisms because they generate a set of puzzles more problematic than the initial paradoxes. For example, the degrees of autonomy and intentionality attributed to the subsystems for them to be able to deceive each other have led to the problem of infinite regress. Sissela Bok says that if we postulate that the selves are themselves split into selves capable of deceiving one another, we may end up with a myriad of self-propagating little self.¹² Another objection is that this

⁷ See Alfred Mele, *Self-deception Unmasked* (United States: Princeton University Press, 2001), 59–67.

⁸ See Raphael Demos, "Lying to Oneself," in *The Journal of Philosophy* 57:18 (1960); Brian P. McLaughlin, "Exploring the Possibility of Self-Deception in Belief," in *Perspectives on Self-deception*, ed. by Brian McLaughlin and Amelie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 29–62; and José Luis Bermúdez, "Self-Deception, Intentions, and Contradictory Beliefs," in *Analysis* 60:4 (2000), 309–319.

⁹ See John King-Farlow, "Self-deceivers and Sartrean Seducers," in *Analysis* 23 (1963), 131–136; and Amelie Rorty, "The Deceptive Self: Liars, Layers, and Lairs," in *Perspectives on Self-deception*, 11–28.

¹⁰ See Donald Davidson, "Deception and Division," in *The Multiple Self*, ed. by Jon Elster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹¹ See David F. Pears, "The Goals and Strategies of Self-Deception," in *The Multiple Self*.

¹² See Sissela Bok, "The self deceived," *Social Science Information* 19:6 (1980), 931.

solution to divide the self into subsystems is just another type of interpersonal deception, only that the partitioner has simply substituted interhumoncular deception for SD.¹³

Other intentionalists suggested a different strategy to solve the paradox. They introduce the temporal partitioning (time slicing strategy) that leads to self-induced deception. An example of this case would be Marta who wants to forget about a meeting fixed in a month. So that she may miss it, she writes a wrong date on her diary. Given her poor memory, she trusts that in a month she will believe her own writing and forget about the original date. She then believes the false date and disbelieves the factual date. This strategy, however, has also been criticized for not being a case of SD. What Marta did was to put herself in the condition of believing *p*. Besides, no dual believing really happened. She does not believe that there was a meeting until she learned so later. And by time she realized she did miss the meeting, she now believes only that there was a meeting. This case may be intentional but there is no possession of contradictory beliefs.

On these grounds, nonintentionalists found the intentionalists' accounts of SD unsatisfactory. Since deceptive intention is what makes SD puzzling, nonintentionalists denied that it is necessary for SD. Common among the nonintentionalists' strategy is to deflate the dual belief requirement to possession of only a false belief and the intentional requirement to motivational influences (e.g. desire and emotions) in acquiring a biased belief. For them, it is not necessary for the self-deceiver to intend to deceive themselves. In the case of the emperor for example, without such deceptive intention, he fell into believing that he is wearing a new suit. And although he may be aware that he is naked, he just believes that he is fully clothed. The same interpretation could be given to other cases. The jealous husband does not really have any intention to deceive himself about his wife's infidelity; he just found himself so deceived.

But there are also sound objections against the nonintentional accounts. I will point out three of the most basic. First, because of their deflationary approach, they seem to be talking about a phenomenon other than SD. There is a tendency to confuse them with wishful thinking and delusions. Besides, through the approach they have removed or at least have lessened the paradoxes which make SD interesting. By doing so, they also make SD less thought-provoking. Second, by removing the intention element in SD, they lessen the responsibility of the self-deceiver in her SD which makes it difficult to assess its morality. Third, according to the intentionalists, the nonintentional accounts succumb to the problem of selectivity of SD. If

¹³ See Mark Johnston, "Self-deception and Nature of the Mind," in *Perspectives on Self-deception*, 64.

cases of SD were just following the whims of desires, impulses, and instinct, why is it that the self-deceiver decides on the circumstances of SD? For example, she chooses when and what to deceive herself about. The only answer is that she selects the object and the circumstances of SD. And this requires intention. We will see more of this in the next section.

3. Twisted Self-Deception within the Intentional Accounts

Very early in the debate, Demos has already pointed out cases of SD which are twisted. He has assumed that in terms of acquisition, the processes are just like those of the straight kind. When people lie to themselves, they can deceive themselves in favor of something pleasant or about something unpleasant. In both kinds of SD, there is a homogeneous explanation. Demos states:

My own analysis of self-deception follows a similar line. As with *akrasia*, there is an impulse favoring one belief at the expense of its contradictory; and the person who lies to himself, because of yielding to impulse, fails to notice or ignores what he knows to be the case.¹⁴

The long lists of intentionalists who came after Demos seem busier in explaining how SD is possible despite the paradoxes. It has led them to pay less attention to cases of twisted SD. Majority of them believe that, if there is deceptive intention, cases of SD can be explained homogenously. Nelkin echoes this assumption: "Intentionalists have a ready analysis of what is common to both straight and twisted cases: the self-deceiver forms the intention to deceive herself, succeeds, and the result is self-deception."¹⁵ Even though the SD belief that *p* is undesirable, the self-deceiver can still believe it because of her intention to deceive. Another homogenous explanation for all cases of SD is through its selectivity. Talbott's and Bermudez's respective accounts of SD are perfect examples of such a unified approach to SD.¹⁶ They argue that SD is selective. The self-deceiver chooses the circumstances when it is most appropriate to deceive herself. In fact, it would be disadvantageous for a creature were she to deceive herself only based on impulse or whims. If SD were nonintentional, humans would not survive, for desire would only

¹⁴ Demos, "Lying to Oneself," 594.

¹⁵ Dana Nelkin, "Responsibility and Self-Deception: A Framework," in *Humana Mentis Journal of Philosophical Studies* 20 (2012), 387.

¹⁶ See William, J. Talbott, "Intentional Self-Deception in a Single Coherent Self," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55:1 (1995); and Bermúdez, "Self-Deception, Intentions, and Contradictory Beliefs," 309–319.

be after hedonistic goals. Indeed, they can choose to believe that which is unpleasant because they can intend to bias their belief or to desire to believe what is undesirable.

Both deceptive intention and the selectivity of SD arguments for twisted cases sound appealing. But desiring the undesirable is something hard to reconcile for it implies contradiction. Pears has already pointed this out when he talked about emotional cases of SD which are characteristically twisted. He has considered that, like the straight cases, they also have desirable goals. But while the latter's goal is geared towards the acquisition of a favorable belief, the former's acquisition of the unfavorable belief is just a means toward an ulterior goal:

So far, the assumption has been that in self-deception the motivation is always provided by a wish for some desirable goal. But is there always a desirable goal? And is there always a wish for it or are we sometimes merely programmed to go for it?

Consider self-deception caused by fear or jealousy. These emotions often lead people to form intrinsically unpleasant beliefs against the promptings of reason... In the case of fear, we may conjecture that the ulterior goal is avoiding the danger, and that it is best achieved by exaggerating it and so making quite sure of taking the necessary steps. Similarly, we may say that that the exaggerated speculations of jealousy, which are intrinsically unpleasant, the best way of making sure of elimination all rivals. In both cases the belief is a kind of bitter medicine.¹⁷

Even though there is a presumptive desirable goal of eliminating all rivals, desiring the undesirable belief that his wife is unfaithful is still problematic. Pears, in continuation, has spelled out the problem: "But neither fear nor jealousy cause people to want..., to form exaggerated beliefs. What, then, is the justification for postulating a wish in these cases?"¹⁸ In short, it is unthinkable for *S* to want the unwanted beliefs that jealousy and fear triggered. Since they are not wishful, it is simply difficult to see how emotion can trigger the desire to form disagreeable beliefs. His way out of this problem is to resort to the adaptive character of emotions:

¹⁷ Pears, *Motivated Irrationality*, 42–43.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

There is presumably, a wish for the ulterior goal, safety or elimination of rival, but nature takes over at this point and sets up an emotional programme that ensures its achievements. The plan is nature and not the person's, and that is why the formation of the intrinsically unpleasant belief is not felt to be the object of the wish.¹⁹

Our emotions are adapted to respond in a manner appropriate to the stimuli. In the case above, jealousy might have exaggerated *p* as to compel *S* to embrace it in view of another goal. If it were the case, the acquisition of twisted SD differs greatly from the straight sort.

The rest of the intentionalists can still insist that deceptive intention can bring *S* to hold the undesirable belief that *p*, but they need to explain how it is possible. It is contradictory to desire to believe something undesirable. And Pears was right to invoke the role of emotion in those cases. But then, again, if it were the case, there would be more than one way of explaining the phenomenon.

Fitting twisted cases within desire-based explanation is problematic. It has even led people to ask whether they are really cases of SD, or whether they are special kinds of SD, or whether SD is really motivated. Ultimately, the problem of twisted SD involves the problem of accounting for the nature of SD. These questions, I think, can be sidestepped if we can find the proper place for emotions in SD which, as we have seen, have not been given attention by the intentionalists until Pears's discussion of the emotional cases.

4. The Nonintentional Twisted Self-Deception Accounts

Before dealing with motivating roles of emotions on SD, I will first review the major nonintentional approaches to twisted SD. Three major accounts can be identified from the literature: 1) the anxiety reliever account, 2) motivated biasing account, 3) and the purely emotional account.

The anxiety reliever account has been originally developed by Johnston and later modified by Barnes. Johnston has proposed that SD belief is generated by "*S*'s desire that *p* and his anxiety that not-*p*."²⁰ Barnes has found this inappropriate for twisted cases. The husband's SD belief that *p* (she is unfaithful) cannot be due to his anxiety that not-*p* (she is not unfaithful) because no anxiety would be reduced in such a case. Hence, to fit twisted cases, Barnes reformulated Johnston's as: "desire that *p* and anxiety that *q*" where *q* could refer to other worries. In the case of the jealous husband, *q* is

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁰ See Johnston, "Self-deception and Nature of the Mind," 50–86.

the belief that “an esteemed colleague has a higher regard for her than for himself.”²¹ To reduce his anxiety that q , he ends up believing that his wife is unfaithful.

My objection to this account is that this might not be applicable with all cases of twisted SD. It may work in the case of the jealous husband, because the anxiety that q is greater than the anxiety that p . But it is difficult to use the account with other cases where it is hard to look for more anxious belief that q which can justify an anxious belief that p . Take the case of Trisha, the anorexic who holds the anxious belief that p , i.e., she is fat. It is simply hard to find a more anxious belief that q to justify that p . But since given that SD is an irrationality, the self-deceiver’s going for the less desirable belief seems conceivable. What may seem trivial to us, may not be to the twisted self-deceiver. Another objection is that of Scott-Kakures who argues against Barnes’s approach because rather than reducing the anxiety oftentimes, the preferred undesirable beliefs cause more anxiety.²² Mele has also raised his concerns because it is questionable whether all cases of SD involve anxious desire. For him, a self-deceiver can deceive herself even without being anxious about what she believes.²³

The second nonintentional approach is the one proposed by Mele and largely shared by Scott-Kakures. To explain SD, they have subscribed to the lay-hypothesis testing model proposed by Trope and Liberman,²⁴ Kunda,²⁵ Friedrich,²⁶ and Lewicka,²⁷ among others. The theory is based on the mechanism of the confirmation bias or what Baron calls “my-side” bias.²⁸ Confirmation bias (as a cognitive bias) functions independently of motivation. According to Kunda, people tend to confirm/favor their preexisting beliefs. The mere fact that a hypothesis is proposed or generated, people’s tendency is to conduct questions leading to its confirmation, which

²¹ Barnes, *Seeing Through Self-deception*, 36.

²² See Scott-Kakures, “Motivated Believing: Wishful and Unwelcome,” 368–369.

²³ See Mele, *Self-Deception Unmasked*, 55–56.

²⁴ Yaacov Trope and Akiva Liberman, “Social Hypothesis Testing: Cognitive and Motivational Mechanisms,” in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, ed. by E. T. Higgins and A. W. Kruglanski (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), 239–270.

²⁵ Ziva Kunda, *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).

²⁶ James Friedrich, “Primary error detection and minimization (PEDMIN) strategies in social cognition: A reinterpretation of confirmation bias phenomena,” in *Psychological Review* 100:2 (1993), 298–319.

²⁷ Maria Lewicka, “Confirmation bias: Cognitive error or adaptive strategy of action control?” in *Personal Control in Action: Cognitive and Motivational Mechanisms*, ed. by M. Kofta, G. Weary, and G. Sedek, (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1998), 233–258.

²⁸ Jonathan Baron, *Thinking and Deciding* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 203.

Kunda calls positive-test-strategy.²⁹ But with motivation, this tendency is bolstered.³⁰ In cases of straight SD, the application of the theory is quite direct. For example, without being motivated, the emperor would easily acknowledge his nakedness, or that Laura could easily recognize the evidence of her cheating husband, or that Sid can easily realize that his affection for Mary is not being reciprocated. Being motivated, the emperor, Laura, and Sid believe only the opposite.

Twisted cases can also be explained through the same biasing mechanisms of motivated beliefs. The idea is that *S* tends to confirm even the undesirable motivated beliefs since desires and/or emotions make the evidence supporting such beliefs more apparent to *S*. Scott-Kakures and Mele both advocate the use of hypothesis testing theories of Friedrich³¹ and that of Trope and Liberman.³² They both agree that emotions have an important role in twisted SD but do not seem to agree as to what this role consists in. On the one hand, Scott-Kakures considers it as a kind of motivation along with desire. As such, they share the functions of motivation in the biasing processes which he divides into two: 1) motivation triggers the hypothesis, thus initiating the cognitive biasing processes; and 2) motivation continuously supports the biasing processes as that of what happens in a typical hypothesis tester.³³ On the other hand, Mele reduces the role of emotions to being constituents of desire. From the very start, desire is actively biasing the processes by boosting the cognitive biasing mechanism which is directed at avoiding costly errors. This in turn, leads to confirmation of the motivated hypothesis rather than its rejection.³⁴

The third approach to twisted cases is proposed by Lazar and Dalglish. They argue that the effects of emotions on belief formation is obvious in both cases of SD. On one hand, Lazar exploits the fact of how 'mood shifts' can result to different interpretation of events or cases. It means that depending on a person's emotional states, an instance can be interpreted in different ways. This is more evident in twisted cases. For example, in the case of our jealous husband: "...in the grip of intense jealousy, (he) sees 'incriminating' evidence wherever he turns. In the grip of jealousy or rage, every aspect of his wife's behavior seems suspicious, while her affectionate

²⁹ See Kunda, *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People*, 113.

³⁰ See Alfred Mele, "When are we self-deceived?," in *Humana Mente Journal of Philosophical Studies* 20 (2012), 7.

³¹ Friedrich, "Primary error detection and minimization (PEDMIN) strategies in social cognition: A reinterpretation of confirmation bias phenomena," 298–319.

³² Trope and Liberman, "Social hypothesis testing: Cognitive and Motivational Mechanisms," 239–270.

³³ See Scott-Kakures, "Motivated Believing: Wishful and Unwelcome," 356–360.

³⁴ See Mele, *Self-Deception Unmasked*, 44–46.

behavior and consistent support are not given their due weight.”³⁵ On the other hand, Dalgleish proposes for emotionally biasing processes like that of Mele’s motivationally biased belief acquisition processes. Dalgleish explains that “it is inappropriate to suggest that jealous persons desire or are motivated to find that their partners are unfaithful; rather, their emotional state is priming the relevant processing systems to gather evidence in a biased fashion.”³⁶ It can only be surmised that since twisted cases are highly emotional, such biasing processes triggered by emotions are more appropriate for those cases.

There is such a possibility that emotions have an independent role in the biasing processes. However, the recent literatures reviewed by Bower and Forgas³⁷ regarding the interaction between emotion and cognition cannot support Lazar’s and Dalgleish’s claim for a sort of emotional roles (independent of desire) in the priming of the psychological mechanism that results in an acquisition of biased false beliefs. The lack of empirical evidence, however, might suggest that they have the same effect as desire in the triggering of the hypothesis that p which leads in the belief that p .

5. Emotions as Motivational Triggers of Hypothesis

There are other authors aside from Dalgleish and Lazar who have stressed the importance of the role of emotions in SD. A pioneer in this field would be De Sousa.³⁸ But his main interest has been to unravel why we often deceive ourselves about how we feel. He claims that emotions are intrinsically deceptive. This in turn may have an influence on our SD about our beliefs. In this sense, emotions have the same role as desire in motivating the self-deceiver into acquisition of her belief. He has not tackled, however, in what way they can motivate. And so, although he has not elaborated on the economy of SD belief acquisition, De Sousa assumes that emotions have a motivating influence in “self-deception focusing on belief.”³⁹ Other important theorists on emotional role in SD would be Sahdra and Thagard who approach SD through a computational model of emotional coherence. According to them, every judgment regarding a belief implies an emotional assessment or valence. One is self-deceived when the valence about a belief

³⁵ Lazar, “Deceiving Oneself or Self-Deceived? On the Formation of Beliefs Under the Influence,” 281.

³⁶ Dalgleish, “Once More with Feeling: The Role of Emotion in Self-Deception,” 110.

³⁷ Gordon Bower and Joseph Forgas, “Affect, Memory and Social Cognition,” in *Feeling and Thinking: The Role of Affect in Social Cognition*, ed. by Joseph Forgas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 87–157.

³⁸ Ronald de Sousa, “Emotion and self-deception,” in *Perspectives on Self-deception*, 324–343.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 327.

coheres with her subjective goals at the mercy of what should be the case or of the facts.⁴⁰

These studies on emotional roles on SD and the likes of them are relevant but they are not the roles of emotion that I am looking for in this study. My concern is much more basic than theirs in that I am dealing with the motivating roles of emotions in the biasing processes leading to the acquisition of SD belief which De Sousa assumed and that may be reason why Sahdra and Thagard see a valence in the belief of the self-deceiver.

Just like what De Sousa assumes, emotions have “a causal or motivational role” in SD.⁴¹ But just how emotions can motivate the acquisition of SD belief is still a matter of debate. Pears, as discussed above, differentiates between straight (wishful believing) types and twisted (emotional) types of SD which in dealing with the emotional types, the role of emotions is explained away by resorting to the adaptive character of emotions. The approach is a shortcut that leaves a lot of explanatory loopholes. Besides, he makes it appear that wishful types do not involve any role for emotions. Barnes’s account of SD, for her part, focuses more on the relief from anxiety (considering it as an emotion) as a motivating factor which accommodates both straight and twisted cases. But, as discussed above, anxiety may not be applicable to all cases of SD. Besides, if indeed the goal of the self-deceiver is to be relieved of her anxiety about a certain belief, in the twisted cases such belief is often a cause of greater anxiety. In the case of the jealous husband, we can question why he would prefer to believe that his wife is unfaithful to be relieved of the anxiety that the colleague has a higher regard for his wife than for him. Even if it is possible, it could be shown that the self-deceiver fell into that kind of irrationality because of some motivating influences on SD belief acquisition.

The accounts that represent a motivational approach fitting all cases of SD are those of Scott-Kakures and Mele whose model is that of lay-hypothesis testing based from Friedrich and Trope and Libermann.⁴² As noted above, Scott-Kakures has not differentiated between emotions and desire: they are both motivating influences responsible for SD belief acquisition. As such, they have dual functions of (1) triggering (the hypothesis) and (2) sustaining the processes of confirmation (of the hypothesis) leading to a biased acquisition of the belief represented by the hypothesis. Mele shares the same explanations in the acquisition of the biased belief that *p*. However, he focused more on the second aspect of motivational

⁴⁰ Baljinder Sahdra and Paul Thagard, “Self-Deception and Emotional Coherence,” in *Minds and Machines* 13 (2003), 213–231.

⁴¹ Ronald de Sousa, “Self-deceptive Emotions,” in *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1978), 684.

⁴² Mele refers to this model as FTL theory as it is based on the theories of Friedrich, Trope, and Liberman.

functions. And he hardly speaks of the triggering of the hypothesis phase. Unlike Scott-Kakures who considers desires and emotions as motivation, Mele's understanding of motivation is solely equated with desire. He accepts that emotions can have a role but only as constituents of motivation. Apart from that, he doubts that emotion has an influence in the acquisition of SD belief parallel to that of desire.⁴³ In any case, both Scott-Kakures and Mele agree that in the second phase of hypothesis testing, the basic desire that motivates the hypothesis tester (in our case, the self-deceiver) is the avoidance of costly error. Mele argues that it is mostly a scheme of this unconscious desire which brings about the acquisition of SD belief. Scott-Kakures, however, maintains that the motivating influence of emotion and desire are continuously supporting the processes in support of that basic desire for avoidance of costly errors.⁴⁴

For Mele and Scott-Kakures, the role of emotion in motivationally biased belief acquisition is eclipsed by the role of desire. On the one hand, Mele reduces the role of emotions to being constituent of desire. A specific role for emotion in this sense is out of the picture. It can be seen on how he rejects Dalglish's assumption that emotion has an influence in the acquisition of SD belief parallel to that of desire.⁴⁵ On the other, Scott-Kakures's discussion is generic in the sense that emotions share this role with desire. And so, no specific role for emotion is elaborated.

In straight cases, whether emotion is involved seems irrelevant. Desire that *p* is sufficient to explain them: the self-deceiver wants *p* and so believes that *p*. In the twisted cases, the role of desire conflicts with the fact that it is hard to desire the undesirable. Here, the nonintentional motivationally biased belief accounts of SD based on lay-hypothesis testing theory accommodate well the twisted cases. If the account is right, once emotions trigger the hypothesis that *p* (e.g., "whether the wife is unfaithful," or "whether I left the burner flame on," or "whether I am fat"), testing for its confirmation is initiated. At least, in this triggering function, the role of emotion is obvious. It is jealousy that triggers the hypothesis of the wife's infidelity; fear that triggers the hypothesis that I have left the gas on or that there is a monster under my bed; and anxiety that I am fat. It is hard to see desire triggering such hypotheses.

In short, typical cases of twisted SD involved emotions influencing *S* to acquire belief that *p*. Here is a basic sketch of the process: emotions trigger a hypothesis that *p*; once *p* is triggered, it is proposed for confirmation. As *S* is biased towards *p* she ends up believing that *p*. We can see the case of the jealous husband fitting this description. In the sudden burst of jealousy, the

⁴³ Mele, "Emotion and Desire in Self-Deception," 174.

⁴⁴ Scott-Kakures, "Motivated Believing: Wishful and Unwelcome," 365

⁴⁵ Mele, "Emotion and Desire in Self-Deception," 175.

possibility of infidelity of his wife looms in his mind. He might start entertaining thoughts that could heighten his imagination of his wife's infidelity. He starts to look for grounds to support this hypothesis, ignoring contrary evidence. He ends up self-deceived that his wife is unfaithful. The same thing could happen in cases of fear. The attack of fear could spur the imagination to create a vision of a monster or a ghost. Once this is formed, a hypothesis that there is a monster, or a ghost could be formulated. The end-product is a SD belief that there is a ghost or a monster.

If there is a difference in the acquisition of the two kinds of SD belief, it pertains to how the hypothesis that p is triggered or generated. As emotions may trigger hypotheses whose objects are undesirable, so do desires (hunger, wants, hopes, lusts, etc.) most likely trigger pleasant hypotheses which can initiate the motivationally biased testing for confirmation. More often, associated pleasant emotions may also accompany such desires that can enhance the sustenance of testing for the confirmation of the hypothesis.

Given that, as opposed to Dalgleish and Lazar, I do not propose a different way of SD belief acquisition for twisted cases. In this account, emotions and desires are both motivating influences whose main function is to trigger a negative or a positive hypothesis, respectively. And so, the worry that there is not a homogenous approach to SD is somehow answered here. Emotions are a sort of motivating influence just like desires are. This account also complements Mele's FTL (Friedrich-Trope-Liberman) theory of lay-hypothesis testing. In explaining the FTL model, he has focused more in the second phase of theory proposed by the author, whereby an independent emotional role as suggested by Dalgleish and Lazar is denied. I must agree with him that in this second stage emotion is subsumed under desire in influencing the self-deceiver in his confirmatory quest of the triggered hypothesis. As with Scott-Kakures the function of motivation in the second phase is a sustenance of the hypothesis testing whose main adaptive ingredient is itself a desire to minimize or avoid costly errors. In all, the most specific role that we can ascribe to emotion is that of a motivating influence in the triggering or generating of the hypothesis that leads mostly to the acquisition of the twisted SD belief.

Conclusion

In this work, I have attempted to sketch a nonintentional account of SD that aims to address the problem regarding its twisted cases. I have argued that emotions are the main motivating influence in the acquisition of such SD beliefs. Specifically, their role lies in the triggering of the unfavorable hypothesis that p leading to the acquisition of the belief that p . Even though I posit emotions as triggers distinct from that of desires, I still maintain that the

process of SD belief acquisition is homogeneous, given that desires and emotions are both motivating influence in the triggering or generation of the hypothesis.

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Logic of Identity and Identity of Contradiction

Rudi Capra

Abstract: Western philosophy has mainly developed in accordance with the three laws of identity, noncontradiction and excluded middle, also known as “laws of thought”. Since Zen Buddhism often violates these apparently indisputable logical principles, a superficial reading may induce the idea that Zen Buddhism is a completely irrational, illogical doctrine. In this essay, I argue that Zen Buddhism is not absurd or illogical. Conversely, it relies on a different logic, which is perfectly consonant with the Buddhist view of the world.

Keywords: Zen, logic, identity, contradiction

On the one hand, philosophical discourse in the West has mainly developed in accordance to the fundamental axioms known as “laws of thought,” whose earliest explicit formulation (even if not systematically organized) appeared in the Platonic-Aristotelian corpus. These rules are the *law of identity*, the *law of noncontradiction*, and the *law of excluded middle*. In Classical philosophy and logic, these principles were conventionally credited with underlying any valid thought process.

It has been pointed out, on the other hand, that the tradition of Zen Buddhism systematically violated these apparently self-evident axioms, resulting in anti-logical or a-logical conclusions which were frequently judged (especially by Western readers) as paradoxical, or even nonsensical. Thus, Zen Buddhism is often regarded as a cult of the absurd for its emphasis on the narrowness of the ordinary mind (limited by logical constraints) in respect to the openness of the state of “pure mind” or “no mind.”

In this essay, I argue that Zen Buddhism, far from being a cult of the absurd, is *only apparently* nonsensical and irrational. In order to do that, I first expound, in detail, the three laws of thought as they were conceived in the original Platonic-Aristotelian corpus. Successively, I explain why these principles are openly rejected in the Buddhist view. Lastly, I argue that Zen

is not plainly illogical, but rather relies on a different logic that cannot merely be dismissed as absurd.

The Three Laws of Thought

George Boole (1854) was the first to define the principles of identity, noncontradiction, and excluded middle as “laws of thought” in his second monograph on algebraic logic. However, the implicit adoption and repeated application of these laws in the construction of logical and philosophical (even ontological) theories has been central throughout the history of Western thought. In fact, their earliest known formulation dates back to the Classical age of ancient Greece.

In the context of Greek philosophy, there is a relationship of conceptual filiation between Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle, expressly revealed by Plato, who refers to the older writer as “father Parmenides” (πατὴρ Παρμενίδου).¹ In fact, Parmenides was the first to theorize, in his philosophical poem *On Nature*, the mutual exclusivity of “What-is” and “What-is-not,” establishing then, and once for all, a(n) (onto)logical notion of identity as an irreducible, fundamental feature of What-is, being necessarily identical to itself, and necessarily different from What-is-not.²

This achievement was not at all banal, nor undisputed, since before Parmenides, another influential philosopher, Heraclitus, in a homonymous philosophical treatise, had described the universe (*kosmos*) as a dynamic flux in which all identities, despite being apparently unchangeable and opposite, are actually complementary components of the cosmic unity.

Unsurprisingly, both Heraclitus’ and Parmenides’ positions are briefly compared in Plato’s *Theaetetus* where the law of identity (hereafter referred to as LID) is first formulated. In the text, Socrates mediates between the Heraclitean doctrine of flux and the Parmenidean doctrine of motionlessness, suggesting that Parmenides, despite his obscurity, seems worthy of reverence or veneration (αἰδοῖος). Then, even if roughly exposed, a basic concept of identity, and *ipso facto* a basic concept of difference (that is, non-identity), are undoubtedly present in this dialogue:

Socrates: Now take a sound and a color. First of all, don’t you think this same thing about both of them, that they both are?

Theaetetus: I do.

¹ Plato, *Sophist*, trans. by Nicholas P. White, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper and Douglas S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 241d.

² Parmenides, *On Nature* (fragments), in Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1974), fragments 2-3.

Socrates: Also that each of them is different from the other and the same as itself?

Theaetetus: Of course.

Socrates: And that both together are two, and each of them is one?

Theaetetus: Yes, I think that too.³

The logical form of the LID can then be expressed by the logical notation $A=A$, meaning that any conceivable considered entity is necessarily identical to itself. The LID, even if not explicitly formulated there, is repeatedly employed in Aristotle's works, for instance when he attempts to demonstrate the validity of the second of these laws, the law of noncontradiction, which is nonetheless ultimately dependent upon (and necessarily implied by) the LID.⁴

The law of noncontradiction (hereafter described as LNC), which had again been implicitly accepted by Parmenides, and openly rejected by Heraclitus, was implicitly present in several Platonic dialogues. Plato also explicitly formulated the principle in the *Republic*:

The same thing clearly cannot act or be acted upon in the same part or in relation to the same thing at the same time, in contrary ways.⁵

In several passages of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle formulates the LNC in a logical and ontological form:

It is impossible that the same thing belong and not belong to the same thing at the same time and in the same respect.⁶

The most certain of all basic principles is that contradictory propositions are not true simultaneously.⁷

In logical notation, the LNC could be expressed as $\sim(A\wedge\sim A)$. In Aristotle's view it was "the most certain [$\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta$] of all principles."⁸

³ Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. by M.J. Levett, rev. by Myles Burnyeat, in *Plato: Complete Works*, 185ab.

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. by Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 1004b.

⁵ Plato, *Republic*, G.M.A. Grube, rev. by C.D.C. Reeve, in *Plato: Complete Works*, 436b.

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1005b19-20.

⁷ *Ibid*, 1011b13-14.

⁸ *Ibid*, 1005b24.

Avicenna was slightly more explicit, claiming that

Anyone who denies the law of noncontradiction should be beaten and burned until he admits that to be beaten is not the same as not to be beaten, and to be burned is not the same as not to be burned.⁹

Indeed, if the LID is accepted in the first place, the LNC cannot but follow as a direct implication. In fact, once the idea of a specific irreducible identity is posed, that same identity cannot but reveal its manifest specificity and irreducibility in respect to all other conceivable entities. In other words, any contingent identity of an entity to itself directly implies the idea of difference of the same entity in respect to any other entity; it does naturally follow that identity and difference, in respect to the same entity, are mutually exclusive, and therefore, contradictory.

In a similar way, the third of these laws, the law of the excluded middle (from now on referred to as LEM) is nothing but a direct consequence of the first two assumptions. Once the notions of identity, and contradictoriness are given as premises, it is clear that any true proposition entails a false negation, and *vice versa*. As Aristotle puts it, “it will not be possible to be and not to be the same thing.”¹⁰ Therefore, the possibility of a third term (the aforementioned “middle”) is to be excluded (*tertium non datur*). Or, again in Aristotle’s words,

there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate.¹¹

The combined set of LID, LNC, and LEM has never been questioned in the domain of formal logic until the early 20th century, when modern developments and ideas led to the formulation of revolutionary forms of logic, such as intuitionistic logic.

However, it is important to note that these principles did not remain enclosed in the narrow field of formal logic. They have been, instead almost unconditionally endorsed within traditional ontological, metaphysical, and even scientific theoretical speculations, following the path traced by Father Parmenides who first theorized the triadic proximity of Being (εἶναι), Thought (νοεῖν), and Discourse (λέγειν), a conceptual configuration which

⁹ Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, trans. by Michael E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), I.11.105a4–5.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1004ab.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 1007a.

has exercised a remarkable influence on the historical development of Western philosophy.¹²

In fact, without the adoption of these principles there could have been neither substance (οὐσία), nor essence (τὸ τί), neither object (ἀντικείμενον), nor subject (ὑποκείμενον), nor would the conception of the Cartesian ego have been possible.

It is precisely the irrefutable status of the logic of identity (and its implications) in its logical, ontological, psychological usage that has been harshly and repeatedly targeted by the modern and contemporary *maîtres du soupçon*: Nietzsche, Freud, Derrida, and Deleuze.¹³ Whereas the Western philosophical tradition mainly developed as a patient construction of majestic theoretical architectures starting from a few solid conceptual grounds, these aforementioned philosophers advocated for a gradual dismantlement of those grounds that, in the meanwhile, had become impenetrable walls, insurmountable limits of thought.

In particular, the general acceptance of the above-described laws led to labelling as absurd, irrational, “poetic” or laughable all theories and philosophical views that would totally or partially reject them.¹⁴ In the next section, I will briefly expose some fundamental traits of the Buddhist worldview, and illustrate how, without falling into an abyss of nonsense, this view does not offer any ground for endorsing the Western laws of thought.

The Buddhist View

The fundamental truths of Buddhism seem to have been derived from the simple observation of the natural world. The famous story of the earliest trips of Gautama Buddha out of his palace, when he saw for the first time an old man, a diseased man, and a rotting corpse, regardless of its historical truthfulness, represents a symbolic invitation to any individual—an invitation to observe the natural course of the world and consider the

¹² On the centrality of the principle of identity and of Parmenides’ influence in respect to the historical development of Western philosophy, see Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer) or Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. by J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

¹³ In relation to the present issue, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 9, 11[7]; Sigmund Freud, “The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis”, trans. by Harry W. Chase, in *The American Journal of Psychology* 21:2 (1910), 181–218; and Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968).

¹⁴ Besides the aforementioned criticisms of Zen, it is worth remembering Carnap’s renowned and merciless comment of a passage from Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, or Bertrand Russell’s petty comments on Nietzsche’s philosophy (and on Nietzsche himself), certainly excusable given his poor understanding of the subject.

evidence that all is impermanent and “whatever is subject to origination is subject to cessation.”¹⁵

The universe is then compared to a “decaying old house on fire,” and the mission of the Buddha is “to rescue sentient beings from the fire of birth, old age, illness and death, anxiety, sorrow, suffering, distress, delusion, blindness, and the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance.”¹⁶

In Buddhism, the notion of impermanence (*anicca*) is one of the three marks of existence, the others being unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and no-selfness (*anatta*). Leaving aside for the moment the existential implications of the affliction (*dukkha*) caused by the unsatisfying, unreliable nature of things, I will analyze the mutually dependent concepts of impermanence, and of the absence of intrinsic nature, with peculiar attention to the former because it seems to hold an axiomatic position in the (historical and hermeneutic) development of Buddhism. By definition, an axiom is a principle that is accepted to be true by self-evidence, and as I previously claimed, the self-evidence of impermanence is seized from the simple observation of the world. However, an axiom is also a fundamentally undisputed premise on which further arguments can be based.

From this point of view, not only the reality of impermanence is uncontested among all Buddhist schools (whereas other doctrinal elements tend to vary, sometimes greatly), but even among the three marks it seems to retain at least a logical priority. Indeed, the unsatisfactoriness caused by the unreliable nature of things does not necessarily imply that the nature of things is truly unreliable. At the same time, the selflessness of things (and beings) does not necessarily imply that all forms of existence are conditioned phenomena, constantly immersed in a lingering state of transience.

On the contrary, the notion of *anicca* is clearly incompatible with an essentialist view, and therefore directly implies *anatta* (but apparently not *dukkha*). In sum, the concept of impermanence has to be considered a fundamental axiom of the Buddhist discourse, because of its irrefutable status and its logical priority over the following doctrinal elaborations.

Since everything is impermanent and devoid of intrinsic nature, in order to describe the universe, Buddhist texts often employ the concept of *sūnyatā* (“voidness,” “emptiness,” “nothingness,” “openness”).

In the *Lotus Sutra*, the nature of the world is presented thus:

All dharmas are empty and without substance,

¹⁵ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya (The Teachings of the Buddha)*, trans. by Bhikku Nanamoli and Bhikku Bodhi (Soomerville: Wisdom, 1995), 56.

¹⁶ *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. by Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), 13a.

Impermanent, without origination or cessation.
 This is known as the sphere
 Of the relationships of the wise.
 Through the error of discrimination
 One sees all existent things
 As existing or nonexisting,
 Real or unreal,
 Produced or unproduced.
 [...]
 He [the bodhisattva] should regard all *dharmas*
 As being without substance,
 Like empty space
 Which has no firmness.
 All dharmas are neither produced
 Nor do they emerge;
 They are immovable, nonreturning,
 And always remain in their single character.
 This is known as the sphere of relationships.¹⁷

The first passage is particularly critical of the deceptive effect of the discriminating mind, which operates by applying on reality illusory dichotomies (of existing/nonexisting, real/unreal, produced/unproduced). In fact, since the universe is a constant flux in which all aggregates are gradually dissolved while new ones gradually emerge, any perceivable distinction is ultimately relative. Also, anything that is, and ceases to be, is neither created *ex nihilo* nor extinct *in nihilo*. If nothing is generated and nothing is destroyed within the universal law of impermanence, then, in a wider sense, all dharmas, perpetually in motion, are “immovable,” since they “always remain in their single character.” Furthermore, the reality of dharmas is explicitly compared to an “empty space which has no firmness,” and is “without substance.”

The *Diamond Sutra*, whose poetic and imaginative style was greatly influential in the Zen tradition, contains the famous gatha:

All conditioned dharmas
 Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows,
 Like dew drops and a lightning flash:
 Contemplate them thus.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 37c.

¹⁸ *The Diamond of Perfect Wisdom Sutra*, trans. by the Chung Tai Translation Committee, in *Bao Lin Chan Monastery – Zen Center of Melbourne*, <<http://chungtai.org.au/en/wp->

The “conditioned dharmas” indicate all events and activities: empirical senses, mental processes, entities and forms, material elements. Everything in the universe is a conditioned dharma, and comparable to dreams, illusions, and shadows, phenomena which are real in a broad sense (since something is occurring) but unreal in the ordinary sense of the term (since what is truly occurring is different from what seems to occur).

Conditioned dharmas are comparable to bubbles, dew drops, and lightning flashes, phenomena that arise as rapidly as they vanish. Once more, it is claimed that the “true nature of reality is empty. This is what the Tathagata calls the true nature of reality.”¹⁹

Similarly, in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, we read, “All constructed things are impermanent.”²⁰ And “nothing was ever destroyed, is destroyed, or will ever be destroyed. Such is the meaning of ‘impermanence.’”²¹ Even in this case, the notion of impermanence directly implies that all things and phenomena lack an inherent nature: “This world has the nature of voidness.”²²

It is important to note that the Buddhist void (*śūnyatā*) is by no means intended as the Parmenidean οὐκ ἔστιν, which is equivalent to the empty set of possible thoughts beyond the inherent limits of thinkability, which is equivalent to a formal representation of the paradoxical nature of what-is-not.²³

On the contrary, according to the Buddhist world view, *śūnyatā* is only apparently paradoxical. Instead it lies in the processual core of reality, constituting its veritable character: “Matter itself is void. Voidness does not result from the destruction of matter, but the nature of matter is itself voidness.”²⁴

Matter is void not because it is nonexistent, but in the sense that “that physical appearances are actually not physical appearances.”²⁵ Physical appearances are ultimately subject to permutation and dissolution; they lack any sort of stable essence, τὸ τί, haecceity, irreducible ego or consciousness. Put briefly, all things are impermanent; all compounded things have no Self.

[content/uploads/2015/02/Sutra-6-The-Diamond-of-Perfect-Wisdom-Sutra.pdf](https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_21/capra_december2017.pdf)>. Hereafter cited as *Diamond Sutra*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 14.

²⁰ *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*, trans. by Robert A.F. Thurman (University Park: Penn State Press, 2003), 1. Hereafter cited as *Vimalakīrti Sutra*.

²¹ *Ibid*, 3.

²² *Ibid*, 9.

²³ Parmenides, *On Nature*, Fragment 8: οὐδὲ νοητόν ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι.

²⁴ *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, 9.

²⁵ *Diamond Sutra*, 5.

Particularly, the critique of the idea of a stable intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) finds its most brilliant (and explicit) philosophical formulation in the Madhyamaka school, whose founder Nāgārjuna is regarded by many as the hypothetical “unofficial First Patriarch” of Zen Buddhism. By systematically recurring to the prominent figure of Indian classical logic, the tetralemma, Nāgārjuna criticized all forms of essentialism. Specifically, he challenged the essentialist view of Abhidharma that had consistently grown in popularity among Buddhists disciples.²⁶

In Nāgārjuna’s corpus

svabhāva is by definition the subject of contradictory ascriptions. If it exists, it must belong to an existent entity, which means that it must be conditioned, dependent on other entities, and caused. Nevertheless, *svabhāva* is by definition unconditioned, not dependent on other entities, and not caused. Thus the existence of *svabhāva* is impossible.²⁷

Since everything that exists is conditioned, depending upon a multiple set of causes and relationships, the absence of intrinsic nature is thus explicitly equated to the principle of *pratītyasamutpāda*. The term is translatable as “dependent origination,” “dependent arising,” “interdependent co-arising,” “conditioned arising,” “conditioned genesis,” “causal interdependence,” and more literally, “arising according to dependence upon causal conditions.” It is poetically exemplified by the metaphor of Indra’s net:

Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net which has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each eye of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. There hang the jewels, glittering like stars in the first magnitude, a wonderful sight to behold. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection and look closely at it, we will discover that in

²⁶ Even though in the earlier formulations of Abhidharma’s doctrine, “svabhāva” is employed as a criterion that determines what a dharma is, not necessarily that a dharma exists.

²⁷ Richard H. Robinson, “Some Logical Aspects of Nāgārjuna’s System” in *Philosophy East & West*, 6:4 (1957), 301-313.

its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring.²⁸

A different interpretation of the Buddha's teachings was offered by the Yogachara school, which was also very influential on the historical development of Zen. In respect to the Madhyamaka school, criticized for its "nihilistic" description of reality, Yogacarins stressed the idea that consciousness (*vijñāna*) is the only reality, and all phenomena only exist as appearances.²⁹ According to this view, the entire system of mentation is naturally predisposed to accumulate and substantialize multiple perceptions, thus creating the illusion of a persistent self.

In the Yogachara's perspective, *śūnyatā* does not necessarily refer to physical phenomena. Instead, it represents the final dissolution of the limit that divides the subject and the object, causing the "awakening" (*bodhi*). *Śūnyatā* dwells in the consciousness – although consciousness is not regarded as a self-subsistent entity. Although Tibetan sources present the Yogachara and Madhyamaka as rival schools, modern scholars tend to present these views as complementary interpretations.³⁰

However, the Buddhist *Weltanschauung* is grounded on the notion of impermanence (*anicca*), which implies (or coincides with) the absence of intrinsic nature (*anatta*). All aggregates arising and ceasing within this dynamic context of perpetual transformation are basically interconnected and mutually dependent on causal conditions (*pratīyasamutpāda*). Since all phenomena lack intrinsic nature, intrinsic reality, intrinsic identity, and intrinsic referentiality (*svabhāva*), the fundamental nature of phenomena is empty (*śūnyatā*). The spontaneous action of consciousness (*vijñāna*) tends to see them as if they were self-subsistent.

What is important to note, is that the constitutive lack of "self" or "intrinsic nature" described by Buddhism unavoidably deprives of universal validity the application of those principles that served as a basis for the philosophical research in the West. According to the Buddhist view, any apparent object (or subject) is the result of several complex dynamic

²⁸ Francis H. Cook, *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1977), 7.

²⁹ Madhyamaka was deemed "nihilistic" by some Yogacharins since the exponent of the Madhyamaka school apparently posed the dharma "in the Void". See for instance Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun* (London: Routledge, 2002).

³⁰ On this topic, see Edward Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, (London: Oneworld, 1993).

interactions, exactly as a color is nothing but the result of the interaction of physical light receptors with the electromagnetic spectrum.

Indeed, the interpenetration of all things, and their ultimate transitory nature prevent any attempt at individuating or defining a single, persistent identity, dependent neither on spatial nor temporal conditions for its own existence. In this sense, the LID obviously has to be rejected, together with its corollaries and implications. Any Buddhist philosopher would probably disagree with Parmenides on the mutual exclusiveness of contraries, and agree instead with the Heraclitean utterance that a man cannot step twice into the same river, since both the river, and the man are subject to the ever-changing flux of time.

In the following paragraphs, I consider Zen Buddhism and its renowned use of paradoxical images and absurd statements. By exposing relevant notions concerning the nature of language and consciousness according to Zen, I illustrate a peculiar logical formula that can be found in several texts belonging to the Zen literary tradition, concerning specifically the concept of contradiction.

Zen and the Logic of Nothingness

Zen has been widely described, within and outside the context of academia, as a “cult of the absurd,” by detractors, and even by zealous disciples.³¹ For instance, Suzuki evoked Tertullian’s paradox (*credo quia absurdum*) in order to explain Zen’s faith in irrationality. Actually, the view of Zen as an anti-rational and anti-intellectual tradition has been challenged.³²

³¹ Arthur Koestler, “A Stink of Zen: The Lotus and the Robot II” in *Encounter* 85 (1960), 13-32.

³² Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, *Comparative Religion*, ed. by Jeff Wilson and Tomoe Moriya, vol. 3 of *Selected Works of D.T. Suzuki* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 123.

Zen has often been described as a chiefly anti-intellectualist tradition. Nonetheless, this is only partially true: recent studies explored Zen insistence on the intuitive and “sudden” character of the true understanding and the alleged rejection of pedagogical mediations, identifying this emphasis as the result of a rhetorical strategy and not as the reflection of an actual praxis. See Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) and Youru Wang, *Linguistic Strategies in Daoist Zhuangzi and Chan Buddhism* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

In addition, although Zen is supposed to be a “special transmission outside the scriptures” (*jiaowai biechuan* 教外別傳), several studies proved that Mahayana teachings, doctrines and sutras were greatly influential in Chan, since its early origins. See Albert Low, *Zen and the Sutras* (Boston: Turtle Publishing 2000).

Several schools and lineages emphasized, in relation to the idea of a “special transmission outside the scriptures”, the complementary principle of “harmony between Chan and the teachings” (*jiaochan yizhi* 教禪一致). See Albert Welter “Mahakasyapa’s Smile: Silent Transmission and the Kung-an (Koan) Tradition,” in *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, ed. by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000).

Among the most popular epitomes of Zen as mask of the absurd and of the incomprehensible, there is certainly the saying of Qingyuan Weixin 青原惟信, master who lived in the 9th century:

Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and rivers as rivers. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and rivers are not rivers. But now that I have got its very substance I am at rest. For it is just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and rivers once again as rivers.³³

A similar pattern repeatedly occurs in the *Diamond Sutra*:

Subhuti, that which is called the Buddha Dharma is not the Buddha Dharma; therefore it is called the Buddha Dharma.³⁴

The Buddha teaches that *prajna paramita* [perfection of wisdom] is not *prajna paramita*. Therefore it is called *prajna paramita*.³⁵

To the extent that these worlds really exist, they do so as a composite. The Tathagata teaches that composites are not composites. Therefore they are called composites.³⁶

In order to explain the peculiar logic that underlies these sayings, I need to say something more about the pedagogic process inherent to the Zen experience, necessarily transmitted from masters to disciples, “mind-to-mind” (以心伝心 *ishin denshin*).

Until now, I illustrated the Buddhist view of the world as based on the notion of impermanence, selflessness and arising co-dependence. What I omitted to explain in detail is that the transitory, empty character of reality provokes a persistent state of unsatisfactoriness, suffering or anxiety (*dukkha*). This happens because the mind is naturally predisposed to “essentialize” perceptions and thoughts, and merge them in a coherent view. These accumulations of perceptions and thoughts, grasped by the senses, and

³³ Alan Watts, *The Way of Zen* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1951), 26.

³⁴ *Diamond Sutra*, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 30.

sedimented by the action of consciousness and memory, create the illusion of countless external substances opposing a singular internal substance, the ego, thus developing multiple (noxious) attachments. The accomplished sedimentation of senses-thoughts within the achieved construction of a self thus generates a state of *dukkha*, and prevents the opportunity of seeing things as they are.

Within this theoretical framework, the use of language does not only reveal the presence of mental hindrances, but also actively contributes in the generation of further obstacles:

Word-discrimination goes on by the coordination of brain, chest, nose, throat, palate, lips, tongue, teeth and lips. Words are neither different nor not-different from discrimination. Words rise from discrimination as their cause; if words were different from discrimination they could not have discrimination for their cause; then again, if words are not different, they could not carry and express meaning. Words, therefore, are produced by causation and are mutually conditioning and shifting and, just like things, are subject to birth and destruction.³⁷

In Zen, non-verbal teachings are often preferred, since an imprudent use of language may generate additional illusions instead of dissolving the former ones. In this sense, Zen's approach is analogous to Wittgenstein's claim that philosophical problems must be dissolved rather than solved, since they spontaneously arise within the ordinary functioning of language – and, in the case of Zen, within the ordinary functioning of the whole system of mind, language, senses, and consciousness.

Indeed, the target of Zen is not merely the language. Instead, it is necessary to destabilize the discriminating action of consciousness. The primary task of the Zen master is to bring the disciple back to a pre-logical and pre-conceptual dimension of consciousness, emptying the mind from noxious obstructions.

The final result of this process is the experience of the state of no-mind (無心 *mushin*), characterized by no-thinking (無念 *munen*), which is not to be intended as a state of torpidity or inertness, but contrarily, as a psychological state “in which the mind finds itself at the highest point of tension, a state in which the mind works with utmost intensity and lucidity”, and reality is

³⁷ *Lankavatara Sutra*, in *A Buddhist Bible*, ed. by Dwight Goddard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 2.

finally seized in the fullest density of existence, in its non-discriminated “suchness” (真如 *shinnyo*).³⁸

Good friends, what is negated by the “non” (無 *mu*)? What kind of thing is “thought” (念 *nen*)? “Non” means to be without the characteristic of duality, to be without the mind of the enervating defilements. “Thought” is to think of the fundamental nature of suchness.³⁹

Nonetheless, Zen does not advocate for a complete retirement from the “ordinary” world and a complete rejection of the ordinary state of consciousness, of the ordinary use of language, of the appeal to ordinary rationality, of the ordinary functioning of the mind. On the contrary, Zen advocates for the mastery of both these existential dimensions, the “conventional” and the “ultimate” realm.⁴⁰ Several *mondō* (Zen dialogues) and *koan* narratives are structured upon the ideal interplay between conventional and ultimate truths.

A remarkable difficulty in interpreting Zen scripts and sayings is due to their intrinsically perspectival standpoint. As was previously mentioned, according to Buddhism, even if the ultimate nature of the world consists in a state of dynamic non-determined nothingness, the same idea of nothingness must not become the object of a conceptual or emotional attachment.⁴¹ In other words, a Zen practitioner should always be able to grasp reality in its totalizing contradictoriness and never dwell either in the realm of ultimate existence or in the complementary realm of conventional existence. Whenever this happens, the Zen master reacts by preaching the complementary pole of any antithesis generated by the spontaneous action of the discriminating mind:

Because we maintain our minds of impermanence,
The Buddha preached of permanence.⁴²

After having clarified these notions, we are finally able to understand the statement of Qingyuan Weixin and the logic of the *Diamond Sutra*, without the necessity of dismissing them as absurd or nonsensical.

³⁸ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1982), 14.

³⁹ Huineng, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, trans. by John McRae (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000), 353ab.

⁴⁰ This idea is not an original product of Zen, it was already advanced in the Pali Canon, for instance in the *Anguttara Nikaya*, and in the Madhyamaka School.

⁴¹ Huineng, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 359b.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 350a.

The logical principle underlying these texts can thus be expressed by the formula: **A is not A, therefore it is A.**

The first “A” refers to phenomena as they are perceived according to the ordinary state of consciousness, i.e. a state of mind in which things, including the ego, are seen as independently existent since provided with a specific irreducible identity.

This step is immediately negated by the following, “is not A”. Within the Buddhist perspective, every aggregate relies on multiple causes and maintains multiple relationships with a wide spectrum of other processes.⁴³ Due to these reasons, a single aggregate could be ideally isolated in conventional terms (in the domain of the Buddhist “conventional truth”), but never in theoretical or doctrinal terms (in the domain of the complementary “ultimate truth”).

For instance, the simple consideration of a blade of grass would necessarily imply references to the soil in which it is planted, to the air, to water, to the atmosphere, and each of these elements would bring further connections and relationships, to such an extent that it would not be possible to graze a single blade of grass without influencing, at the same time, the entire universe.

Nothing, according to Buddhism, is independently existent, and therefore it would be utterly nonsensical to define anything without considering the infinite set of co-dependent relationships connecting every single part to the whole. Furthermore, any conditioned dharma has to be regarded as a lightning flash or a dewdrop.

Therefore, since any aggregate is immersed in the flux of time, it lacks an intrinsic essence that would allow a permanent identification and, consequently, a positive definition.

For these reasons, the LID does not apply in the Buddhist perspective. Even positing *only* “A” would be, in principle, unacceptable, since there is nothing identical to itself: firstly, because there is nothing at all, being any apparent entity is merely the result of a countless number of processual interactions; secondly, because the flowing of time frustrates any attempt at determining or attributing a stable identity to any conceivable A. From this standpoint, it is not even contradictory to equate any term to its negation, nor to reaffirm the negated term right after its denial. If there is no identity, there is also no difference, since only something provided with a specific identity can be different from something else. Where there is no difference, there cannot be any contradiction. Thus, this view does not offer any ground for endorsing even the LNC and, evidently, the LEM.

⁴³ Any physical aggregate, i.e., any “object” or “entity” in a Western philosophical vocabulary.

Despite that, the formula “A is not A”, as “mountains are not mountains” or “rivers are not rivers,” can be easily explained given a basic account of Zen view of the world: phenomena which appears to be existing as self-sufficient entities are actually devoid of inherent existence and not isolable as such. The proposition “A is not A” opposes then the conventional truth, i.e. the ordinary state of consciousness in which a permanent self-identical ego is ideally counter-posed to a realm populated by likewise permanent self-identical entities, to the ultimate truth, i.e. a state of consciousness in which reality and the manifold aggregates are perceived as non-determined nothingness.

Nonetheless, although “A is not A,” it is reaffirmed that “therefore it is A”. In fact, ultimate and conventional truth, ordinary and not-ordinary states of consciousness are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. Once acknowledged, the significant difference between conventional and ultimate truth must be overcome. If one remains attached either to the ordinary world or “to emptiness” his experience of Zen will be defective or faulty, contaminated by a noxious form of one-sidedness. Zen does not advocate an escape from reality, but rather for a more complete and totalizing experience of it.

Therefore, the reaffirmation of “therefore it is A” also reaffirms the necessity to live, to reason and to communicate through the language, despite its inherent impossibility to construct meaningful descriptions of the world – at least, in respect to the ultimate truth, which is by definition ungraspable and undefinable.

Finally, at the beginning “seeing mountains as mountains and rivers as rivers” means the common, ordinary understanding of reality. Then, “seeing mountains as not mountains and rivers as not rivers” means to have grasped the processual nothingness behind all phenomena. Lastly, “seeing again mountains as mountains and rivers as rivers” means to have subsumed the contradictoriness of reality⁴⁴ in a state of consciousness able to embrace and transcend all conceivable contradictions.

It is now clear how the Zen standpoint (consisting actually in a differential abandonment of all standpoints) cannot be considered as merely illogical or absurd. Rather, it stands outside of a particular logic, namely the logic of identity, and contradiction that underlay the historical development of the Western philosophical discourse.

Zen’s own logic transcends the dichotomous construction of dualistic couples of identities and contradictions, and is clearly represented by the

⁴⁴ To claim that things themselves are inherently contradictory is not only a rather odd affirmation, but also a completely misleading one according to the Buddhist perspective. Obviously, the contradiction must lie, or rather it must have been produced, within the ongoing relationship between things and the mind.

(apparently) paradoxical formula “A is not A, therefore it is A.” Following Nishida Kitarō, this principle could be given the denomination of Self-Identity of Contradiction (SIC).⁴⁵

Conclusion

To begin with, I illustrated the fundamental principles of the Western classical logic, which have been implicitly accepted throughout the history of Western philosophy and formal ontology. Subsequently, I criticized the characterization of Zen as an epitome of the absurd, a persistent platitude that has been repeated even by Zen scholars in order to stress an antithetic and irreconcilable opposition between the Western and the East Asian philosophical traditions.

After having described the fundamental assumptions of Buddhism and a number of important notions pertinent to Zen theory and praxis, I analyzed and explained a peculiar formula that appears to be recurrent in several Zen literary sources, from ancient sutras to modern treatises.

I hope in this way to have demonstrated that, although violating the principles of Western classical logic ultimately based on the mutually dependent notions of identity and contradiction, the logic of the “self-identity of contradiction” cannot be criticized (or praised) for being absurd or illogical.

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On Democratization: Identity and Solidarity in Multicultural Societies

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Abstract: How can one actually identify with people whose modes of being are substantially different from one's own? How can two groups engage in a dialogue who do not share certain fundamental values and concepts? To what extent does one identify? These concerns touch upon the sociological, political, and economic dimensions of a community. Accordingly, the task of political institutions is to provide adequate means of dealing with diverse identities. In this regard, I present a critical analysis of Charles Taylor's notion of multiculturalism and solidarity.¹ While one can be sympathetic to his communitarian proposals, these proposals are apparently good wishes and less evident. I conclude the essay with my views on democratization.

Keywords: multiculturalism, political, economic solidarity, identity democratization

I. Introduction

Multiculturalism has opened new possibilities for democratization. Societies are challenged, more than ever, to evaluate their perceptions and attitudes towards diversity. One concern in recent years is the problem of minority representation in the public sphere. In this paper, I advocate a comprehensive notion of minority groups: ethnocultural groups, new social movements, and migrants.² Confronted with this concern,

¹ Adapted and revised from my MPhil thesis, *Democratization of Society: Reflections on Charles Taylor's Theory of Democracy* at the Catholic University of Leuven. I thank my promoter, Antoon Vandeveldel for his instructive feedback and helpful supervision. My gratitude also to Hui Shuk Miu Lisa, Analissa dela Cruz, André Cloots, and Tim Heysse for their comments and suggestions, and to the anonymous referees of *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*.

² Ethnocultural groups refers to groups of people inhabiting well-defined and sometimes overlapping territories, observing cultural practices, ancestral political-social structures, and claiming interests and conceptions of the good which often compete with the

the task of political institutions is to provide adequate approaches of serving both the “recognition of difference and integration.”³ How should majority societies interact with minority groups who do not share their identity, history, and culture? Should laws and policies articulate the aspirations and identities of minorities in a majority society? The problem is relevant as it concerns the various facets of social structures, i.e., political, economic, and culture. In determining how best we can adequately address these concerns, I critically analyze Charles Taylor’s notion of (1) multiculturalism and (2) political solidarity.⁴ In the conclusion, (3) I offer my views on democratization.

II. Multiculturalism in a Democratic State

Multiculturalism refers to a political orientation with the goal of “recognizing diversity, fostering integration, and producing/maintaining equality.”⁵ According to this view, multiculturalism can broaden our understanding of and justification for democracy as a suitable form of government that can adequately respond to multiculturalism. Some democratic states tend to be exclusively dominated by elite groups who collude to secure their interest at the expense of the society at large, or by a dominant voice that assimilates minorities according to its systems of relations. However, democracy, in its strict sense, is a system of government that recognizes the power of people to determine the direction of their social, economic, and political life through collective action and participative governance.⁶ Implicit in this conception of democracy is the sense of solidarity and recognition of diversity. However, these democratic ideals can only be achieved through a just system of policy-making.⁷ Consider a

mainstream society. The new social movements include, but are not limited to, environmental and gender movements. Minority groups also include internal and external migrants, who for various reasons such as economic or political move to other regions or states.

³ Charles Taylor, “Interculturalism or Multiculturalism,” in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38 (2012), 416. Hereafter cited as “Interculturalism.”

⁴ This paper discusses the intellectual contribution of Charles Taylor’s communitarian multiculturalism. There are other theoretical positions dealing on problems taken up in the essay but are not considered due to practical considerations. Nonetheless, Charles Taylor is one of the pioneers in the theorization of the politics of in multicultural societies.

⁵ Taylor, “Interculturalism,” 415. For the significant adaptation and accommodation of multicultural policies, see Irene Bloemraad, “The Debate Over Multiculturalism: Philosophy, Politics, and Policy,” in *Migration Policy Institute* (2011), <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=854>>.

⁶ Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 273.

⁷ For the statistical data on global immigration and public policies, see Will Kymlicka, “Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future,” in *Migration Policy Institute* (February 2012), <<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/TCM-multiculturalism-success-failure>>.

democratic society that does not observe civil rights. Such a society can be considered a dictatorial regime in a democracy's clothing. Because it tends to be inconsiderate of the rights of people of their fair share or just allocations of resources to pursue their conception of the good, it perpetuates injustice. Indeed, the absence of civil rights can bring more harm and cruelty by powerful forces. Civil rights must be secured because they serve as check and balance to political structures. Hence, the kind of government to advocate should be one that best serves equal political participation.

Contrary to the "hierarchical" notion of a political structure, a real democracy spouses a "horizontal" movement of political power. By 'horizontal,' I refer to a government where effective civic political participation is not only aspired for but also observed. The link between multiculturalism and democracy is evident in the democratic aspiration that "the sense of equal dignity is really shared by people who belong to functioning direct-access society together."⁸ Hence, the challenge for a diverse society is to guarantee the basic ideals of democracy, namely: equality, civil rights, liberty, collective cooperation, and non-discrimination.⁹ Apparently, acknowledging the ethical underpinnings of a democratic society is a consequence of two significant moments at play in every modern society: identity struggle and recognition.

A. Democratic Sphere as the Locus of Identity Struggle

In its most basic concept, identity refers to a group of people's ascriptions of themselves and by others. It can have one or more of the following elements: language, cultural practices, traditions and beliefs, and/or norms and values. This is called the subjective aspect of identity. The objective aspect of identity, however, rests on how identity is conceived from the outside. According to this view, social actors are identified as belonging to a group by virtue of their "origin and background," that is, "sharing" and "playing the same game" or "criteria for evaluation and judgment."¹⁰

⁸ Charles Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 277.

⁹ The United Nations strongly suggests that respect for cultural diversity can help forge a high-level solidarity. See UNESCO, "Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity," in *United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner* (2001), <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CulturalDiversity.aspx>>. See also Commission for Social Development and Civil Society Forum, "Social Integration / Inclusion: Towards Societies of Solidarity and Mutuality," in *United Nations – Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division of Social Policy and Development* (2009), <<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2009/documents/csf/declaration.pdf>>.

¹⁰ See Fredrik Barth, Introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture*, ed. by Fredrik Barth (USA: Little, Brown and Company), 9-38.

In recent years, the struggle for recognition and assertion of identity has become a familiar story in every multicultural society. People ask whether or not they can still identify with the state, and whether or not its political structures promote and reflect the identity and welfare of the people.¹¹ Taylor tends to admit that the reality of multiculturalism can be a threat to a harmonious existence because political interests between the state and groups of people can be so opposed to each other that it can yield “new set of issues which may deeply divide people.”¹² He thinks that if these concerns are not adequately remedied, they will certainly pose “new obstacles to co-existence.”¹³ Consider a political institution that only favors the majority of the members of the society at the expense of minorities. Apparently, this can breed suspicion which can ultimately lead to political instability. An isolationist treatment by the state affects the relationship between groups of peoples towards each other.

Clearly, what is needed is a structural reform that is oriented to “a truly just and humane society.”¹⁴ But what does “a truly just and humane society” account for? From a communitarian perspective, a just and humane institution is one that advances substantive values and enhances the diversity of interests and cultural belonging by relating to the political state in different ways. Some might object that relating to the state in different ways cannot create long lasting and forward-looking opportunities for participative socio-political cooperation. However, if the communitarian’s claim is correct, then it is necessary to align the political institution accordingly. Hence, an unjust political structure should be changed. Since the members of the society relate with the state in different ways, it is important to seriously consider the social context. It can be argued that a local province or region that determines its public affairs will not see public policies as impositions from external agents, but something that it can call its own. Moreover, since it makes its policies, it is more likely that they fit to respond to the local social context. This is called localization of power.

The localization of power sits well with Taylor’s conception of “nested public sphere” which is aimed at decentralization and sharing of power. The localization of power advocates local assemblies, social movements, and local media among others. It fosters debates on local needs and issues that directly affect the interests of people with the aim of guiding

¹¹ Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections*, 276.

¹² *Ibid.*, 132.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Charles Taylor, *Philosophy and Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 310. Hereafter cited as *Philosophy and Human Sciences*.

public undertakings.¹⁵ Moreover, the debates can substantially influence the discussions and decisions at the national level. Localization of power serves as a check and balance to the preferred, yet sometimes elusive and invisible institutional state. Consequently, it enhances the sovereignty of the people.¹⁶ Taylor, however, is quick to acknowledge that this is not easy to achieve, considering widespread individualism and a distorted understanding of nationalism.¹⁷ Some might argue that it is only after firmly establishing the nation's dominance through public policies that an interest towards a fundamental ethic of equality and fair treatment of minorities will subsequently develop because by then the minority group is not anymore a threat to the dominant nation. For instance, Spinner-Halev claims that "when the ascendance of a nation is secure, it can turn to treating its minority citizens well."¹⁸ I tend to concur that in any political institution, the dominant group's interests always take precedence. There are underlying negative implications that should be taken into consideration. It might echo a wrong signal which can mean two things. First, the dominant group has a right to exclude the minority in policy decision making. Second, it relaxes the horrors of violent nationalism, such as the Holocaust in WWII, the genocide in the multicultural country Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Serbs against the Muslim Albanians, and in Darfur, Sudan among others.

However, Taylor argues that any "holistic" advocacy should "give higher priority to community life" and not merely to the interest of a particular dominant group.¹⁹ A political institution rightly responds to such a view when it prioritizes the needs of the community and not of a particular group's interest. As this happens, alterity and difference become important aspects in weaving policies that extend sufficient respect to self-worth. Nonetheless, Taylor warns that the democratization of society is stymied "when a group or cultural community feels unrecognized by the larger society, and so becomes less willing to function on a basis of common understanding with the majority."²⁰

¹⁵ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 89.

¹⁶ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 279.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁸ Jeff Spinner-Halev, "Democracy, Solidarity and Post-nationalism," in *Political Studies* 56 (2008), 615.

¹⁹ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 182.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

B. Recognition of Identity in Modern Society

It seems that identity is at stake in modern society.²¹ Minority groups, for instance, are confronted with the thought that they might hardly be able to negotiate their concerns and interests with the dominant society. An experience of exclusion will always be a phenomenon to confront with, especially when the minority feels frustrated as the dominant group imposes its interest upon them. It is likely that among dominant groups, “strong national sentiments” will be asserted. The presence of the minority can be considered a threat to their established norms and practices thus fortifying nationalistic tendencies. As Taylor concurs, the “identity [of the minority] is vulnerable to nonrecognition ... by the members of the dominant societies,” because the presence of the minority seems to threaten the majority.²²

Apparently, the skepticism, according to which the presence and role of a minority in the flourishing of the society can preclude an affirmative collaboration and integration of diverse views is counter-intuitive and an overstatement. On the contrary, it seems advantageous for diverse societies to collaborate for a common goal. And since a person’s identity is evolving and not static, one can continue to grow by relating to others. Learning to integrate with diversity and alterity through conversation and mutual understanding can help a society adequately advance the needs of its members than otherwise conceived. However, one cannot simply fault those groups that have become less willing to recognize diversity and hard on securing their borders when it is clearly established that threats to national security or welfare of the people are at stake.

Nonetheless, the recognition of diversity and alterity does not merely advance a more hospitable environment. It is also necessary for the formation of a person’s identity. Acknowledging the “other” can broaden one’s understanding of oneself, that is, one’s conception of identity. In every culture, there are good things which can enhance life, but there are also elements that can demean and depreciate one’s self-worth for which political institutions must be vigilant. Nonetheless, it seems that in a horizontal relation diverse groups can learn from each other what it means to live by respecting self-worth.²³ This is the case, for example, among peers in an academic community, family members and friends where a respectful exchange of diverse views can enhance both personal and social growth.

²¹ Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections*, 277.

²² *Ibid.*, 278.

²³ Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections*, 277; Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 88. Hereafter cited as *Human Agency and Language*.

Apparently, a genuine encounter with diversity broadens one's conception of identity because a single brand of identity as a criterion for any social, political, and economic relations is not sufficient.²⁴ Through sincere "comparisons and contrasts" of diverse views, cooperation on various aspects of the society can be enhanced.²⁵ Consequently, Taylor believes that "we ... liberate the others and 'let them be' when we can identify and articulate a contrast between their understanding and ours, thereby ceasing" to regard them from a one-sided perspective.²⁶ The opportunity to learn and to work with the "other" will diminish by clinging on a narrow and restricted conception of identity. However, sincere recognition through dialogue allows one to broaden his/her understanding of the "other," thus affirming that no one holds the absolute mark of a superior identity, Taylor claims.²⁷ The social nature of a person points to the reality that values and aspirations are something that people discover together, and that no one has the monopoly of the truth. Of course, every identity seems to have its strengths and flaws. Nonetheless, recognizing diversity opens the possibility for people to appreciate each other's uniqueness, to complement each other's strength, and to supply each other's paucity.

The reality of multiculturalism calls for a sense of dialogue with alterity and diversity by breaking through one's fixated attitude which encloses the self from establishing a mutual collaboration with others. The inability to recognize diversity "can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being."²⁸ However, a horizontal relationship, which ensues from trusting and understanding, fortifies the claim that people can co-exist not merely because they exhibit different social ways and features but also because their differences are sources of mutual enrichment. In political matters, for example, the acknowledgment of diversity responds to a fundamental assumption of democracy, that is, political equality wherein "various groups,

²⁴ Charles Taylor, "Solidarity in a Pluralist Age," in *Project Syndicate* (2010) <<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/solidarity-in-a-pluralist-age>>. Hereafter cited as "Solidarity."

²⁵ Elsewhere, Taylor notes that through dialogue, which facilitates an encounter and better understanding of the "other," a person can re-orient his/her views, goals and values towards the good of the society. See Taylor, "The Other and Ourselves: Is Multiculturalism Inherently Relativists?" in *Project Syndicate* (19 July 2002), < <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-other-and-ourselves--is-multi-culturalism-inherently-relativist?barrier=accessreg>>.

²⁶ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 150.

²⁷ Dialogue commences "from the fact that we are all less satisfied and dogmatic in our possession of the truth; that we are all therefore in some way researchers." See Charles Taylor, *The Pattern of Politics* (Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1970), 124.

²⁸ Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. by Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25.

types, and classes of citizens have been given a genuine hearing and were able to have an impact on the debate.”²⁹ Some demands can be too much for the government to discharge or allocate. Minority groups might not be provided of all that they ask to satisfy their needs and interests, but they “can have a sense that they are heard because they know themselves to be valued in a certain way, even when some particular demands are not met.”³⁰

Furthermore, an “other-understanding” disposition gives credence to the “equal worth of cultures.” This does not mean sameness of cultures, rather, it claims the view that “all human cultures that have animated the whole of societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings.”³¹ Cultures have an epistemic value that can guide political institutions in responding adequately to societal concerns. They are sources of knowledge. Their epistemic value can be appropriated in understanding and in responding to social, economic, cultural, and political concerns that affect society. One can think, for example, of a grassroots-based conflict resolution. Accordingly, if “the search for recognition is, properly understood, a demand for reciprocal recognition, within the life of the community,”³² then it is inevitable that a functioning democratic society should render respect to the equal worth of every identity according to which an inclusive toleration of diversity is a virtue. This includes language or mother tongue, customs and tradition, religion, conceptions of the good, among others which do not inflict harm or disrupt the functions of political institutions. Accordingly, unjust institutions and practices (e.g., slavery, clitoridectomy, forced marriage, etc.) that disadvantage weak members of society should be abolished because ultimately, “the true goal of the search for recognition remains community.”³³ The recognition of diversity enriches community life and highlights the very reason why people bond together.³⁴ Recognition of diversity and alterity can fill what might be lacking in others and enriches what is already available in them. This view advances more tolerant and sympathetic societies.

The above views are not immune from objections, however. First, they seem ideal and seem to bear good wishes, but actual situations suggest otherwise. Multicultural communities are so complex to manage. To say that recognition and inclusion demand “identification” with others is rather easy. How can one identify with peoples whose modes of being are substantially

²⁹ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 276.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 277.

³¹ Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” 66.

³² Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*, 88.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Charles Taylor, “The Dynamics of Democratic Exclusion,” in *Journal of Democracy* 9:4 (1998), 153.

different from one's own, and how far should one identify? How can two groups engage in dialogue who do not share certain fundamental values and concepts? Indeed, there are competing choices to be evaluated and compromises to be made, and usually these are emotionally charged. Some might argue that identification with diversity should be tempered by public policies. While democracy guarantees the fundamental ethics of "human rights, equality, and non-discrimination," migrants have the responsibility to understand the political milieu and culture of the host society that welcomed them. This entails that migrants should adhere to the laws or policies inscribed in the constitution. In the first place, to be granted entry to a host state, in principle, is a privilege. It is never, legally speaking, a right. Nonetheless, active participation in public affairs becomes more accessible when one becomes a citizen. The obligation to abide by the constitution and laws of a receiving country, however, does not mean renunciation of one's own cultural heritage. A migrant might learn the language and some other practices of the host state, but citizenship does not mean total assimilation to the culture of the majority group. For every migrant, the important issue, in my view, is whether the basic democratic ideals are being observed, or to demand from the government where they are not accessible within reach.

Second, some might claim that multiculturalism, while it is good for society, is more complicated than a mono-cultural society. In other words, the imposition of a majority culture in a multicultural society has more far-reaching results in terms of effectivity and efficiency because there are no differentiated rights but only one law that equalizes and neutralizes all groups. Viewed from another perspective, mono-culturalism can be used to argue for maintaining the stability of the social security of the citizens. For example, in some multicultural countries migrants are regarded as economic, social security, welfare competitors. So, to get rid of competitors, the state can set a higher bar on immigration policies. In doing so, the political state will deter the influx of migrants and in turn secure the welfare of the citizens. However, whether setting the bar higher is democratic at all, and whether it can maintain internal social cohesion, seems doubtful because contestations and dissents are always part of the dynamics of social relations.

Third, others assume that it seems difficult to advocate a balance between cultural diversity and political identity. Emphasizing one over the other can resort to political disintegration. A deficiency in political identity among peoples of diverse cultures can also weaken the point of living together. The lack of political identification can spring misunderstanding and violence, leading to a serious threat to social harmony. An example of this is the Southern Philippines where several Filipino Muslim leaders and representatives in the island of Mindanao think that it is better for them to live as an independent state because of their unique cultural, linguistic and

historical identity. This view, of course, challenges national integrity. It seems that where political identity is lacking, among diverse and different groups of peoples, there is no point of living together. Secession can be a worthwhile option. Having a separate state might give them an optimal power to decide and to govern their own affairs, just like in federal states. Nonetheless, the extent to which the stability of a political institution remains intact would largely depend on the solidarity of its members with the political state. But this needs forward-looking institutional and legislative reforms that best respond to the problem of minority representation in the public sphere.

III. Solidarity in Multicultural Society

Modern societies are a constellation of various groups whose identity needs recognition. The fact of diversity enjoins us to open the door of our “closely-knit, strongly-bonded communities” in order to build a sense of solidarity, belonging with the other members of society. Solidarity is crucial for the well-being of society because it can be a preventive measure to any socio-political fragmentation.³⁵ Solidarity transcends the boundaries of one’s religious, cultural and linguistic affiliations. How far should the practice of solidarity as a “common allegiance to the political community”³⁶ be enforced or limited to a multicultural society? An analysis of two forms of solidarity, namely, patriotic and socio-economic, I believe, can shed light upon this concern.

A. Patriotic Solidarity

Taylor claims that “the modern democratic state needs a healthy degree of what used to be called “patriotism.”³⁷ Patriotism refers to the strong identification of the people with the political state. It reflects a common enterprise aimed at building a stable and cohesive society. This view implies two claims: Patriotic solidarity is (1) a response to self-absorption and (2) grounded on a collective identity.

The former suggests that patriotism counterbalances the problem of self-absorption in which a person tends to care less of others and to disengage from public affairs. There is no easy way for solidaristic patriotism to prosper. Apparently, a suitable political institution and workable programs can glue people together, breaking through the barriers of race, language, and color. Sincere recognition of equal worth can be a source of this social glue because

³⁵ Nicholas H. Smith and Arto Laitinen, “Taylor on Solidarity,” in *Thesis Eleven* 99 (2009), 49.

³⁶ Taylor, “The Dynamics of Democratic Exclusion,” 144.

³⁷ Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections*, 90; Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 188.

it opens the path where different meanings of people meet and integrate. This approach is hoped to motivate diverse groups into a “collective action.”³⁸ Hence, despite the different meanings claimed by diverse groups, they can still mutually work together to achieve a common purpose.

The latter claims that patriotism rests on a collective identity which can guarantee social cohesion. In the absence or lack of a collective identification, the state is susceptible to disintegration. Seemingly, differences can turn into strengths when people are motivated by a common goal. By upholding the same values and sharing the same interests, peoples’ ties tend to be intact. Thus, they are also willing to fight for their sources of identity and belonging when threatened.

While collective identity is a motivating factor in the formation of patriotic ideals, it tends to exclude and assimilate one group or another. Political institutions can lend themselves to exclusivism when they emphasize what Taylor calls “homogenization of identity.”³⁹ Homogeneity is the eradication of diversity which also weakens the capacity of people to live together despite their differences. Homogenization is expressed concretely in terms of ethnocentric tendencies which intentionally negates the value of diversity and otherness because the “other” is categorized as an inferior species. However, to say that a majority culture becomes the norm upon which others should be measured implies that some groups cannot be part of a given society. If this is correct, those who cannot meet the requirement might have no place in the overall interest of the state.

Apparently, when homogenization of identity becomes the norm, it may give rise to what I call “solidaristic contestations” according to which collective opposition are introduced in response to the tendency of powerful forces in subordinating the “other.” Hence, solidarity, albeit in a contestatory way, can also take place when the concerns of minority groups are excluded from the overall interest of the political state. If patriotic solidarity is a necessary assurance for maintaining a stable society and social cohesion, how should “homogenization of identity” be remedied?

Two things come to mind. First, patriotic sentiments can emerge by changing one’s distorted conception of the “other.” The key element here is political equality. According to this view, the “other” should be treated fairly, that is, with equal dignity and equal worth. For Taylor, the “other” should not be treated as “them”—a distant and withdrawn social agent whose primary function is to provide the satisfaction of interest—because they are

³⁸ Charles Taylor and Slawomir Sierakowski, “The de-politicization of politics,” in *Eurozine* (10 November 2011) <<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2011-11-10-sierakowski-en.html>>.

³⁹ Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections*, 90.

“potential partners”⁴⁰ in democratic political deliberations. Policy decisions somehow reflect the aspiration and identity of deliberative participants. Consequently, it is a significant loss for the political state to regard inadequately the voices of people of different race, gender, color, and linguistic affiliation. Hence, there can be no real solidaristic patriotism until we acknowledge our own identity as one among the many other possible forms.

Second, solidarity with minorities is expressed not merely by being aware of their needs and interests, but also by recognizing their role in the political, economic, and cultural levels.⁴¹ Politically, while it is the right of citizens to decide which policies to implement, minority interests should also be considered. Economically, migrants, for example, can boost economic progress by utilizing their own knowledge and skills. Culturally, they can enrich and broaden one’s perspectives. They can contribute substantially in the practice of democracy because they open various opportunities that nurture a quality and meaningful life. As such, a solidaristic patriotism prospers when the dignity of every individual is equally respected. However, a fragmented citizenry persists when contempt, antagonism, and suspicion are not mitigated.

With the above contentions, I argue that political solidarity is more than emphasizing “my culture” or “my citizenship.” Rather, it is a question of peoples’ conscientious political participation in the society. Because of the recognition of “equal worth,” diverse groups can work together for common goals. It should be noted that some citizens might only be interested in what the state can favorably do for them, but are indifferent to public affairs. Those considered “others,” however, can solicitously contribute to the good of the state in various ways. I think, for instance, of the Filipinos in Singapore.⁴² On 19 April 2014, Filipino organizers of the 12 June 2014 Philippine Independence Day celebration were harassed. Some Singaporeans slammed the proposed activity. Lee Hsein Loong, the Prime Minister of Singapore, “appalled by the harassment,” apologized, saying that it is “a disgrace to Singapore” and “many sensible Singaporeans condemn this thuggish behavior.”⁴³ He enjoined that Singaporeans “must treat people in Singapore the way [they expect] to be treated overseas,” and to show that “[Singaporeans] are generous of spirit and welcome visitors into [their]

⁴⁰ Taylor, “The Dynamics of Democratic Exclusion,” 144, 146.

⁴¹ Taylor *Dilemmas and Connections*, 130.

⁴² In the year 2011, there are close to 150,000 overseas Filipino workers behind the economic progress of Singapore. See “Compendium of OFW Statistics (2005-2011),” in *Philippine Overseas Employment Agency*, < <http://www.poea.gov.ph/ofwstat/compendium/2011.pdf>>.

⁴³ Camila Diola, “Singapore Leader defends Pinoys, labels ‘spammers’ a disgrace,” in *Philippine Star Global* (21 April 2014), < <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2014/04/21/1314411/singapore-leader-defends-pinoys-labels-spammers-disgrace>>.

midst, even as [they] manage the foreign population [in Singapore].”⁴⁴ It might be the case that there have been some problems associated with the presence of migrant groups. Some of them could have truly disturbed the security and peace that dominant groups enjoy. But these incidents cannot justify acts of discriminations or exclusions. Apparently, the hope for a better society is still through sincere recognition.

B. Solidarity in Socio-economic Welfare

Economic preoccupation can be an obstacle to solidarity and democratic ideals. When we think of the economy in terms of enriching oneself without due regard for the common interest, we trespass some essential components of justice, namely, distribution of resources and social welfare. An economy that is dissociated from social responsibility will only be concerned with profiteering. As a result, inequality abounds when people think only of what they can gain, like capitalism which refers to an economic system often operated by private individuals whose interest is to increase profit and to exploit the vulnerability of weaker people.⁴⁵ A capitalist can “unilaterally raise his income at the expense of consumers without any compensating increase in their welfare.”⁴⁶ Capitalism is considered a socioeconomic malpractice because it steals and siphons the interests and needs of a person and the community.

Consider an ancestral domain that is taken over by transnational companies in the name of economic progress. It is likely that local economic sustainability and the welfare of cultural groups in the area are placed at risk, which usually happens. In cases like these, there is no such thing as equal opportunity for everyone, but rather inequality and injustice along economic and even political lines. Because capitalism seems interested merely in exploiting labor, the dignity of the human person can be jeopardized. Reciprocity or mutual benefit does not even get to the ears of capitalists, for they catapult it right away. It is disheartening to note that in any oligarchic system of economy, the exhaustion of natural resources and skills can demean and degrade human dignity. Accordingly, capitalism “reduces the world” and the human person “to raw things without intrinsic purpose and meaning,”⁴⁷ and “demands that we slide solidarity to the side and agree to

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Taylor, *Philosophy and Human Sciences*, 307.

⁴⁶ Taylor, *The Pattern of Politics*, 22.

⁴⁷ Taylor, “Solidarity.”

bend or even break the rule of reciprocity in the name of effectiveness."⁴⁸ The sense of solidarity is dumped on the sidelines in the name of production and profit which further increases individualism. Capitalism can be characterized as predatory because the system of economic exchange is all about "relations of domination, of ownership of man by man."⁴⁹

However, capitalism will always be part of the structure of the society. People will always find themselves participating in economic exchanges. But this does not mean that nothing can be done about the negative aspect of capitalism. When capitalism is well-embedded in a decent regulatory system and framed according to principles of justice, it can also work to the advantage of society. Capitalism can be good if it does not "contradict the basic nature of law."⁵⁰ I understand this basic nature of law as pertaining to the distribution of resources and profits down to all members, thus reaching all sectors of the society. The basic needs such as healthcare, housing, quality education, just remuneration, and efficient transportation and communication facilities are some of the interesting examples of how market capitalism can be transformed through comprehensive democratic measures. Perhaps, these measures might also improve the treatment of human dignity among social actors.

In what way can market systems respond affirmatively to the thrust of the basic nature of law? This question seems difficult to answer considering the intricacies of the system of market economy. Taylor himself even acknowledges the difficulty of determining "the conditions of an advanced and progressive economy on a mass scale without also creating the conditions ... towards democratization."⁵¹ I agree that creating the conditions for economic progress and democratization at the same time can be difficult. However, it does not seem to suggest that it is impossible. Incorporating economic planning into the overall goals of democratization might be a good solution. Specifically, this idea involves the restructuring of economic system through efficient and effective measures that are anchored in public policies which is oriented to a just society. The taxation system is an example of adequately managing the distribution of wealth. In this regard, capital gains, labor, inheritance, and properties must be reasonably taxed. It cannot be denied, however, that some political institutions hardly tax big corporations

⁴⁸ Charles Taylor, "Several Reflections on the Theme of Solidarity," trans. by Arthur Rosman, in *Thinking in Values – The Tischner Institute of Journal of Philosophy* 1 (2007), 75. Hereafter cited as "Several Reflections."

⁴⁹ Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*, 89.

⁵⁰ Robert Dahl claims that in modern democratic societies, "market capitalism has not been abolished altogether," but "peacefully transformed by democratic means into far more humane and decent economic order." See Robert Dahl, "Justifying Democracy," in *Society* 35:2 (1998), 390.

⁵¹ Taylor, *The Pattern of Politics*, 99.

because they fear that these companies will leave and invest in another state that would only minimally, if not at all, require a tax from them. This exemption is unfair to the people who work so hard but pay heavy taxes.

A just and humane taxation system is needed, hence a restructuring of the taxation system. There is also a need for “a relatively strong commitment on the part of ... citizens” for “collective action”⁵² to advance economic sustainability and distribution. The economic sphere is an avenue of solidaristic endeavor for a just and humane society. If the “economic pie” is utilized to meet the human predicaments, such as hunger, sickness, poverty, then the economic structures can be said to have satisfied the basic law of distribution of resources. On the other hand, if economic practices are not regulated by a just law, it can perpetuate a ‘master-slave’ relationship. Here, the economic structure forsakes and tramples human dignity. On the contrary, socioeconomic condition progresses best when people experience gradual relief from dreadful conditions.

But there is more to the law that must be satisfied. Economic practices should be anchored on mutual trust just as “democratic societies are based on trust.”⁵³ Economic affairs must be tempered by mutual trust because it is vital in the overall conception of solidarity among diverse groups. A sense of trust drives away suspicion and establishes collective action. Of course, trust is something that is motivated by transparency, effective and responsible social welfare programs, and a just economic system. These measures beget trust from the people. For example, economic transparency can “bring the truth into the light and bring [it] into public consciousness.”⁵⁴ It becomes an added motivation for people to cooperate collectively when there is transparency. Because they are aware of the socioeconomic realities that affect them, they can make the necessary adjustments and remedies and pass on important decisions. In the absence of transparency, it is likely that people will be at the losing end. Hence, an economic system betrays the trust of the people if it is devoid of humane and justice-oriented motivations. Betrayal refers to an outright negation of trust because it exploits the people by not giving them what they deserve for their output, and for using the output at the expense of others.⁵⁵

If there are no just laws, mutual trust and collective action that regulate the economy, the economic system might turn away from its social responsibility. Then, people would continue to be exploited when their dignity as “free and equal subjects” is not respected, and when what is due to them is not justly compensated. A regulated economy, however, is more

⁵² Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections*, 90.

⁵³ Taylor, “Several Reflections,” 75.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

advantageous to the weakest members of the society because their basic needs can be met.

With the above claims, it might be good to ask whether Taylor's economic advocacy is plausible. As noted, a just law, transparency, and mutual trust are regulating mechanisms which can preclude abuses and exploitations. I concur to this. However, these views are easier said than done. Consider the economic status of the Philippines. Although the Philippines is a democratic country, it is ironically a haven of oligarchs and influential politicians who apparently are preoccupied at amassing wealth at the expense of the population. They lord over the masses. Currently, the Philippines is dubbed "no longer the sick man of East Asia, but the rising tiger." This description, however, is a stark contrast of the real situation. The Philippines is suffering from a poor-rich divide disease. Philippines' economic gain, if there is, has not trickled down to the various sectors of the society, especially the marginalized. The state of the poor has not improved. Reports show that "22 out of 100 families were estimated to be poor in the first semester of 2012 while 13 in 100 Filipinos lived in extreme poverty in the same period."⁵⁶ Moreover, the National Statistical and Coordination Board forecasts that as of 2009 nationwide survey, "a total of 23.14 million Filipinos scrape by on 46.14 pesos (1.04 US dollars) a day or less."⁵⁷

Some might point out that there are countries whose economic approach can be a source of inspiration if we apply a regulated capitalism scheme. The European Union is an example. One might say that the economy in most member states in the EU is not disentangled from its social responsibility because the wealth is distributed in many different forms: education, healthcare, research development projects, social security, infrastructures, etc. More so, the gains of the economy are not only distributed to its constituents but also to immigrants. The EU has reached this status, another would argue, because of the peoples' concerted effort to uphold a just law that can regulate socioeconomic processes and to ascertain mutual trust through a high degree of transparency. However, the EU has also suffered economic setbacks. Think of the economic crises in Greece and Spain respectively. Even if the EU can be said to have the most advanced liberal practices and economic systems, it is not immune to democratic deficits. Nonetheless, their experience can be a learning tool for democratizing societies and economies.

⁵⁶Luis Bacani, "No improvements in the lives of poor Filipinos," in *Philippine Star Global* (23 April 2013) <<http://www.philstar.com/business/2013/04/23/933989/no-improvement-lives-poor-filipinos>>.

⁵⁷ Agence France-Presse, "One in 4 Filipinos live on a dollar a day," in *Inquirer* (8 February 2011), <<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/cebudailynews/enterprise/view/20110208-319235/One-in-4-Filipinos-live-on-dollar-a-day>>.

IV. Concluding Reflections

In this paper, we analyzed Taylor's notions of identity and solidarity. Central to his view is building a just and humane society which, for him, should be the aim of democracy. A democratic society is anchored on a sense of belonging and meaning, strong allegiance to the state, and collaborative enterprise with the other members of the society. Seemingly this thrust has far-reaching and diverse implications insofar as questions of democratization are always contextually determined. One might argue that even though democracy does not have all the answers to sociocultural and politico-economic problems, it might still be the best civilized alternative approach because it provides opportunities for political and civic participation. Since democracy advocates "we-identities" such as collective action, sense of meaning, belonging, and real solidarity to the whole, "as against merely convergent I-identities,"⁵⁸ it can redress the problem of indifference punctuated by atomistic and utilitarian doctrines. Commitment to political solidarity, for instance, can ignite the resolve of people towards a common goal. It can also enhance inter-subjective relations that have been wounded and clouded in animosity because of injustice. The social bond that democratic society nurtures can become "the engine of healing towards social action" which redresses, if not altogether eradicates, the injustice, discrimination, and exploitation of people.⁵⁹ Accordingly, the sense of social bond is inevitable for democracy and democratization.

Identifying with the political state expresses a commitment to collective and shared goods and shared goals. It presupposes the renunciation of atomistic views and sincerity to engage in a common enterprise, but it requires the freedom from "command-obedience" power structures because everything involuntary is not a practice of one's freedom.⁶⁰ To participate freely in charting the future of a democratic society can make it possible for every member to pursue a common objective. Apparently, for Taylor, this is an indispensable feature of political life and it is a tragedy for the society when "we cannot answer unconditionally"⁶¹ to it. Of course, solidaristic contestations will likely emerge because of the assertion of competing claims. However, they are also necessary for democratization as they can potentially rally political institutions toward a common purpose.

⁵⁸ Charles Taylor, "The Dialogical Self," in *Rethinking knowledge: reflection across the disciplines*, ed. by Robert F. Goodman and Walter R. Fisher (USA: State University of New York Press, 1995), 192.

⁵⁹ Taylor, "Several Reflections," 72.

⁶⁰ Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, 192.

⁶¹ Taylor, "Several Reflections," 73.

Indeed, it harnesses what I call twin approaches in democratization. These are ground-based and reflective approaches respectively.

The ground-based approach touches upon existing social conditions. It deals with the concrete concerns that society faces. A political institution is rooted in the factual realities of the people when it is not withdrawn from their concrete situations. Because it is grounded in real-life contexts, this ground-based approach can inform and aid legislations and public decision-making. The social context provides the necessary basis for charting and implementing policies that best respond to the people's concerns. Neglecting public affairs can lead to the creation of policies that are less effective in responding to the situation it is meant to address. Accordingly, inattention to facts precludes democratization.

The reflective approach refers to the rationalization aspect. It is crucial for any political community to evaluate and to assess the conditions affecting society. The reflective approach involves participation among the members of the political community to evaluate the available facts on the ground, to legislate relevant policies, and to visualize programs for collective action not only for the present but beyond. In short, the reflective approach is a sustained critical understanding of actual social conditions in lieu of creating policies that are suited to address them.

Appropriating both approaches can have the following advantages in mobilizing the democratization of society: (1) improve collective political action aimed at building a just and humane society, (2) preclude ineffective system that can potentially derail democratization, (3) provide avenues for greater political participation, enhancing the confidence of the people to exercise their shared sovereignty, (4) assist the people to vote for the right political leaders who can work with the interest of the society as a whole in mind, (5) adequately respond to current concerns, such as migration, climate change, environmental pollution and economic neoliberalism among others, and (6) reinforce mindfulness of effective and long-term development goals and not merely rely on short-term but costly and sometimes collaterally damaging solutions.

Of course, often the political directions of democratic societies have been put into question. For instance, one can even be skeptical whether democracy can manage twenty-first-century social problems, such as, political dynasty, oligarchy, unbridled corruption, climate change, refugee crisis, poverty, and hunger among others that tagged people along uncertain paths. Accordingly, there is no assurance that democracy can solve all the problems. Nonetheless, advancing the strengths and improving the limitations of a democratic system in the governance of public affairs can adequately pursue the case of a just and humane society. Democracy is still

considered the best alternative government so far to realize this common project. Until then, the fate of the democratization of society is uncertain.

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Article

How to Change the World: An Introduction to Alain Badiou's Subtractive Ontology, Militant Subjectivity, and Ethic of Truths¹

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Abstract: In one of Alain Badiou's interviews, he diagnoses that today's world is suffering from a double-edged crisis. At the objective level, we have the crises brought about by capitalism. But at the same time, he notes that at the subjective level, we are confronted with an obscure vision of the future, which makes the solution to the objective crisis more problematic.

This work provides a concise introduction to what I refer to as the four-part solution of Badiou to the existing crises the contemporary world is faced with. This consists of, first, founding of an affirmative logic to combat the crisis of negativity in contemporary philosophy. Second, laying down an ontology capable of thinking about the possibility of radical immanent change as a response to the declaration regarding the end of metaphysics. Third, constructing a new understanding of ethics that can go beyond the limitations of an ethics based on universal human rights and ethics of difference or compassion. And fourth, a new theory of the subject that shall serve as a manifesto for a new form of subjectivity as is required in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Badiou, subtractive ontology, militant subjectivity, ethic of truths

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I am a philosopher. And I think that the business of a philosopher is to be optimistic ... Because if you are pessimistic, finally, there is no use of yourself. Because to be pessimistic, there is no necessity to be a philosopher, the situation suffices. And so, to say to people something which can be useful for them, we must have some hope to transform the world, and go to the direction of a better world, if it is possible.
—Alain Badiou²

Introduction: The World as 'Is' is in Crisis

One of the famous scholars of the late twentieth century, Francis Fukuyama, wrote in his article "The End of History?" that "liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and 'the final form of human government,' and as such constituted the 'end of history.'"³

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek in his book *Living in the End Times*, diagnoses contemporary society and confronts the question, what kind of 'end time' are we living in? Insofar as Fukuyama is concerned, this consists of liberal democracy having reached the peak of its *ideal*, and that the best course of action is the complete implementation of the principles of liberty and equality.⁴ Mark Fisher, in addressing the question, "Is there no alternative?" echoes the sardonic remark of Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek: as if "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism."⁵ Sardonic, I say, because Žižek in *Living in the End Times* asserts the opposite: liberal democracy with its twin economic model, capitalism, is "approaching an apocalyptic zero-point."⁶ For him, the inconsistencies of liberal democratic capitalism are exploding in our globalized world, and this is not because of 'incomplete implementation' or as a standard capitalist views them, 'temporary, correctable glitches' in the functioning of the system. For Žižek, such inconsistencies must be viewed instead as moments of truth, as 'symptoms' in the psychoanalytic sense, as "exceptions" that "allow us to

² Alain Badiou, "On Optimism," The Nexus Institute (2012), 07:30, <http://y2u.be/o6O_d1DVk3U>.

³ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), xi. The article was published in *The National Interest* in the summer of 1989. See also, Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" in *The National Interest* 16 (1989), 3-18.

⁴ The general tenor of his thought was that despite the problems liberal democracy is facing, these problems are only the result of "the incomplete implementations of the twin principles of liberty and equality ... rather than flaws in the principles themselves." Fukuyama furthers that, while stable liberal democracy cannot yet be achieved in other states, "the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved on." Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, xi.

⁵ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative* (UK: O Books, 2009), 2.

⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010), x.

grasp the functioning of the system”⁷ in its internal inconsistency. Žižek diagnoses that our world today is being haunted by what he calls the “four riders of the apocalypse” comprised by “ecological crisis, the consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food, and water), and the explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions.”⁸ Simply put, our world today is undergoing a crisis.

The significance of Žižek’s analysis lies in providing us a different angle through which we can understand the world situation. He powerfully argues that the problems we encounter today—crimes, poverty, discrimination, global warming, etc.—should not be looked at as psychological/subjective problems, but as results of the violence deployed by the system we are in. From Žižek’s perspective, it is not enough to punish wrongdoers, to make people aware of the catastrophic consequences of people’s consumption and way of life to the environment, or to continually give charity to the poor. What we need is an unrelenting courage to question why crimes, ecological crisis, poverty, and social divisions are being sustained in the first place, in a supposed to be free, democratic, and globalized world, and shatter the ‘insensitivity to the *systemic* violence that had to go on in order for our comfortable lives to be possible.’⁹

Badiou agrees with Žižek on the point that at the objective level, the crisis we are experiencing is caused by capitalism. But he points out that there is yet another aspect of the problem which makes the solution to the objective crisis seem to be even more impossible: a subjective crisis. For Badiou, this means that the difficulty of questioning the global order lies in the difficulty of questioning our very own way of life. Badiou has identified this as a fundamental problem which the younger generation in particular, but also humanity in general, is confronted with. In his terms, this predicament consists in an “obscure vision of the future.”¹⁰ In an interview, Badiou remarks that this problem has two aspects. One poses the question ‘can we continue as now?’ The other asks the question ‘if continuity is not the solution, if one recognizes the impossibility of sustaining this kind of life against the backdrop of the ongoing problems of social inequality, social divisions and poverty, if one ever desires to change the way things are, how will such change be possible?’ In Badiou’s words: “How is it possible to

⁷ Slavoj Žižek, “Badiou: Notes From an Ongoing Debate,” in *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, 1:2 (2007), 4.

⁸ Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, x.

⁹ Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York: Picador, 2008), 9.

¹⁰ Badiou, “On Optimism.”

invent a new form of life?"¹¹ What does the phrase 'another way of doing things' point at?

This entire line of questioning leads to a core issue in Badiou's philosophy: the thinkability of the actualization and materiality of change. Adrian Johnston, in the Preface to his book *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change*, makes the optimistic remark that "the Badiouian-Žižekian engagement with politics gives a strong reason for hoping that thinking can in fact generate change."¹² This is echoed by Ed Pluth who describes Badiou's philosophy as one that promotes an "intelligence of change."¹³ Meanwhile, in contrast to an optimistic tone, Bruno Bosteels uses "Can Change Be Thought?" as an interrogative title to his interview article with Badiou, appended at the end of his book, *Badiou and Politics*. These three works attest to the growing intellectual orientation in Western political-social philosophy that explores the possibility of a renewed materialist theory of radical change, tied to a reconstructed theory of subjectivity that became most pronounced in the philosophy of Badiou. Since the said idea's articulation in Badiou's *Theory of the Subject*, down to its elaboration in *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds*, floodgates of debate have been opened up, and this idea lured a lot of leftist thinkers like Žižek, Bosteels, and Johnston.

Badiou stresses that the purpose of philosophy is to provide a way of understanding and confronting the problems of the world and of life. However, for him, contemporary philosophy cannot do this after the ethico-linguistic turn¹⁴ because philosophy already rendered itself compatible with the current ideology that declares "there are only bodies and languages."¹⁵ In confrontation with this, he asserts that there is a need to bring back the concept of truth, because it is the concept of truth which is concerned with going beyond limits, going beyond the ordinary towards the authentic life—the life which, for him, is barred in today's world.

Badiou's revival of the concept of truth is what led his thinking to the very idea of the 'event'—one of the central concepts of his philosophy. For

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Adrian Johnston, *Badiou, Žižek and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change*, (USA: Northwestern University Press, 2009), xxiv.

¹³ See Ed Pluth, *Badiou: A Philosophy of the New* (New York: Polity Press, 2010), back cover.

¹⁴ In the discussion pertaining to the incommensurability of differences most pronounced in the linguistic turn in philosophy, this incommensurability was not only at the level of language and epistemology, but most importantly, at the level of culture and ethics. This instigated a shift not only to a preoccupation with language but also to morality and/or ethics. Hence the term ethico-linguistic turn.

¹⁵ Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, trans. by Alberto Toscano (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1-2.

Badiou, truth is not always possible. Truth, he argues, needs a supplement¹⁶—an occurrence, that disrupts the regular functioning of our world. This disruptive occurrence is what he calls an event.

The term ‘event’ is Badiou’s name for the beginning of change. An event is what sparks an idea that a change in the distribution of possibilities is possible. The event is what opens up the possibility of truth and the coming to being of worlds.¹⁷

The entire discourse surrounding the concepts ‘being,’ ‘event,’ ‘worlds,’ ‘subject,’ and ‘truth’ is the content of Badiou’s subtractive ontology (*Being and Event*), logic of appearing (*Logics of Worlds*), and ethic of truths (*Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*). These are Badiou’s responses to what he sees as the inability of contemporary Western ideology, including contemporary Western philosophy, to provide enough solution to our double-edged crisis. His proposal consists of four parts: the founding of an affirmative logic, the laying down of an ontology capable of thinking about the possibility of radical immanent change, the construction of a new understanding of ethics, and a new theory of the subject on the basis of the first two.

This paper focuses on these four. It begins with Badiou’s diagnosis of the contemporary form of ethics and social critique which constitute our existing ideology. This is followed by what he sees as the limitation of contemporary ideology in relation to the authentic life. Then, in the attempt to address the contemporary predicament using Badiou’s philosophy, this paper argues that his proposal consists of four-parts: logic, ontology, a theory of the subject, and an understanding of ethics.

I. Thinking in the End Times

In the eyes of Badiou, the general determination of ethics today is the one which is represented by an ethics of the universal rights of the human individual. It prescribes a way of understanding our basic human orientation by defining our most elementary feature, that we are beings who “are born free and equal in dignity and rights ... endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”¹⁸ This is asserted in ‘The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.’ Badiou remarks,

¹⁶ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2005), 355; Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* trans. by Peter Hallward (New York: Verso, 2000), 41; Alain Badiou, “Ethic of Truths,” in *Pli: Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 12 (2001), 250.

¹⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, xii.

¹⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 217 A, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” 10 December 1948, <<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>>, Art. 1.

According to the way it is generally used today, the term ‘ethics’ relates above all to the domain of human rights, ‘the rights of man’ – or, by deviation, the rights of living beings ... We are supposed to assume the existence of a universally recognizable human subject possessing ‘rights’ that are in some sense natural: the right to live, to avoid abusive treatment, to enjoy ‘fundamental’ liberties. These rights are held to be self-evident, and the result of a wide consensus. ‘Ethics’ is a matter of busying ourselves with these rights, of making sure that they are respected.¹⁹

The core of such ethical orientation for him, rests on the assumption that we share a general consensus of what could be considered as those that violate our ‘inalienable rights’ and ‘freedom.’ This means that as human beings, we share an implicit agreement on what is harmful or unjust, which can be the basis for a universal determination of what is good. Badiou reads this as embodying the imperative of identifying first the opposite of what is to be considered *good*, viz., the principle of *evil*. Ethics is to proceed and determine its course from the standpoint of what is considered evil. What is good is everything that is against and that prevents the occurrence of torture, slavery, inequality.

Badiou argues that this is essentially what theorists of the ‘natural law’ retained from the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant. He says that “ethics is conceived here both as an *a priori* ability to discern Evil, [...] and the ultimate principle of judgement.”²⁰ This means that we presume a natural law regarding what is barbarian and that we understand the Good as that which “intervenes visibly against Evil which is identifiable *a priori*.”²¹ The power of this doctrine, Badiou accounts, is its self-evidence²²—the self-evidence of suffering being highly visible and that we have an immediate disposition to move towards its impediment. The fact that from experience, we recognize that we can identify suffering and injustices when we see them and thus construct the law according to its prevention is the very foundation of an ethics of ‘universal human rights.’

Meanwhile, the refocusing of philosophy on the discourse of finitude went side by side with changes in ethics. Philosophies that centered on linguistic incommensurability had moral counterparts, such as the respect of

¹⁹ Badiou, *Ethics*, 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²² *Ibid.*, 9.

differences, multiculturalism, and the politics of tolerance. This work refers to this form of ethics as the ethics of difference.

It is not a hidden fact that the philosopher most notable for this is Emmanuel Levinas. He critiqued the Heideggerian formulation of “ontology is first philosophy,” deposed it, and put ethics at center stage. The ethical radicalism Levinas upheld in *Totality and Infinity* goes against a Greek-origin of ethics which presumes that action must be in conformity with the rationality of being. For Levinas, it is impossible to restrict within the limits of the logic of the Same or identity the being of the Other. This is because the Other’s being rests on absolute infinity. If there is to be any conception of ethics therefore, it must be “grounded in the immediacy of an opening to the Other which disarms the reflexive subject.”²³

It is upon this theoretical edifice that the ethics of difference is founded. Contemporary ethics, like those of culturalism, Badiou argues, amounts to “‘the recognition of the other’, to the ‘ethics of differences’, to ‘multiculturalism’, or to the good old-fashioned ‘tolerance’, which consists of not being offended by the fact that others think and act differently from you.”²⁴ It runs a firm stance against racism, against hegemony, or against a substantialist nationalism that denies or excludes others. In the words of Badiou, “Its great ideal is the peaceful coexistence of cultural, religious, and national ‘communities’, the refusal of ‘exclusion’.”²⁵ By virtue of the reality that we are all different, and this difference is in itself what prevents us from identifying a single determination of ourselves, of others, and of the world, it is only by taking this as point of departure that we can start living humanely.

Correspondingly, the ethics of difference and compassion (embedded in the ethics of universal human rights), Badiou notes, are also the founding blocks of the dominant theoretical forms of social critique today. One of these is espoused by the critical theorist, Theodor Adorno, namely, Negative Dialectics. The goal of thinking for him is precisely to prevent the repetition of the banality of Auschwitz.²⁶ Under the logic of Negative Dialectics, the non-identity of thought and its negativity towards itself should be the ground of all thinking.²⁷ Anything that prescribes or advances a unified concept of things must be dismissed.

²³ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁶ Theodor Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concepts and Problems* trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 116. See also, Mark Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002).

²⁷ Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* trans. by E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1999), 365.

Another one is the view of the liberal communist Antonio Negri who does away with Adorno's hyper-negativity and proposes instead a Spinozistic faith on the inherent evolutionary creativity of capitalism. Badiou notes that for Negri, capitalism is now working towards the direction of actualizing the ideals of communism. He writes that "Antonio Negri, but also Louis Althusser, thinks that the Hegelian dialectics was too negative, too subjective and too indifferent to the absolute potency of Nature, of Life, of the movement of History."²⁸ And so, they ally themselves with Spinoza, because they find in him "a model of philosophy [...] which is without negation."²⁹

Badiou stresses that contemporary Western philosophy together with the ethics of difference and compassion fit the contemporary ideology that declares "there are only bodies and languages."³⁰ In the second volume of *Being and Event* entitled *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou explains that this statement is "the axiom of contemporary conviction."³¹ He names it 'democratic materialism.' He writes:

Democratic *materialism*. The individual as fashioned by the contemporary world recognizes the objective existence of bodies alone ... In order to validate the equation 'existence = individual = body', contemporary *doxa* must valiantly reduce humanity to an overstretched vision of animality. 'Human rights' are the same as the rights of the living. The humanist protection of all living bodies: this is the norm of contemporary materialism. Moreover, it is essentially a *democratic* materialism. That is because the contemporary consensus, in recognizing the plurality of languages, presupposes their juridical equality. Hence, the assimilation of humanity to animality culminates in the identification of the human animal with the diversity of its sub-species and the democratic rights that inhere in this diversity ... Communities and cultures, colours and pigments, religions and clergies, uses and customs, disparate sexualities, public intimacies and the publicity of the intimate: everything and everyone deserves to be recognized and protected by the law.³²

²⁸ Alain Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology," in *The International Journal of Badiou Studies*, 2:1 (2013), 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁰ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 1-2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Democratic materialism he says, “is in the process of becoming the enveloping ideology for this new century.”³³ As in the case of an ethic of human rights, the *body*, in so far as its vulnerability to victimhood is concerned, has become man’s identifying factor and served as the basis for his rights. Badiou interprets this as contemporary ideology’s form of materialism. By materialism, this means the brute insistence that everything that actually exists is material or physical.³⁴ Thus, the insistence that the body is the ground of morality or ethics is a form of materialism insofar as it does not refer to any transcendent or symbolic entity or forms or principles, just the “immanence of incarnate beings.”³⁵ Meanwhile, the emphasis on the incommensurable differences in our systems of *language*, cultures, communities, and perspectives is what for Badiou orients our sense of democracy. In the contemporary ‘democratic’—or as Badiou interchangeably calls ‘Western’—order, these differences must be welcomed and given free expression. In a simple note, democratic materialism is Badiou’s term for the great motor that drives our thinking in what Žižek calls, the end times.³⁶

II. Confronting the Question of the World as ‘Ought’: The Need for a New Logic and a New Anthropology

For Badiou, it is easy to see what the democratic materialist ideology amounts to: an anthropology that equates man simply with his capacity to suffer and be a victim, and his incapacity to pursue a good that transcends, and, in fact, ignores the brute reality of difference and appeals to our generic humanity. Badiou stresses that when confronted with the question of change, its only proposal is to survive and be tolerant.

Man: a biological species, a ‘biped without feathers’

Badiou explains that the ethics of human rights begins with the identification of suffering that actually splits the human subject into two: a passive subject that suffers, and an active subject that judges that it must be

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴ It has to be noted that this idea of materialism is different from what Badiou’s brand of materialism. Regarding this topic, Ed Pluth comments that the materialism of capitalism is still an ‘idealist materialism’ owing to the fact that it introduces hierarchy of beings: the rich and the poor, the good guys and the bad guys, etc. See Ed Pluth’s “The Black Sheep of Materialism: The Theory of the Subject,” in *Badiou and Philosophy* ed. by Sean Bowden and Simon Duffy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 99-112.

³⁵ Adrian Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism – Volume One: The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 13.

³⁶ See Žižek’s *Living in the End Times*.

stopped by all available means.³⁷ Put in the case of charity work or social welfare movements, for instance, the character of man is divided into the suffering-victim-man defined by his misfortunes, and the rich-healthy-benefactor who is identified by his sensitivity and exercise of good conscience. What this alludes to is the fact that, in a situation that calls for an 'ethical response,' there is always the necessary coexistence of the suffering victim and the capable benefactor, without which, there can never be an 'ethical act.' Because we must act in accordance to "the spirit of brotherhood," 'ethics' is only for the 'privileged man of conscience' to exercise, towards an Other whose subjectivity is identified simply with his capacity to suffer.

For Badiou, this ominously downgrades the definition of man to a "living organism pure and simple."³⁸ It reduces 'humanity' to the "status of victim, of suffering beast, of emaciated, dying body,"³⁹ and equates him with his "animal substructure."⁴⁰ He adds, "To be sure, humanity is an animal species. It is mortal and predatory. But neither of these attributes can distinguish humanity within the world of the living."⁴¹ It is not our victimhood which makes us what we are. But rather, our capacity to be more than this—our capacity to concentrate our force and direct our existence in pursuit of a conviction. "Beyond this," Badiou says, "there is only a biological species, a 'biped without feathers'."⁴²

Tolerance: as an ideological category

His next point of contention against democratic materialism involves the ethics of difference which for him bred, in our time, another ideology, the communitarian-particularist kind.

Another philosopher who echoes Badiou's attack on the issue of tolerance is Žižek, who explains that the "Respect for others' beliefs as the highest value can only mean two things: (1) either we treat the other in a patronizing way and avoid hurting him in order not to ruin his illusions, or (2) we adopt the relativist stance of multiple 'regimes of truth,' disqualifying as violent imposition any clear insistence on truth."⁴³

Both of these stances however are problematic. In the first case, instead of an authentic respect for the Other, what one expresses is a distant engagement in order not to see how thoroughly 'other' the Other is. Žižek

³⁷ Badiou, *Ethics*, 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 12. Or as Žižek would remark: in renouncing "big ideological causes, what remains is only the efficient administration of life." Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 40.

⁴³ Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 139.

uses Sigmund Freud's analysis in discussing the problems of racism and discrimination that immigrants face. For Žižek, these actions are motivated by the experience of violence in sustained difference. He explains that the Other, the neighbor, is viewed as "a traumatic intruder ... whose different way of life disturbs us," s/he "throws the balance of our way of life off the rails."⁴⁴ Žižek notes that the offensive difference of the Other, "when it comes too close ... [may]give rise to an aggressive reaction at getting rid of this disturbing intruder."⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the second stance—the acceptance of the relativist stance of multiple regimes of truth that also plagues philosophy today—in Žižek's diagnosis, simply accepts that differences must just be 'tolerated' rather than 'overcome.'⁴⁶ Under this ideology, particularism, otherness—today exhibited in the discourses on the diversity of cultures and religions, of expressions of sexuality, of technological specialization, of functions and skills—are used as a right, a protective barrier against any form of intervention, even political struggle. With the recognition of the general character of today's world as free and democratic, situations that call for a militant firmness to intervene against barbarism are glossed over. In Žižek's words, it breeds "blindness to oppression on behalf of 'respect' for the Other's culture."⁴⁷ What this suggests is an ethical gesture that backfires against itself in reality, in which the very limit of an ethics of difference becomes visible. For Žižek, true respect means treating the other as a serious adult, responsible for his or her belief.⁴⁸ To tolerate is to entrench an identity (which is actually non-fixed), and to assume its totality.

It has to be noted that Žižek is not at all endorsing another universalist-totalitarian point of view in his critique of multiculturalism. As he remarks:

Actual universality, is not the deep feeling that above all differences, different civilizations share the same base values, etc.: actual universality appears (actualizes itself) as the experience of negativity, of the inadequacy-to-itself of a particular identity.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁶ Slavoj Žižek, "Tolerance as an ideological category," in *Critical Inquiry* 34:4 (2008), 660-682.

⁴⁷ Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 144.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

It is precisely this negativity which mobilizes the value of difference and the demand for respect; however, it is a form of respect not as tolerance, but rather, as intervention.

To return to Badiou, the 'respect of differences' is an advocacy that today is in fact characterized by a horror towards any vigorously sustained difference.⁵⁰ He notes that "the celebrated 'other' is acceptable only if he is a *good* other."⁵¹ This means that, "Just as there can be 'no freedom for the enemies of freedom', so there can be no respect for those whose difference consists precisely in not respecting differences."⁵² He further derides: "Respect for differences, of course! But on condition that ... that which differs also respects, just as I do, the said differences."⁵³

Badiou notes that this is certainly not what Levinas had meant in his ethical radicalism, but this is how it appears to be manifested in our contemporary global world. It upholds the hidden attitude, that "only an Other who is like me, is deserving of respect."⁵⁴

From the point of view of Badiou's ethico-political philosophy, ethics itself is the assertion that yes, "there are only bodies and languages," but he adds, "except that there are [also] truths."⁵⁵ This means that there are not just differences and communities; there are also very authentic human gestures in the fields of science, politics, art, and love that cannot be reduced to strict animal parameters. They transcend the elementary necessity of everyday survival, and they are the halting point of differences, and are the real expressions of freedom. Badiou writes:

Freedom has nothing to do with the capacities of an ordinary body under the law of some language. Freedom is: active participation to the consequences of a new body, which is always beyond my own body. A truth-body which belongs to one of the four great figures of exception: love, politics, art and science; ... freedom is not a category of elementary life of bodies. Freedom is a category of intellectual novelty, not within, but beyond ordinary life.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Badiou, *Ethics*, 24.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 4.

⁵⁶ Alain Badiou, "Bodies, Languages, Truths," in *Lacan dot com* (2007), <<http://www.lacan.com/badbodies.htm>>.

Badiou is convinced that there should be no reason to “respect or vilipend”⁵⁷ differences in the first place; that the law of things is that our life, as human animals, consists of particularities.⁵⁸ He further states that “infinite alterity is quite simply what there is”⁵⁹ and that the real challenge of thought is rather the question of the ‘same,’ the question of the ‘universal’ that could cut across differences. One can love, solve a scientific problem, create a work of art, or fight for justice, regardless of race, gender, religion, class, or age.

Žižek supports Badiou on this thought and writes:

One of Badiou’s great theses is that the pure multiple lacks the dignity of the proper object of thought: from Stalin to Derrida, philosophical common sense has always insisted on infinite complexity (everything is interconnected; reality is so complex that it is accessible to us only in approximations ...). Badiou implicitly condemns deconstructionism itself as the latest version of this common-sense motif of infinite complexity. Among the advocates of ‘anti-essentialist’ postmodern identity politics, for example, one often encounters the insistence that there is no ‘woman in general’, there are only white middle-class women, black single mothers, lesbians, and so on. One should reject such ‘insights’ as banalities unworthy of being objects of thought. The problem of philosophical thought lies precisely in how the universality of ‘woman’ emerges out of this endless multitude.⁶⁰

Badiou stresses that we are “necessarily different.”⁶¹ The real challenge and problem is how to produce sameness or forms of unity, that is, how we can set ourselves up at the point where all of our differences do not prevent us from acting, thinking, and living together. To repeat: whether it is in the realm of art, politics, science, or love, the question of race, gender, religion, class, or age, should not be a problem, they should not even count. One can love, solve a scientific problem, create a work of art, fight for justice, while eating what

⁵⁷ Alain Badiou, “Behind the Scarfed Law, There is Fear,” in *Islam Online Archive* (3 March 2004), <<https://archive.islamonline.net/?p=14999>>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Alain Badiou, *Ethics*, 26.

⁶⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (New York: Verso, 2000), 133.

⁶¹ Alain Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event: Alain Badiou with Fabien Tarby* trans. Louise Burchill (USA: Polity, 2013), 41.

one is used to eat, wearing anything one wants or traditionally wears, praying to a deity or God, or not praying at all. Within these human endeavors in the fields of art, science, politics, and love, the domain of particularity is halted. Again, these are the kinds of human undertaking which basically transcend the brute fact of finitude, mortality, and diversity.

Negation does not equate to Affirmation

Finally, in the discussion of the current forms of social critique, Badiou runs the polemic that it is the moralism of Adorno's thought that regards the victimized body as the foundation of morality which he finds analogous with, if not a translation in, the democratic respect for human rights.⁶² Meanwhile, it is Negri's faith on capitalism transforming into a sort of communism which Badiou sees to be an acceptance of the capitalist order itself.⁶³ This is something that Žižek also recognizes. He says that even Negri's final proposal for the focus of political struggle, viz., 'rights to global citizenship, minimal income, and access to and control over education, information and communication,' receives similar articulation in the universal human rights.⁶⁴ In commenting on Negri, Žižek remarks that it is as if "one has only to drop the capitalist form, and the revolutionary goal is achieved."⁶⁵

It is the compatibility of Adorno and Negri's views with the existing order that Badiou regards the two as forms of critique which cannot be sustained if we are to envisage an idea of change in the contemporary world. Badiou announces that "the fundamental problem in the philosophical field today is to find something like a new logic."⁶⁶ His philosophical position is to find what can be called an 'affirmative' dialectics, which, in contrast to 'negative' dialectics, is not a matter of negating the existing order as such but of thinking the possibility of the new itself. He wants "to find a dialectical framework where something or the future comes before the negative present."⁶⁷

⁶² Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology," 2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Slavoj Žižek, "Have Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri Rewritten The Communist Manifesto For The Twenty-First Century?," in *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* 13:34 (2001): 190-198.

⁶⁵ Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 16.

⁶⁶ Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology," 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. The trajectory of Badiou's thought is towards founding a framework where affirmation comes first, having negation only as its consequence. His goal is to find "a way of reversing the classical dialectical logic inside itself so that the affirmation, or the positive proposition, comes before the negation instead of after it."

If one is to pursue the consequences of simple negation and critique, the problem involved in it can be summarized in three points. First, what it produces is a reactive kind of subjectivity that remains entangled to a previous order: to what it negates. Second, there is nothing in it that prevents the germination of a different oppressive order because it is obsessed with the current order. Third, it highlights the critical aspect of human agency but fails to account for human creativity as such. In following Badiou's point, the real challenge in making the ideal society possible is not simply to destroy an existing 'imperfect' regime, but more precisely to actually create the ideal society ground up, and only as a consequence, destroy the existing regime.⁶⁸

Badiou thinks that affirmation must be 'the creation of something absolutely new, not in the form of a negation of what exists, but in the form of the newness inside what exists'.⁶⁹ He writes:

Really, in the end, I have only one question: What is the new in a situation? My unique philosophical question, I would say, is the following: Can we think that there is something new in the situation, not the new outside the situation nor the new somewhere else, but can we really think of novelty and treat it in the situation?⁷⁰

It is not negation and then creation, but rather affirmation and creation within the situation of the old.⁷¹ This is the general orientation of the new logic he was in search of.

Our contemporary vision of ourselves in the eyes of Badiou is incapable of giving us insight on how we are to envisage and orient ourselves towards that "which brings to pass 'something other' than the situation," other than "opinions," other than "instituted knowledges."⁷² With democratic materialism, Badiou is worried about how we are to act at the wake of an event that disrupts the very coordinates of the world that we know; how we are to avert the germination of a radical and unforeseen form of evil if we are stuck with the horrors of totalitarianism as its acme-point; or how we can prevent meeting the great due dates of history by simply being seated worriedly in front of the television, watching; if the only thing we are convinced about is that we must live and be tolerant?

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁰ Alain Badiou, "Can Change Be Thought?" in Bruno Bosteels, *Badiou and Politics* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011), 307.

⁷¹ Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology," 5.

⁷² Badiou, *Ethics*, 67.

This line of discussion now takes us to the very heart of Badiou's philosophy: to why he declares that there is a need for a new dialectical logic, a reconstructed ontology, and a new form of ethics and theory of the subject, in lieu of "a new philosophical proposition adequate to ... creative novelty."⁷³ Badiou singles out that politics, ethics, and philosophy are all plagued with the crisis of the negative. In taking the affirmative stance, he disagrees with the Hegelian dialectical logic that the negation of negation is a new affirmation. He asserts that today, "negativity, properly speaking, does not create anything new. It destroys the old, of course, but does not give rise to a new creation."⁷⁴ For him, what we need to do instead, is to find a way to reverse "the classical dialectical logic inside itself so that the affirmation, or the positive proposition, comes before the negation instead of after it."⁷⁵ What we need is to make affirmation the essence of opening a new possibility, a new order of things, with negation only as a derivative, a consequence of creative novelty.

But what exactly is this new logic for? Badiou does not shy away in claiming that "there is no philosophy without the discontent of thinking in its confrontation with the world as it is."⁷⁶ There is definitely something wrong with our state of affairs which our current theoretical frameworks fall short in assisting us as we confront it. In an interview on the self-evidence of Evil in our time, Badiou rather gives a sharp polemical remark:

Today we see liberal capitalism and its political system, parliamentarianism, as the only natural and acceptable solutions. Every revolutionary idea is considered utopian and ultimately criminal. We are made to believe that the global spread of capitalism and what gets called "democracy" is the dream of all humanity ...⁷⁷

He adds:

In truth, our leaders and propagandists know very well that liberal capitalism is an inegalitarian regime, unjust,

⁷³ Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology," 1.

⁷⁴ Alain Badiou, Filippo Del Lucchese, and Jason Smith, "We Need a Popular Discipline: Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative," in *Critical Inquiry* 3:4 (2008), 652.

⁷⁵ Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology," 3.

⁷⁶ Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy* trans. and ed. by Oliver Feltham & Justin Clemens (London: Continuum, 2003), 29.

⁷⁷ Alain Badiou, "On Evil: An Interview with Alain Badiou, Christoph Cox and Molly Whalen," in *Cabinet Magazine Online*, (2001-2002), <<http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/5/alainbadiou.php>>. Hereafter cited as "On Evil."

and unacceptable for the vast majority of humanity. And they know too that our “democracy” is an illusion: Where is the power of the people? Where is the political power for third world peasants, the European working class, the poor everywhere? We live in a contradiction: a brutal state of affairs, profoundly inegalitarian—where all existence is evaluated in terms of money alone—is presented to us as ideal. To justify their conservatism, the partisans of the established order cannot really call it ideal or wonderful. So instead, they have decided to say that all the rest is horrible. Sure, they say, we may not live in a condition of perfect Goodness. But we’re lucky that we don’t live in a condition of Evil. Our democracy is not perfect. But it’s better than the bloody dictatorships. Capitalism is unjust. But it’s not criminal like Stalinism. We let millions of Africans die of AIDS, but we don’t make racist nationalist declarations like Milosevic. We kill Iraqis with our airplanes, but we don’t cut their throats with machetes like they do in Rwanda, etc.⁷⁸

He further notes that:

Under the pretext of not accepting Evil, we end up making believe that we have, if not the Good, at least the best possible state of affairs—even if this best is not so great. The refrain of “human rights” is nothing other than the ideology of modern liberal capitalism: We won’t massacre you, we won’t torture you in caves, so keep quiet and worship the golden calf...⁷⁹

That there is indeed Evil in our time which contemporary man is unable to address properly, is the conviction of Badiou. For him, what we need is not tolerance but intervention. Contemporary ethics, he says, “feeds too much on Evil and the Other.”⁸⁰ Emancipatory politics is halted by its inability to “surpass the concept of a negation taken solely in its destructive and properly negative aspect.”⁸¹ And, contemporary orientations of

⁷⁸ Badiou, “On Evil.”

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Badiou, *Ethics*, 34.

⁸¹ Badiou, Del Lucchese, and Smith, “We Need a Popular Discipline,” 652.

philosophy⁸² reigned by linguistic relativism (or contemporary sophism as Badiou calls it) are all announcing the 'end' of philosophy.⁸³ As such, there is a need for what he calls a (re)turn of philosophy, a reestablishment of its connection with politics, and a reconstruction of ethics. All of these, organized under the slogan: "There are only bodies and languages ... except that there are truths."⁸⁴

Here, we are to see the root of Badiou's polemic of ethical ideology. For him, the discourse of the Good, is not the discourse of 'what there is,' of the brute fact of mortality or of the self-evidence of difference. The Good is what we strive for, it is that which is not yet.⁸⁵ Badiou's idea of the Good-life is nothing but the reassertion of the Platonic ideal of true-life, or of the Aristotelian gesture of living as an immortal.⁸⁶ Furthermore, a truth, he says, is "that which punches a hole through knowledges."⁸⁷ It is that which breaks away with consensus, with opinions, with the 'known' order of reality. In a very striking description, he refers to truth as an 'immanent break'. Immanent, "because a truth proceeds *in* the situation, and nowhere else—there is no heaven of truths," and 'break,' "because what enables the truth-process—the event—meant nothing according to the prevailing language and established knowledge of the situation."⁸⁸

For Badiou, the real question and challenge of thought and of life, is not the status of difference or survival, but the status of the *same* and the *immortal*. This means thinking and living in accordance to a singular and universal cause aimed at opening a new possibility within one's existing situation and of transforming from mortal-human-animals to immortal-singular-subjects.⁸⁹ To him this is properly the question of truth and event.

III. Subtractive Ontology

In addressing the question of truth and event, Badiou notes that the first step is to determine their ontological status or to think about their being.⁹⁰ This is why the first of his planned three-volume work, *Being and Event*,⁹¹

⁸² Badiou points to the Hermeneutic orientation, Analytic orientation, and Post-modern orientation as the three general trajectories of contemporary philosophizing.

⁸³ See Badiou's discussion in "Philosophy and Desire," *Infinite Thought*, 29-42.

⁸⁴ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 4.

⁸⁵ Badiou, *Ethics*, 27.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 12; Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 40.

⁸⁷ Badiou, *Ethics*, 70.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁹⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 18.

⁹¹ The second volume is *Logics of Worlds*, and the third volume is *Immanence of Truths* (which is yet to be written by Badiou).

deals with ontology, even if one of the underlying premises of Badiou's ontology is that it is different from philosophy. In *Being and Event*, Badiou argues that "mathematics, throughout the entirety of its historical becoming, pronounces what is expressible of being *qua* being."⁹² For Badiou this is what allows philosophy to have a new basis.

Ontology, insofar as Badiou is concerned, is subtractive. He contrasts it to metaphysics which, for him, is the discourse of being as One. He cites G.W. Leibniz's metaphysical phrase that "What is not *a* being is not a *being*."⁹³ Tzuchien Tho in his article "What Is Post-Cantorian Thought? Transfinitude and the Conditions of Philosophy" clarifies this and notes that "in its various expressions, metaphysics attempts to address reality through the speculative construction of its principles of organization."⁹⁴ Tho interprets that metaphysics for Badiou had always treated reality, or the world, under the criteria of oneness and unity.⁹⁵ He adds that for Badiou, however, ontology will only effectively deploy itself once it gets subtracted from the reign of totality and oneness. It is to this sense that Badiou's ontology is referred to as subtractive. Being is subtracted from the One, being is no longer considered as *a* being but instead as *nothing*,⁹⁶ since, to repeat Leibniz, "What is not *a* being is not a *being*."⁹⁷ This 'nothing,' is what Badiou refers to as the pure multiple or the multiple of multiples. Being, for him, is not composed of atoms,⁹⁸ which will still mean that being is composed of ones. Being is instead composed of multiplicities that are further composed of multiplicities and so on, that ends not in an ultimate one, but in a void.⁹⁹ The scientific rendering of this 'void' or 'nothing' is for Badiou the job of ontology. Ontology then is the science of being's subtraction from unity, that is, being as pure multiplicity.

Badiou maintains that it is set theory in mathematics which had been able to provide a scientific rendering of pure multiplicity as such. Badiou in Meditation Three of *Being and Event* notes Bertrand Russell's key insight on the Barber Paradox and Georg Cantor's thesis on absolutely infinite multiplicities. Badiou remarks that the falsity of the speculative presupposition that 'nothing of a multiple can occur in excess of a well-constructed language' or that "the master of words is also the master of the multiple" is what obliged set theory to "emerge recast and refounded, or

⁹² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 8.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁴ Tzuchien Tho, "What Is Post-Cantorian Thought? Transfinitude and the Conditions of Philosophy" in *Badiou and Philosophy*, 23.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 388; *Ethics*, 53.

⁹⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 23.

⁹⁸ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 106.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

rendered axiomatic.”¹⁰⁰ He stresses that “it so happens that a multiplicity (a set) can only correspond to certain properties and certain formulas at the price of the destruction (the incoherency) of the very language in which these formulas are inscribed.”¹⁰¹ By this statement, he means that “the multiple does not allow its being to be prescribed from the standpoint of language alone.”¹⁰²

Badiou demonstrates this through the well-known Barber’s Paradox or Russell’s Paradox. The paradox states the logical contradiction in the idea of a barber who shaves and does not shave himself at the same time. The paradox begins with the proposition that a barber is someone who shaves all those, and those only, who do not shave themselves.¹⁰³ This proposition is then followed by the question: “Does the barber shave himself?”¹⁰⁴ The attempt to answer this question is what brings to the fore the apparent contradiction involved in the proposition. The barber cannot be shaving himself while at the same time being a barber, because the proposition states that the barber ‘only’ shaves those who do ‘not’ shave themselves. If he shaves himself, then he can no longer be the barber that shaves only those who do not shave themselves, because then, he would also be shaving those who shave themselves, i.e., himself.

The implication of this to set theory is that there is no such thing as ‘a set of all sets’.¹⁰⁵ Say the ‘barber’ is a ‘set’ symbolized as p , such that it is not an element of itself, that is, $p = \sim(p \in p)$; which in this case means that the barber cannot not belong to the set for which he is a barber: a barber of those who do not shave themselves. This is because if he belongs to the set of those who do not shave themselves, that is, $p = (p \in p)$, it will mean that he shaves and not shaves himself at the same time which is a contradiction. It will make $(p \in p) = \sim(p \in p)$ which is contradictory. The possible answer to the question then is for the barber to not shave himself at all $\sim(p \in p)$. But if this is the case, then he does belong to the set of those who do not shave themselves $(p \in p)$ and will commit the same contradiction $(p \in p) = \sim(p \in p)$.

Badiou then notes that “this equivalence of a statement and its negation annihilates the logical consistency of the language.”¹⁰⁶ He adds: “inasmuch as we suppose that it counts a multiple as one, the ‘set’ p is in excess here, of the formal and deductive resources of the language.”¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 40.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Bertrand Russell, *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 8: The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, ed. by John Slater (Canada: Routledge, 1986), 228.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Tho, “What Is Post-Cantorian Thought?,” 24.

¹⁰⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 40.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

property of p is in excess or is 'larger' than p . The impossibility of the existence of a set that contains and does not contain itself as an element—like in the case of a set of all sets (since being a set, it must be included in itself)—is Badiou's departure point for asserting the impossibility of Oneness or totality or unity in being. The discussion of the excess in the set p is the content of his ontology. He proceeds from the assertion of Cantor that "it is impossible to conceive the multiplicity as a unity, as a finite thing" and for that reason, such multiplicities are named "*absolutely infinite multiplicities, or inconsistent ...*"¹⁰⁸ From this Cantorian assertion, Badiou argues that set theory enacts "that the one is not," or that "the absolute point of the being of the multiple is not its consistency but its inconsistency, a multiple-deployment that no unity gathers together."¹⁰⁹ Finally, he asserts that being is a multiple which is not a multiple of ones, or a being, but a "multiple of multiples".¹¹⁰

Being and the two kinds of multiplicity

In his subtractive ontology, Badiou lays down two primary categories involved in this thought: 1) the category of being, which refers to the realm of 'what there is,'¹¹¹ to the world as it is, or to the world according to our 'encyclopaedia of knowledge'¹¹²; and 2) the category of event, whose belonging to the category of being is by non-belonging,¹¹³ insofar as it manifests as a 'rupture'¹¹⁴ with the established order of things, or a 'caesura'¹¹⁵ and 'interruption'¹¹⁶ to the normalcy of everyday life situation.

As pointed out above, Badiou stresses that in the discussion of event, truth, and the subject, it is necessary to demonstrate the thinkability of their being.¹¹⁷ This means providing a philosophical elucidation of the arrival of an event—the singularity and novelty of which, interrupts the transcendental regime of a world—through the systematic inscription of the status of the void (that which is not being *qua* being) in ontology without reducing it to ontology's structural formalism.¹¹⁸ For Badiou, before we can give an account

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 388; 41.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 327; 328.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 136; 346.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 136; 206; 216.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹¹⁸ Badiou, "Can Change Be Thought," 307.

of the event, there is the necessity of presenting first the structure of being, and how being could be supplemented.¹¹⁹

Badiou refers to any presented multiple as the *situation* having its own structure.¹²⁰ Insofar as he is concerned, being can only 'present' itself as 'a multiple'.¹²¹ Without a structure, being will not be recognizable. What is there will only be a multiple of multiples. Being then, for him, is always recognized, or is only recognizable as a coherent situation, a structured multiplicity, with its own transcendental ordering (e.g., a conference of philosophers, Western world, a university, French culture, a laboratory, etc.). Badiou then interprets that being is nonetheless consisted by two kinds of multiplicities: inconsistent and consistent.¹²² He explains, that if a situation is a structured multiplicity, it must be the case that there is a kind of multiplicity before it, not yet structured, which called for the necessity of the structure.¹²³ It means that the structured multiple "structures" an initially unstructured multiple. He cautions though, that this unstructured-inconsistent multiple is something that can only be derived by 'retroactive apprehension.'¹²⁴ For example, the structured multiple of human society would consist of multiples of multiples that do not refer to human society as such (e.g., atoms, germs, hairs, clothes, etc., that have their own set of multiple of multiples, and so on.). These multiples are in themselves incomprehensible to thought without a structure that will make them intelligible or consistent. In set theoretical rendering, because there is no set of all sets—a set that would contain itself as an element—there is a necessity for *a* set, for being to be presentable.

What could be inferred in this structured multiplicity and unstructured multiplicity dualism is that every situation is basically split into double multiplicity. On one side there is *inconsistent multiplicity* which exists *before* structuration. On the other side, there is *consistent multiplicity after* structuration.

The structure that splits the situation into two is referred to by Badiou as the 'count-as-one'.¹²⁵ He also calls it the 'law' that "*constrains* the multiple to manifest itself as such [as inconsistent], and, what *rules* its structured composition [its consistency]."¹²⁶ The significance of this 'law' or 'count-as-one' consists in making the multiple itself consist or structured and hence presentable. What this means is that it is the count-as-one or the law that allows presentation to take place.

¹¹⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 17.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 25.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

Badiou assesses the specific arcane involved in this statement. It begins with the puzzle that ‘if being is one, it follows that the multiple *is not*’.¹²⁷ However, this cannot be forwarded because at the level of presentation, being is multiple, and there is no other way through which being could be known except through presentation. Badiou then infers that it must be conceded that the multiple *is*. But if this is the case, again, it is unacceptable, because insofar as the multiple is concerned, it can only be thought as *a* multiple if it is already assumed that it is one—a multiple with oneness. Now, in this elucidation lies the significance of the axiomatic claim of Badiou about double multiplicity. It has to be reckoned that Badiou in his assessment of being immediately presupposes the being of both oneness and multiplicity. But, oneness to him is not an ontological property of multiplicity as such but only the *result* of an *operation* in ontology.¹²⁸ He writes that “there is no one, only the count-as-one.”¹²⁹

Here, one can make a little remark that Badiou does not really say in Meditation One of *Being and Event*—where this discussion of being and situation is first laid out—what makes the operation *operate*, or what does the counting in the first place. If one has a more Kantian background, one could fall into understanding it as an operation of the mind or thought. This is in the sense that the mind is what organizes multiplicities and hence, what makes possible the presentation of the multiple first and foremost. And in this case, if one is Kantian, one might claim that the multiple presents itself ‘to’ thought. Thought then in its understanding of the multiple *operates* the multiple, it *counts it as one*, in order to be able to assert it as a multiple in its double sense (multiple before, and after).

It must be noted, however, that Badiou, is in no way Kantian on this dimension. For Badiou, the operation is part of ontology itself and not simply epistemology or an act of understanding.¹³⁰ To Badiou, multiplicity is always counted. It is the *law* of presentation. It is always organized at the level of presentation, since as such, its initial state of inconsistency is unrepresentable by itself. He traces this back to the Parmenidean thesis: “if the one is not, nothing is.”¹³¹ This means that without the count or a certain form of consistency or structure, ‘there is nothing’ or ‘nothing is there.’ This is why Badiou refers to inconsistent multiplicity as the *void*.¹³²

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹³⁰ Alain Badiou, *The Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. by Louise Burchill (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011), 30.

¹³¹ Plato, *Parmenides*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 166c.

¹³² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 58.

Void: the proper name of being

The second aspect of Badiou's discussion rests on the claim that "the void is the proper name of being."¹³³ As such, this void is unrepresentable,¹³⁴ there is no access to it except via retroactive apprehension. The consistent multiplicity on the other hand, because of the fact that inconsistency is not presented as such, turns out to be the recognizable situation. Badiou writes:

... once the entirety of a situation is subject to the law of the one and consistency it is necessary, from the standpoint of immanence to the situation, that the pure multiple, absolutely unrepresentable according to the count, be *nothing*.¹³⁵

The pure multiple, as it is, is subtracted from the regime of presentation.¹³⁶

After this discussion of the void in Meditation Four, Meditation Eight introduces the idea of a second structure. Badiou calls this second structure as the 'metastructure.' If there is any definite function or feature of the metastructure, it is to make sure that "the void be nothing."¹³⁷ This means that none of its trace must even resurface within the regime of presentation. The metastructure as such, in fear of the void, re-structures the structure.¹³⁸ It re-counts the count.¹³⁹

At the level of the situation, if there is something that the law of the count is not able to count, it is the count itself. Badiou then identifies this as the point where the void could lurk. It is from this limit of the situation that the void could appear or manifest in the situation and disrupt consistency.¹⁴⁰ To ensure that this will not happen, there is the necessity to count again the count, and establish that only what the count counts exists.¹⁴¹

Remember that in the discussion of sets, a set cannot be an element of itself because if it is, then it becomes contradictory. In set theory, there is that which is called Power-set. The Power-set is the set that includes all 'subsets' of a set. The Power-set axiom of set theory states that if a set exists, there also exists a 'set of all its subsets'; but one which is 'essentially distinct'

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 52-59.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 16; 54.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

from the initial set.¹⁴² For instance, set $\{a,b\}$, have elements a and b . The Power-set of set $\{a,b\}$, have the elements $\{a\}$, $\{b\}$, $\{a, b\}$, and $\{\}$ (or the empty set). Badiou notes that these two, despite being related, are different. The Power-set of $\{a,b\}$ which is symbolized as $P\{a,b\}$ is not the same with $\{a,b\}$, that is, $P\{a,b\} \neq \{a,b\}$. The set is not necessarily similar to the set of all its subsets. There will always be at least one element of the Power-set $P\{a,b\}$ that is not an element of the initial set $\{a,b\}$ (i.e., $a \bullet b \neq \{a\} \bullet \{b\} \bullet \{a, b\} \bullet \{\}$).

It was already established earlier that the count tries to contain pure multiplicity and makes it consistent. If there is any point from which the pure multiplicity could manifest itself as such, it lies in the very count that tries to contain it. The count, because its base is pure multiplicity, can likewise become inconsistent, and as such, manifest the inconsistent multiplicity that it is. If what guarantees consistency is the count, and if the count itself becomes inconsistent, there will be nothing to stop the void from becoming visible. It is because of this that the metastructure is necessary, that which in set theory is rendered as the Power-set. There is a need for another structure, another count that will ensure that the count is also counted, that the set itself be a subset of itself; another law that will constrain it from letting the void appear. If there is double multiplicity, there is also a double structuration:

The apparent solidity of the world of presentation is merely a result of the action of structure, even if *nothing* is outside such a result. It is necessary to prohibit that catastrophe of presentation which would be its encounter with its own void, the presentational occurrence of inconsistency as such, or the ruin of the One.

Evidently the guarantee of consistency (the 'there is Oneness') cannot rely on structure or the count-as-one alone to circumscribe and prohibit the errancy of the void from *fixing* itself, and being, on the basis of this very fact, as presentation of the unrepresentable, the ruin of every donation of being and the figure subjacent to Chaos. The fundamental reason behind this insufficiency is that *something*, within presentation, escapes the count: this something is nothing other than the count itself.¹⁴³

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 93.

For Badiou, this ‘nothing’ other than the count itself, is the void, represented in set theory as the null or empty set $\{ \}$ or \emptyset . A set counts a multiplicity as one. However, the empty set counts nothing precisely because it is empty. It does not have any element, not even itself, thus the symbolization, $\emptyset \notin \emptyset$ (which means the empty set is not an element of itself). However, in order to secure the counting of the count, it is recounted in the Power-set of the empty set, $P\{ \}$. It is $P\{ \}$ that has $\{ \}$ or \emptyset as its element. Badiou writes further:

The ‘there is Oneness’ is a pure operational result, which transparently reveals the very operation from which the result results. It is thus possible that, subtracted from the count, and by consequence a-structured, the structure itself be the point where the void is given. In order for the void to be prohibited from presentation, *it is necessary that structure be structured ...* The consistency of presentation thus requires that all structure be *doubled* by a metastructure which secures the former against any fixation of the void.¹⁴⁴

In this sense, “all situations are structured twice.”¹⁴⁵ Within being, “there is always both presentation and representation.”¹⁴⁶ If there is a situation, Badiou says, there is also a ‘state of the situation’.¹⁴⁷ For every set, there is a Power-set that counts even the count itself. However, because there is always something in representation, state-of-the-situation, or Power-set, that is in excess or not initially included in presentation, in a situation or in a set, the gap that separates the two provides avenue for the occurrence of what Badiou calls the ‘supplement of being,’ which he terms as the ‘event.’

IV: A Theory of Militant Subjectivity and An Ethic of Truths

The Event

This is the point where Badiou begins to talk about the ‘supplement’ of being, that opens up a new possibility for it. This supplement, in the form of an event, is the manifestation of the void that is being. He writes: “the event is being, absolutely.”¹⁴⁸ But at the same time, it is already “inappropriate” for

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴⁸ Badiou, “Can Change Be Thought,” 307.

being in the situation.¹⁴⁹ What Badiou describes here, is the moment when the world as we know it, is interrupted in its regular flow.

The event, within the perspective of being, is that which it was unable to account for. It is what the world as it is, was unable to inscribe into its encyclopaedia of knowledge. In relation to this, Badiou puts the concept of truth in contrast to knowledge.¹⁵⁰ Badiou aligns knowledge to the order of repetition¹⁵¹ while he aligns 'truth' to the order of singularity and newness.¹⁵² If knowledge is to being, truth is to event.

There are two relations which the event has to being. On the one hand, it is a rupture within being. On the other hand, it is the opening of a new possibility within and of being. Similarly, a truth's relation to the system of knowledges is two-way: First, it 'punctures a hole through it';¹⁵³ and second, it proposes a new ordering of these knowledges.¹⁵⁴

The emergence of the event within the plane of being, in Badiou's description, consists of a double-event within the situation. First, it creates "a process of torsion, by which a force reapplies itself to that from which it conflictingly emerges";¹⁵⁵ and second, it transforms the coordinates of a system, degrees of existences,¹⁵⁶ or distribution of possibilities¹⁵⁷ within the situation. The first event is the moment of rupture, and the second one, is the 'interpretative intervention'¹⁵⁸ of a subject which inscribes in the situation the actual occurrence of an event.

Badiou highlights in *Being and Event* that the occurrence or non-occurrence of an event is dependent on interpretative intervention. He describes intervention as "any procedure by which a multiple is recognized as an event."¹⁵⁹ He adds the term 'interpretative' inasmuch as the belonging of the multiple to the situation is not a given, but a matter of 'interpretation'

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 327-355.

¹⁵¹ Badiou, "On the Truth-Process: An open lecture by Alain Badiou," in *Lacan dot com* (August 2002), <<http://www.lacan.com/badeurope.htm>>.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Bruno Bosteels, "Alain Badiou's Theory of the Subject: The Recommencement of Dialectical Materialism? (Part II)," in *Pli Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2002), 176.

¹⁵⁶ Badiou, *The Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 43-63.

¹⁵⁷ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 9-12.

¹⁵⁸ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 181.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 202. Bruno Bosteels explains that "the most important argument in all of *Being and Event* effectively holds that an event, which brings out the void that is proper to being by revealing the undecidable excess of representation, can only be decided retroactively by way of a subjective intervention. 'The impasse of being, which causes the quantitative excess of the state to wander beyond measure, is in truth the passe of the Subject.'" Bosteels, "Alain Badiou's Theory of the Subject (Part II)," 195.

and 'decision.'¹⁶⁰ Badiou writes that "there cannot exist any regulated and necessary procedure which is adapted to the decision concerning the eventness of a multiple."¹⁶¹ He adds, "It will always remain doubtful whether there has been an event or not, except to those who intervene, who decide its belonging to the situation."¹⁶²

The event, for Badiou, is "only recognized by its consequences."¹⁶³ This includes the naming of the event (interventional nomination), the circulation of this name,¹⁶⁴ and 'the existence of a subjective body.'¹⁶⁵ These three are what constitute the material inscription and evidence of change within a situation.¹⁶⁶

Through the name, the event gets to be incorporated into the situation,¹⁶⁷ making its circulation within the situation possible. The affirmation of the event through the name is coextensive with the coming to existence of a 'subject.' The subject, Badiou defines, is "the process itself of liaison between the event (thus the intervention) and the procedure of fidelity (thus its operator of connection)";¹⁶⁸ it is "any local configuration of a generic procedure from which a truth is supported."¹⁶⁹ The subject intervenes with the transcendental configuration of the situation by naming an indiscernible multiple (interventional nomination) and circulating it (fidelity to the event).¹⁷⁰ The subject is what "incorporates the event into the situation"¹⁷¹ by naming it, circulating the name, and determining the multiples that are connected to the event within the situation.¹⁷² It is through this that the event properly becomes an event *for* a situation.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 183; 203.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 207-211.

¹⁶⁵ Badiou, "Affirmative Dialectics," 4.

¹⁶⁶ Pluth, *Badiou: A Philosophy of the New*, 106.

¹⁶⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 393.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 391.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 207-211.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 393.

¹⁷² Subjectivization, is a special count which "counts whatever is faithfully connected to the event." *Ibid.*, 393.

¹⁷³ Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 13.

Subjectivization

Badiou calls “the advent of the Two” of ‘interventional nomination’ and ‘fidelity to the event,’ as *subjectivization*.¹⁷⁴ He notes that subjectivization is subtracted from the sense register of a situation. The name of the event and the existence of a subjective body do not have significance within the language and encyclopaedia of the situation.¹⁷⁵ From the point of view of the situation, they simply do not make sense.

“This in-significance,” Badiou writes, is “a reminder that what was summoned by the interventional nomination was the void.”¹⁷⁶ Thus, subjectivization, upon which an event is dependent, is itself “an occurrence of the void.”¹⁷⁷ The process of subjectivization is an interruption to the coordinates of a situation. It is “an interruption of the law of representation inherent to every situation” which is what representation, the double count, or the metastructure prohibits. “If we now turn to the state of the situation,” Badiou notes, “we see that it can only resecure the belonging of the supernumerary name, which circulates at random, at the price of pointing out the very void whose foreclosure is its function.”¹⁷⁸

This is where the seeming deadlock in Badiou’s account of the event comes to the fore when he talks about the belonging of an event to a situation. The paradox is, if the state does not recognize the belonging of the evental multiple within the situation, it will assert this multiple’s evental character. This means that the state will announce that the disruptive multiple is indeed something it was never able to anticipate, and is, therefore, beyond its control. However, if it asserts the multiple’s belonging to the situation so as to bar its consequent interruption of the rules of the situation, it will do this at the price of forcing itself “to confess its own void”¹⁷⁹:

By the declaration of the belonging of the event to the situation it bars the void’s irruption. But this is only in order to force the situation itself to confess its own void, and to thereby let forth, from inconsistent being and the interrupted count, the incandescent non-being of an existence.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 393.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* In the earlier parts of *Being and Event* Badiou writes: “The name of the event must emerge from the void.” Badiou, *Being and Event*, 205; “The term chosen by the intervenor represents the void.” *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Badiou emphasizes how the event's belonging to the situation is always "undecidable,"¹⁸¹ and there can only be two interpretative interventions: either the event belongs to the situation or it does not. Consequently, there are two implications: either (1) the form of the multiple designated is eventual; or, (2) with respect to this multiple, it is decided that it is a term of the situation.¹⁸² In this second implication, it will be as if "nothing will have taken place but the place itself," "when one makes two, there is never any return. It does not amount to making a new *one*, not even a *new one*."¹⁸³ In his interviews and the preliminary remarks to his books, Badiou always asserts that the primary question of his philosophy is to find out how a 'radically new' is possible 'within' a situation, while not being entirely reducible to it. However, it appears that there is some ambiguity in Badiou's elucidation alone that triggered a series of discussions between interpreters like Žižek and Bosteels. Returning to the discussion on subjectivization, it is then in the wake of an event that for Badiou, a truth-process may or may not emerge. A truth-process is that which a 'subject' *produces* in his committed fidelity to an event.¹⁸⁴ The significance of an event, by being the material embodiment of the crack, the symptomatic torsion within a situation, lies in its influence to induce a human animal into becoming a subject by deciding to invent a new way of being and acting within the situation in accordance to it.¹⁸⁵ The event has the power to make evident the impossibility of things to remain the same or to stay as they are.¹⁸⁶ It is the trigger point of change. It is what opens the possibility of that which is declared impossible within the situation.¹⁸⁷ The event which is the coming into presence of the crack, the limit, or the inconsistency, the void of being itself, is what opens up the possibility of a reordering of being.¹⁸⁸ This reordering is what Badiou refers to as the truth-process.

There is, however, yet a very crucial role played here by the subject. The subject, as Ed Pluth describes it, is the "actual material inscription of change,"¹⁸⁹ or the concrete affirmation that an event 'actually' happened.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁸³ Cf. Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 126; Bruno Bosteels, "Alain Badiou's Theory of the Subject: Part II," 179.

¹⁸⁴ Badiou, *Ethics*, 41.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁸⁶ Slavoj Žižek, "From Purification to Subtraction: Badiou and the Real," in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy* ed. by Peter Hallward (London: Continuum, 2004), 175.

¹⁸⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 86.

¹⁸⁸ Badiou, "On the Truth-Process."

¹⁸⁹ Ed Pluth, *Badiou: A Philosophy of the New*, 106.

Unless, there is a subject that would affirm an event, there is only the continuation of the current order, and as such, no truth-process.¹⁹⁰ A truth-process only ‘begins,’ at the moment when one ‘decides’ to act according to the new possibility opened by an event, and thus to live through “a sustained investigation of the situation, under the imperative of the event itself.”¹⁹¹ Badiou further defines the subject as “the bearer of a fidelity, the one who bears a process of truth,”¹⁹² the material embodiment of the consequence of the event. However, only until an absolute decision is made at the ‘night of being,’ at the irruption of the unsettling undecidability of the event’s relation to the situation, will a new subjective body emerge. It is an ‘absolute’ decision for one will never ‘know’ nor ‘calculate’ nor be ‘certain’ of what will a new way of going about things will amount to, and this is why Badiou attaches the spirit of fidelity characterized by militancy to the subject.¹⁹³ Within subjective fidelity, the element of resistance, the element of doubt, and the element of exhaustion are the very challenges against which one must strive. To be a subject is to have a disciplined commitment to a decision for a prolonged disorganization of one’s life.¹⁹⁴ To be a subject of a truth is to be a militant for a cause. It “requires effort, endurance, sometimes self-denial.” It is to be an “‘activist’ of a truth.”¹⁹⁵

The ethic of truth-processes

This elaboration of organizing one’s life according to processes that labour to bring *some* truths into the world is basically what Badiou refers to as *ethic of processes*¹⁹⁶ or truth-processes. It is in the plural because as Badiou writes, “There is not, in fact, one single Subject, but as many subjects as there are truths.”¹⁹⁷ However, one must not mistake this as falling into the very relativism which Badiou is arguing against. Because despite the plurality of truths, produced within the four figures of exception: science, art, love, and politics; every truth, by virtue of its singularity is “subtracted from identitarian predicates.”¹⁹⁸ Even if they proceed from particularities, they are

¹⁹⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 202, 239, 393.

¹⁹¹ Badiou, *Ethics*, 67.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁹³ Badiou, *Being and Event*, xiii.

¹⁹⁴ Badiou, *Ethics*, 60.

¹⁹⁵ Badiou, “On Evil.”

¹⁹⁶ Badiou, *Ethics*, 28.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁹⁸ Alain Badiou, “Eight Theses on the Universal,” in *Lacan dot com* (2004), <<http://www.lacan.com/badeight.htm>>, Thesis 2. Cf. Alain Badiou, “Eight Theses on the Universal,” Thesis 2, <http://www.lacan.com/badeight.htm>; Cf. Alain Badiou, “Thinking the Event,” in Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, *Philosophy in the Present*, ed. by Peter Engelmann (UK: Polity Press, 2009).

subtracted from such particularities, and are in their nature universal by virtue of their 'exceptional' production.¹⁹⁹ They are those that are truly "indifferent to differences"²⁰⁰ and are founded on the principle of infinity. They are those which in Badiou's words, can "interest, rightly, 'every' human individual, according to his/her 'generic' humanity."²⁰¹ Badiou argues that it is actually "in recognizing the capacity of differences to carry the universal which comes upon them, that the universal can verify its reality."²⁰² It is to this end that he calls them singular. But these singularities are exceptions that go beyond the hold of particularities despite their particular origins. Commenting on this, Peter Hallward notes, "Justice must be for everyone, or it is for no one."²⁰³ For Badiou, this ethic is not a general configuration of Ethics, which for him does not exist. But rather, it is an *ethic of ...*, that is, of *procedures of truth*.

If we are to look at issues today which could give us a picture of what Badiou is pointing out as the inconsistency of a situation which in fact sustains every consistent situation, a good example would be the case of Korean veterans in Japan, Muslim women in France, African Americans in the United States, or the *Pariahs* in India. They are, to use Badiou's terms, the 'outplace,' the uncounted, the unrepresented, within the state (the unified Japanese race, the secular French government, the white American people, the members of the Indian *chaturvarnas*). Situated 'on the edge of the void,' they contain the "absolutely primary terms" of the situation.²⁰⁴ They are "the 'lie' of the *ancient regime*"²⁰⁵; the truth that it had to repress, the proof of the state's inherent inconsistency and excess which it had to suppress in order to secure its own consistency and sustain its structure. What it indicates is an advocacy of tolerance and respect of differences (One Japan; Equality,

¹⁹⁹ This passion for the 'universal,' the 'exceptional,' the 'same,' is in Badiou's philosophical edifice, the pursuit of truth. 'Exception' is another term Badiou uses to refer to truth—as in the case of 'figures of truth' he also refers to it as 'figures of exception.' Truth, Badiou interprets, belongs to the order of exception, and it is a 'procedure' rather than a fact, or some correspondence between object and knowledge. This is why Badiou more often calls the four figures of exception as truth procedures. For Badiou they are exceptions because they are the kind of practical human endeavors that go beyond and interrupt everyday routine and survival. The character of exception is what renders truths universal and singular. They are universal in the sense that they do not privilege any specific difference. Their exceptionality—in contrast to normality—is what makes them accessible, intelligible, or recognizable to everyone as well as what makes everyone capable of pursuing them.

²⁰⁰ Badiou, *Ethics*, 27.

²⁰¹ Badiou, "On Evil."

²⁰² Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* trans. by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 106.

²⁰³ An allusion to Peter Hallward's statement: "true justice is either for all or not at all." Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 26.

²⁰⁴ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 175.

²⁰⁵ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 130.

Fraternity, Liberty; Democracy; Harmony) that actually prescribes an *identity*—the identity of the state.²⁰⁶ Such cases are in Badiou's ethico-political thought, what manifest the communitarian-particularist ideology's halting point, its crack and impasse.

Returning to the topic of ethics, Badiou observes that at the heart of the ethical wisdom of an ethic of universal human rights, what remains is always only the power to decide who dies and who does not.²⁰⁷ That beneath all the projected spirit of brotherhood, only those in power, or better yet, those who have money, are capable of exercising 'freedom' and enjoy 'equality.' Badiou retorts lengthily:

Isn't there a lot of despair and violence in the world caused by the fact that the politics of Western powers, and of the American government in particular, are utterly destitute of ingenuity and value? ... The whole world understands that the real question is the following: Why do the politics of the Western powers, of NATO, of Europe and the USA, appear completely unjust to two out of three inhabitants of the planet? Why five thousand American deaths are considered a cause for war, while five hundred thousand dead in Rwanda and a projected ten million dead from AIDS in Africa do not, in our opinion, merit outrage? Why is the bombardment of civilians in the US Evil, while the bombardment of Baghdad or Belgrade today, or that of Hanoi or Panama in the past, is Good? ... The whole world understands these situations, and the whole world can act in a disinterested fashion prompted by the injustice of these situations. Evil in politics is easy to see: It is absolute inequality with respect to life, wealth, power. Good is equality. How long can we accept the fact that what is needed for running water, schools, hospitals, and food enough for all humanity is a sum that corresponds to the amount spent by wealthy Western countries on perfume in a year? This is not a question of human rights and morality. It is a question of the fundamental battle for equality of all people, against the law of profit, whether personal or national.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Badiou, *Ethics*, 24.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰⁸ Badiou, "On Evil."

At the core of all these, Badiou's message strikes us with an incisive frankness: today, we need no less than a theory, a general framework that would assist us in knowing what must be done, and an ethic that would encourage us to be militants for something true, for a cause, for the Good. What we need is an emancipatory politics that is supported by an ethic, thought through philosophy. For Badiou, this is the role of philosophy: to give insight on 'What is the Good?' Badiou writes in his *Theory of the Subject* that all of his philosophy is aimed at preventing us from becoming one who "can only meet the great dates of history by distributing herring vouchers."²⁰⁹ It is inspired by the Lacanian optimism: "Fortify yourself if you can, ... 'it makes no sense for life to create cowards'."²¹⁰

Following through the discussion one may ask whether Badiou is trying to restore the revolutionary spirit, which, in the twentieth century had catastrophic consequences, or whether he is reviving something like the communist projects of Lenin, Stalin, or Mao. The answer to this lies in Badiou's analysis of why the communist projects of the past failed. For him, their political determination tried to maintain a relation, between pure subjective will and implacable historical necessity.²¹¹ Definitely, Badiou's theory of militant subjectivity is a revival of the activist stance. However, it is a militant subjectivity subtracted from objective necessity. That is why Badiou's ethic of truths rests on an absolute wager.²¹² Badiou strongly stresses that becoming a passage of truth requires courage. It goes against a life that has resigned its significance to mere survival, the luxuries of merchandise, and the obsession to security. It is a life constructed around that which one is willing to risk for, around what he calls an "Idea" which he described as "the possibility in the name of which you act, you transform and you have a programme."²¹³ The Idea is "the conviction that a possibility, other than what there is, can come about."²¹⁴ It is the name for the possibility the subject tries as much to inscribe in an existing situation that declares it impossible—the possibility opened up by the event. To live life according to the Idea, Badiou remarks, is to live a life of 'immortal intensity' that is founded on absolute uncertainty. It is a life that finds motivation in the ethical maxim:

... 'do not give up on that part of yourself that you do not know.' ... do not give up on your own seizure by a

²⁰⁹ Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, trans. by Bruno Bosteels (New York: Continuum, 2009), xlii.

²¹⁰ Badiou, *Ethics*, 56.

²¹¹ Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 39-40.

²¹² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 201. See also, Badiou, "On the Truth Process."

²¹³ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 14.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

truth-process. ... 'Do all that you can to persevere in that which exceeds your perseverance. Persevere in the interruption. Seize in your being that which has seized and broken you.'²¹⁵

Conclusion

To conclude this paper, I would like to describe Badiou's take on subjectivity as subjectivity to the call of truth. It is a subjectivity of a body that took it upon itself to pursue or incarnate the true life. Drawing from the discussion laid out here, it appears that one of the purposes of philosophy for Badiou is to think about the possibility of this subject.²¹⁶ In my analysis, Badiou's solution to the crisis we are experiencing at the objective level is not immediately a change of the existing objective order, for as he himself admits that we are not too powerful to do that.²¹⁷ What he proposes instead, is a change in contemporary subjectivity, hoping that this could prepare the way to the establishment of a new order. In other words, it is a change in the objective order by way of the subject. This I think is the Badiouian philosophical response to the question "How to change the world?" In his political texts, he writes exhaustively too on the concrete problems and changes he wants to address and do respectively. But his philosophical thought shows much promise insofar as it provides us a framework that enables us to confront the crises of our contemporary situation with courage and the hope for the impossible. Perhaps indeed, what he fought for in the student revolution of May 1968 in France remained in him, as he still endorses their rallying cry: "Declare the impossible!"²¹⁸

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²¹⁵ Badiou, *Ethics*, 47.

²¹⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 6.

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²¹⁸ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 11.

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Discerning *Différance* in Jacques Derrida's Ethics of Hospitality

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Abstract: The question of hospitality is not alien to philosophy. It is one of the themes explored by philosophers since the time of Hobbes. Likewise, it was a subject thoroughly discussed by French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) in some of his books and seminars. Though more prominently known for his deconstruction and textual analysis, Derrida never failed to address the issues on the hospitality during his time. In fact, he never saw his philosophical work divorced from his ethico-political positions. One of the primary notions associated with his deconstruction (of metaphysics/ logocentrism/ phonocentrism) is *différance*. At first glance, it appears to have no relation to the ethical-political concern that Derrida has demonstrated in works on hospitality. As a concept, *différance* seems to dissolve the most inherent tendency in Western metaphysics and philosophy i.e. the logocentric-binary structures. However, my aim is to show that *différance* may be discerned as a movement inhabiting the tensions within the ethics of hospitality: (1) between the laws of conditional hospitality and unconditional hospitality; and (2) the self-interruption of the subject of hospitality [as host and hostage].

Keywords: Derrida, *différance*, ethics and politics, hospitality

Introduction

At the advent of the 21st century, crisis in global politics has intensified with the increased terrorist violence in various parts of the world. For example, the violence perpetrated by the Islamic State (ISIS) caused the death of millions of civilians in the Middle East. Likewise, this triggered a sudden surge of Middle Eastern refugees seeking asylum in other countries. Based on the numbers given by the International Office of

Migration, “over 700,000 migrants have arrived by sea into Europe in 2015.”¹ Though many western countries have already accepted refugees, the recent and controversial bombing and killing in Paris by some Islamic radicals confronted the whole world with the question on the extent of one’s hospitality to them.² One might discern an ethical imperative to a refugee by way of hospitality. However, this is no longer a simple question of ethics. Accepting a foreign refugee, may entail socio-political and economic risks.

The question of hospitality is not alien to philosophy. It is a theme discussed since the time of Thomas Hobbes³ and Immanuel Kant.⁴ Likewise, it was a subject thoroughly discussed by the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Though more prominently known for his deconstruction and textual analysis, Derrida never failed to address the issues on hospitality during his time. In fact, he never saw his philosophical writings divorced from his ethico-political positions.⁵ His engagement in the question of hospitality began after his involvement with the issue of the illegal

¹ Karen Bravo, “Do refugees have a ‘right’ to hospitality?” in *The Conversation* (5 November 2015), <<http://theconversation.com/do-refugees-have-a-right-to-hospitality-47629>> 11 May 2016.

² An example of this situation took place after the news of the bombings in Paris last 13 November 2015 reached the United States. “Nothing has yet been confirmed and a massive investigation into the Paris attacks is still ongoing, but the mere possibility that terrorists might be posing as helpless refugees has led to a contentious debate over whether the United States should move forward with President Obama’s plan to accept 10,000 new Syrian refugees in 2016.” Evan Bonsall, “Are Syrian Refugees Really a Security Risk?” in *Harvard Political Review* (11 December 2015), <<http://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/syrian-refugees-really-security-risk/>>, 11 May 2016.

³ Haig Patapan traces the roots of modern hospitality from political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Patapan argues that Hobbes’ admiration for Sidney Godolphin initiated him to dream of protecting “noble and law-abiding citizens ... who are willing to sacrifice their lives for their country.” Moreover, according to him, Hobbes aimed at crafting ‘new human beings’ (*Leviathan’s* children) who recognizes other citizens’ right of liberty by abandoning their prideful aim for authority, riches and honor. This, for him, is the ‘new hospitality’ that Hobbes successfully introduced—a “state that allows them [*Leviathan’s* children] to exercise their liberty in peace and prosperity at home and internationally.” Haig Patapan, “*Leviathan’s* Children: On the Origins of Modern Hospitality,” in *Hospitality and World Politics*, ed. by Gideon Baker (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013), 35.

⁴ In the ‘Third Definitive Article’ of Kant’s *Towards Perpetual Peace*, Kant tells us that the ‘*Cosmopolitan Right* Shall be Limited to the Conditions of Universal Hospitality’ where the law of hospitality is limited to a ‘right of resort (or visit)’ based on one’s cosmopolitan right i.e. the right that pertains to humanity’s ‘common possession’ of the earth. Hence, a guest may not ask for more from the state (e.g. citizenship) other than one’s right to visit. Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, in *Political Writings*, trans. by H.B. Nisbet and ed. H.S. Reiss (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 106.

⁵ In an interview with Antoine Spire in 2000, Derrida states that “I don’t feel a divorce between my writings and my engagements, only differences of rhythm, mode of discourse, context, and so on.” Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 153.

immigrants.⁶ He deplored the fact that European countries, like France, “are turning their borders into new iron curtains”⁷ by promulgating “a law permitting the prosecution, and even the imprisonment, of those who take in and help foreigners whose status is held to be illegal.”⁸ To fully understand his position on ethico-political issues in relation to his philosophical enterprise, I find it necessary to go back to the very root of his philosophical project i.e. his (in)famous *deconstruction*.

Deconstruction began not only as a critique of Western metaphysics, but also as a critique against the tradition of everyday thought and language of the West.⁹ This was Derrida's response to the prevailing temperament of Western thought which is constructed in terms of opposites or dichotomies: being/non-being, identity/difference, soul/body, presence/absence, man/woman, speech/writing. Derrida's problem, however, is not that these terms are opposed to each other, but that they are seen in a hierarchical fashion. The positive term (being, identity, soul, presence, speech, man) is privileged and placed over the underprivileged negative term (non-being, difference, body, absence, writing, woman).

Derrida, however, saw a gap within this binary structure. In *Of Grammatology*, deconstruction works within the opposition of speech and writing. Speech (or phonocentrism) is privileged because of the assumption that it is nearer to being/meaning of being/ideality of meaning.¹⁰ When one speaks, the assumption is that one is expressing the ‘full presence’ of meaning—that there is no breach or gap between our *intention to mean* and

⁶ See Bennoît Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, trans. by Andre Brown (Malden: Polity Press, 2013), 469.

⁷ Jacques Derrida, “Derelictions of the Right to Justice,” in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 134.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁹ Cf. Barbara Johnson, Translator's Introduction to *Dissemination* by Jacques Derrida, trans. by Barbara Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), viii. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who also influenced Derrida, criticized the Western mode of thinking and behavior as well. In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger deplored the domination of ontology over the history of western culture. He points out that the static and transcendental plane of ontology forgets the very “there-ness” of being (hence, the central notion in his work is the *Da-sein* or ‘being-there’). Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1962) § 6, pp. 41-49. Hence, it is from Heidegger where one is acquainted with one of the important gestures of Derrida's deconstruction i.e. “The Task of Destroying the History of Ontology.”

¹⁰ Derrida underscores the connection between *phonocentrism* and *logocentrism* by saying that ‘within the logos, the original and the essential link to the *phonè* has never been broken ... the essence of the *phonè* would be immediately proximate to that which within “thought” as logos relates to “meaning,” produces it, receives it, speaks it, “composes” it. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, corrected ed., trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press), 11-12. Emphasis mine.

what we utter in and through the signs of the linguistic system or a particular language. As Christopher Norris remarks “the logocentric will [is] to privilege a self-present (spoken) truth above the endless duplicities of written language. This idea is one that Derrida sought to deconstruct by all manner of graphic and rhetorical means.”¹¹ And, one of these strategies is *différance*.

At first glance, *différance* appears to have no relation to the sorts of ethical-political concern that Derrida has demonstrated in works on hospitality. As a concept, it seems to dissolve the most inherent tendency in Western metaphysics and philosophy i.e. the logocentric-binary structures. However, my aim is to show that, in fact, *différance* may be discerned as a movement inhabiting the tensions within the ethics of hospitality: (1) between the laws of conditional hospitality and unconditional hospitality; and (2) the self-interruption of the subject of hospitality [as host and hostage].

In order to do so, I shall first go back to Derrida’s notion of *différance* as expounded in his 1968 lecture, “La Différance” then, I shall elaborate on his ethics of hospitality through his 1997 Istanbul lecture, “Hostipitality” with occasional references to his other writings on hospitality.

Derrida’s *Différance*

In 1967, Derrida’s three important works: *Voice and Phenomenon*, *Writing and Difference* and *Of Grammatology* were published. He introduced his neologism *différance* in these works. The year after these three important writings appeared, on 27 January 1968, he delivered “La Différance” to the *Société française de philosophie*.¹²

Différance is a deliberate “misspelling” of the French word *différence*. Since in French, both words have similar pronunciations, one can never know the phonic difference between *différance* and *différence*. One cannot hear the difference between these two; it is mute, it is silent. And for Derrida, this “silence of the graphic difference between the *e* and the *a* can function, of course, only within the system of phonetic writing, and within the language and grammar which is as historically linked to phonetic writing as it is to the entire culture inseparable from *phonetic writing*.”¹³ By changing the *e* into *a*, he is deconstructing one of the major logocentric binaries of philosophy: phonetic writing (speech) and graphic writing (writing).

¹¹ Christopher Norris, *Derrida* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 63.

¹² This lecture would eventually be published in *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* (July-September 1968). Jacques Derrida, “Différance” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Great Britain: The Harvester Press, 1982), 1-27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

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Derrida, however, does not give a clear-cut definition of *différance*. Instead, he tries to show how the various directions of this *non-concept* and *non-word* is built into a sheaf. Even though this is the case, he gives us a rough and simple *semantic* examination of it. The French verb *différer* (coming from the Latin verb *differre*) can mean two things. On the one hand it can mean:

the action of putting off until later, of taking into account, of taking account of time and of the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation—concepts that I would summarize here in a word I have never used but that could be inscribed in this chain: *temporization*.¹⁴

On the other hand, it can also mean:

to be not identical, to be other, discernible, etc. When dealing with *differen(ts)(ds)*, a word that can be written with a final *ts* or a final *ds*, as you will, whether it is a question of dissimilar otherness or of allergic and polemical otherness, an interval, a distance, *spacing*, must be produced between the elements other, and be produced with a certain perseverance in repetition.¹⁵

In short, *différer* means “to defer” (first sense) or “to differ” (second sense). Derrida notes that since the word *différence* cannot take its meaning from either of these two aforementioned senses, *différance* can refer to both senses at the same time.

The translator of Derrida's lecture “Différance” explains that the French word *différence* does not suggest “to defer” (the act of putting off later/postponement) or “to differ” (just as when one says, “I beg to differ”).¹⁶ The word simply signifies difference. For example, “There is a *différence* between A and B.” The verb *différer* when conjugated into the present participle, turns into *différant*. Here, the translator remarks “Curiously then, the noun *différance* suspends itself between the two senses of *différant* – deferring, differing. We might say that it defers differing, and differs from deferring, in and of itself.”¹⁷ Now it is clear why Derrida mentions that

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, See footnote 8. The translator notes that the two French words, “*différants*” and “*différands*,” sound similarly. Although, the former refers to “different *things*” while the latter refers to “different *opinions*”.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, See footnote 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, See footnote 10.

différance cannot refer to “to defer/to differ” since it is a noun and it is passive. However, *différance* “brings us close to the infinitive and active kernel of [the verb] *différer*.”¹⁸ The “-ance” ending in *différance* is crucial since it suggests that it is an “action” not taken by a *conscious subject* – e.g. in English we have the term *severance*. This is not the action of a subject doing something i.e. *severing*. Rather, it is a “phenomenon” which proffers an undecidability between the active and the passive.

Derrida however poses another problem: how then do we unite the two senses of *différance*? He continues his semantic examination by referring back to the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. He cites that, for Saussure, the *sign* is “arbitrary and differential”.¹⁹ Now, the aforementioned linguist asserts that these two cannot be separated. “There can be arbitrariness only because the system of signs is constituted solely by the differences in terms, and not by their plenitude.”²⁰ In other words, the identity of any sign is produced by the differences; it has no singular identity without difference. Derrida stresses Saussure’s arbitrary-differential nature of the sign in relation to *différance* in these following points: (1) Saussure’s difference and *différance* are neither words nor concepts; and (2) *différance* produces these differences in language. The latter point however bears the most significant aspect as he declares that “we will designate as *différance* the movement according to which language, or any code, any system of referral, is constituted “historically” as a weave of differences.”²¹

Derrida also points to Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche in order to show that *différance* is also manifested in some of their works. In congruence with the theme of Nietzsche’s philosophy Derrida states that “*différance*, is the name we might give to the “active” moving discord of different forces, and of differences of forces, that Nietzsche sets up against the entire system of metaphysical grammar...”²² In addition, Derrida highlights the role Freud plays in his conception of *différance* by revisiting the latter’s notions of trace, breaching, and the opposition between the pleasure and reality principles. *Différance* is responsible for the production of “unconscious traces” in the “process of inscription.”²³ In fact, *différance* as the “movement of the trace” is what governs the life-preserving mechanism through the deferment of a “dangerous investment” and creates a certain “reserve.” This is an illustration of how the economy of *différance* works within the system of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹ Cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin and ed. by Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 67-70.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Derrida, “Différance,” 12. Italics mine.

²² Derrida recalls that the “unconscious” for Nietzsche is “the great principal activity” and that “consciousness” is a product of forces. *Ibid.*, 18.

²³ *Ibid.*

Freud's concepts: "One is the other in *différance*, one is the *différance* of the other."²⁴

Similarly, Derrida also traces the economy of *différance* in Emmanuel Levinas' criticism of 'ontology as first philosophy' and his proposal of 'ethics as first philosophy'. Here, Levinas takes his discourse on the level of alterity: the Other. Derrida justified Levinas' position earlier in a 1964 essay "Violence and Metaphysics" wherein "we find discussions both of the difference between the same and other and of the difference between totality and infinity."²⁵ In the essay, Derrida emphasizes that the ego (same) cannot be itself (or ego as such) if it is not the other's other neither would the alter ego of the ego would be as such if it is not an ego itself.²⁶ In this statement, Derrida was trying to say that even Levinas' ethics of alterity cannot escape an ontology/metaphysics of identity – that the experience of other or of difference is always determined by a metaphysics of presence.²⁷

Aside from these three mentioned philosophers, Derrida adds Martin Heidegger. The latter's ontological difference [i.e. the difference between *Sein* (Being) and *seiendes* (beings)] is unfolded by the mark of *a* in *différance*.²⁸ He adds, "Being has never had a 'meaning,' has never been thought or said as such, except by dissimulating itself in beings, then *différance*, in a certain and very strange way, (is) "older" than the ontological difference or than the truth of Being."²⁹

Derrida's Ethics of Hospitality

During the years 1995-1997, Derrida became engaged with the questions on responsibility, particularly with the theme of "hospitality." His seminars on the subject of hospitality is divided into two phases: (I) "Questions of Responsibility: Hostility/Hospitality" (1995-1996); and (II) "Questions of Responsibility: Hostipitality" (1996-1997).³⁰ Two of the lectures

²⁴ *Ibid.* Details on the relation between Freud and *différance* is elaborated in Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing" in *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 196-231.

²⁵ One must remember that Levinas criticized ontology's long-standing emphasis on the *same* and *totality*, which are allied concepts of *Being*. By proposing 'ethics as the first philosophy,' he shifts the focus from Being (same, totality) to the *other* and *infinity*. Cf. Robert Bernasconi, "The Trace of Levinas in Derrida," in *Derrida and Différance*, ed. by David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 13.

²⁶ Cf. Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas" in *Writing and Difference*, 128.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁸ Cf. Derrida, "Différance," 22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ The seminars were originally delivered in French with the titles: "Questions de responsabilité V: hostilité/hospitalité" and "Questions de responsabilité VI: hostipitalité." See

from the first phase is published in the book *Of Hospitality*, where Anne Dufourmantelle engages Derrida into a dialogue. Some of his lecture notes from the second phase are published as 'Hostipitality' in the book *Acts of Religion*.³¹ My discussion of his ethics of hospitality in this section, however, shall come from his 1997 Istanbul lecture 'Hostipitality' where, "[the] central philosophical argument is clearest" unlike in the two aforementioned works where he focuses his discussion on related texts concerning the stranger, enemy, the host and the guest.³²

Derrida's lecture begins with a quotation from Immanuel Kant's *Towards Perpetual Peace*. The "Third Definitive Article of a Perpetual Peace" states that "Cosmopolitan Right shall be limited to the Conditions of Universal Hospitality."³³ Derrida notes that Kant highlights two terms: Cosmopolitan Right and Universal Hospitality. Cosmopolitan Right belongs to the realm of right with respect to citizenship, the State and its subject, world State (international law) and thus is neither concerned with morality nor politics. The latter on the other hand, serves as one of the conditions of the former (that will be ratified in a treaty among States).

The word *hospitality* is of Latin origin which, according to Derrida, bears its own contradiction.³⁴ He reiterates Kant's emphasis that the article involves right and not philanthropy.³⁵ He underscores Kant's equivalent term for hospitality in German, *Wirtbarkeit*.³⁶ It is derived from the word *Wirt*³⁷ which signifies the host. Thus, Derrida remarks, it is the host, being the master of the household (or the State), who establishes the 'conditions for hospitality'.³⁸ From this, it follows then that there is no room for unconditional welcome.

However, the establishment of the conditions of hospitality breaches the very idea of hospitality with a contradiction. Hospitality is a duty to "welcome the other stranger as a friend but on the condition that the host, the *hôte*, the *Wirt*, the one who receives, lodges or gives *asylum* remains the *patron*,

"Seminars," in *Derrida Seminars Translation Project* (2009), <<http://derridaseminars.org/seminars.html>>, 12 February 2017.

³¹ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. by Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002).

³² Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality," in *Jacques Derrida: Basic Writings*, trans. by Barry Stocker and Forbes Morlock, (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 239. This English translation of the lecture by Barry Stocker and Forbes Morlock was first published in *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* vol. 5, no. 3 (December 2000), 3-18.

³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 243.

³⁴ Cf. Derrida, "Hostipitality," 244.

³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁶ "As in the foregoing articles, we are concerned not with philanthropy, but with *right*. In this context *hospitality* means the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory." Kant, *Political Writings*, 105.

³⁷ "Wirthin" is the feminine equivalent.

³⁸ Kant, *Political Writings*, 245.

the master of the household."³⁹ In other words, the *host* maintains his authority over his home by establishing laws that would limit the gift of hospitality offered to the other, so as not to efface his identity and authority as master. According to Derrida, this is the "implosion" or the "auto-deconstruction" of hospitality; it is seen as "protecting itself from itself, auto-immunising in some way, that is to say deconstructing itself – precisely – in practicing itself, precisely."⁴⁰

"We do not know what hospitality is." [*Nous ne savons pas ce que c'est que l'hospitalité*]⁴¹—this was Derrida's inviting statement after his analysis of Kant's third definitive article. But what does he mean by this? To begin with, one must remember that Derrida was addressing his audience in his mother tongue—French. I placed the original French (in brackets) beside the English translation, because Derrida wanted to show his audience that by addressing them in French, the language of his home, he is welcoming, receiving, and inviting them inside his home by allowing them to cross a threshold.⁴¹ Likewise, by addressing them in such manner, he is asserting his position as the host [*hôte*], master of the home that welcomes his guest/s [*hôte*].⁴² He supposes that given this setup, I (the host), address and welcome you (the guest), by first of all saying "we do not know what hospitality is." This, however, is a *co an aporia*, a performative contradiction.⁴³ To understand what this means, Derrida presents us with four acceptations.

First, "we do not *know* what hospitality is." Not *knowing* hospitality, according to Derrida, does not consist in one's ignorance of the subject matter. It "is not a concept which lends itself to objective knowledge ... hospitality ... is an experience...an intentional experience which carries itself, beyond knowing, towards the other as absolute stranger, as unknown, there where I know that I know nothing of him..."⁴⁴ In other words, hospitality is an experience of the unknown *Other*, a total stranger. But then, even if the *Other* is a stranger, conditions are already stipulated.⁴⁵ At the end, there is still a

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁴¹ The phenomenon of the *threshold* (the *door* or *border*) is greatly emphasized by Derrida. The *threshold* for him is where the master (of the home, State, Nation etc.) welcomes the *other* (the *guest* or someone seeking asylum) into his/her home by letting him/her pass through it. Cf. *Ibid.*, 248.

⁴² As you may have noticed, the French equivalent for the words *host* and *guest/s* (in brackets) are the same – *hôte*. This is a basic ambiguity in the French language for the word *hôte* may either refer to *host* or *guest*.

⁴³ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 250. Italics mine.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Ibid.* Derrida clarifies in another work (*Of Hospitality*) that the *foreigner* (or *stranger*) is never simply a total other i.e. someone who is entirely different. Even the foreigner is bound by certain obligations with other men. In other words, hospitality is also a kind of contract – "this contract of hospitality that links *to* the foreigner and which *reciprocally* links the foreigner,

necessity to know everything about hospitality but at the same time, he asks us to think beyond what can be known about it. John Caputo adds that this apparent difficulty in not knowing what hospitality is, is not simply resolved through one's intellectual competence, but also through a generous act, as in gift giving, "[binding] the other to me in gratitude and the need to reciprocate. What is true of hospitality is true, too, of the gift, and of deconstruction itself: *it does not come down to knowing anything, but to doing something.*"⁴⁶

Second, "we do not know what hospitality is" signifies that it is what is not. However, Derrida claims he does not mean that hospitality is nothingness, it is indeed something! He places the accentuation on the negative because hospitality is not *being* (in the strict and metaphysical sense of the term).⁴⁷ Instead, it deals with right, law, duty, obligation, etc. It speaks of a stranger's right to hospitality and the host's duty to provide hospitality. The host as master of the house sets down the laws of hospitality where, according to him, the contradiction within hospitality takes form.

Using Pierre Klossowski's text, *Roberte this Evening*, Derrida attempts to demonstrate the paradoxes that lie beneath the act of hospitality. On the one hand, he examines the contradiction between the essence and existence of the hostess. Roberte was expecting a guest, while she was in the presence of Octave. The guest enters and comes up behind Roberte. But it was Octave who enters, attempting to surprise Roberte by acting like the guest. Klossowski's novel was drawn into the problem of hospitality while taking account of the sexual difference between the couple, and their relationship to a witness (who is the guest at the same time). Thus, according to Derrida, the contradiction may be found within the "essence of the hostess" (as Klossowski likewise sees it).⁴⁸

On the other hand, Derrida expounds the apparent hostage taking and reversal of roles⁴⁹ between the host and the guest. The host who *invites* becomes the one *invited* by the guest. The host becomes hostage to the guest. In this case, Derrida takes hostage to mean "security for an occupation ... a

it's a question of knowing whether it counts beyond the individual and if it also extends to the family, to the generation, to the genealogy." See Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 21.

⁴⁶ Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. by John Caputo (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1997), 112. See also pp. 140-151 for Caputo's discussion of *The Gift*.

⁴⁷ He asserts that "[if] we do not know what hospitality is ... it is not a present being." Derrida, "Hostipitality," 251.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 252. Klossowski, in his novel, was trying to uncover the contradiction within the passage.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 253. Cf. Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 129.

guarantee for the other, held in place and taking the place."⁵⁰ He further explores the notion of a hostage and hostage taking in relation to ethics and responsibility. Derrida cites Levinas' claim that one is held hostage by the *Other* when one exercises his/her ethical responsibility.⁵¹ In addition, he underscores the role played by the "I" by probing into the problem of *ipseity*. In "Substitution" (from *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*), Levinas speaks of the connection between the *I* (subject) as hostage and responsibility for the other. Derrida quotes Levinas: "*Ipseity in its passivity without the arche of identity, is the hostage. The word 'I' would answer for all and everything.*"⁵²

Thirdly, "we do not know what hospitality is," for Derrida would mean "we do not know *yet* what hospitality is."⁵³ This third acceptance puts emphasis on the *not yet*—where a fundamental anachrony is being suggested. This is an implicit reference to Levinas' notion of anachrony in that it exists in the "paradoxical instant" of the subject being the host and hostage at the same time.⁵⁴ The *not yet* refers to the threshold that is yet to be crossed. From here, Derrida draws our attention to two other reasons regarding the 'present future but "not yet"' of hospitality: firstly, because the European system that regulates and limits hospitality via certain rights, laws and politics has a particular history (and Kant already pointed this out in the Third Definitive Article of Perpetual Peace we quoted earlier). As for Derrida, "we do not know what hospitality is" signifies that we do *not yet* know what it is "beyond this European, universally European right."⁵⁵ Secondly, the *not yet* entails "what remains to come, always in the future, what comes from hospitality, what is called and called by hospitality."⁵⁶ This statement leaves us with further several implications and questions: who is going to come? what is going to come? what is called hospitality? what is called *in* hospitality?

Lastly, Derrida's proposed fourth acceptance for "we do not know what hospitality is" is its *double bind* (contradiction in movement) or its *aporetic* condition. Given the foregoing acceptations, Derrida was able tease out certain contradictions and paradoxes through his semantic (etymological and institutional) analyses of some terms belonging to the vocabulary and

⁵⁰ Taking reference from the *Littré*, he traces the current usage of the word *hostage* [*otage*] from the word *ostage* that dates back to thirteenth-century texts. The *Littré* also suggests that it comes from the contracted form of *obsidaticum* i.e. *hostaticum*. From *obsidaticum*, a string of words may be associated: *obsudatus* ("guarantee"), *obsess/obsiditis* (was hostage), and *obsidere* (to occupy, to possess, to obsess). *Ibid.*, 253.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.* Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis, (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 114.

⁵³ Derrida, "Hostipitality," 254-255.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 254.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 255.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

discourse of hospitality. These contradictions are what constitutes this final and fourth acceptance, its *aporia*.⁵⁷ In offering hospitality, the host allows the guest to pass through the threshold. But then, he asks, “is it not *aporia*...the non-passage?”⁵⁸ Derrida argues, however, that *aporia* does not necessarily entail something negative; it as a necessary condition for hospitality or any welcoming.⁵⁹ He goes on to underscore the paradox which runs through the law of hospitality. First, the host is masculine, the sovereign master of his house i.e. *he* has an overarching control over his house and the goods that he may offer to a guest. There must be an affirmation of the host over his domain and ownership of the house before he can give it away. He provides hospitality to the guest under the condition that the latter respects the former’s *being at home*, of the host *being-himself at home* or the laws of hospitality that govern the household. It is here where Derrida points out the self-contradiction in the law of hospitality.

There is no hospitality if there are no doors/thresholds, and yet, there is no hospitality if there are doors. From here, Derrida demarcates the difference between a “hospitality of *visitation*” and “hospitality of *invitation*.” The former pertains to a hospitality *without a door*—“anyone who is anyone arrives at any moment and passes without needing a key for the door. The customs are not checked for the visitation.”⁶⁰ In contrast, the latter means a hospitality *with a door*, where everyone is checked by the customs and police (or the master himself) before one is allowed to cross.

Derrida cautions us not to think of this contradiction (*aporia*) within the threshold as hospitality. Instead, he asserts that it is this very aporetic threshold that we must cross. In other words, we must go beyond this contradiction that takes place within the threshold to go beyond hospitality.⁶¹ For hospitality to be possible, one must perform the impossible. Derrida writes, “[hospitality] can only take place beyond hospitality, in deciding to let it come, crossing the hospitality which paralyzes itself on the threshold that it is.”⁶² Hence, “we do not yet know what hospitality is” means that the kind of hospitality beyond itself is “*yet to come*”—a future that goes beyond our knowing.

⁵⁷ Derrida describes an *aporia* as “not knowing where to go” – which has something to do with *nonpassage* (or its experience), something that holds us back (*paralyzes* us) before a certain *threshold* (or border, door, line etc.). Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 12.

⁵⁸ Cf. Derrida, “Hospitality,” 258

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 261.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Discerning *Différance* in Hospitality

In the second section, we discussed how the movement of *différance* produces the various oppositions in our language and serves as their common denominator. The discussion on Derrida's hospitality (with the four acceptations as its highlight) in the third section maintains two dilemmas (or as I would like to call them: tensions) that occur in almost every acceptation. These two tensions are: (1) the tension within the contradictory laws of hospitality; and (2) the tension within the subject of hospitality (particularly to that of the host-guest [*hôte*] relation). Having elaborated on these topics, I shall now attempt to discern the movement of *différance* within these two tensions scrutinized by Derrida in his discourse on hospitality.

A. *Différance* within Hospitality: Between *Unconditional* and *Conditional*

Hospitality is an obligation of a State to a certain person seeking asylum or even asserting his right to it. Within this seemingly absolute or categorical (or in Derrida's parlance *unconditional*) hospitality is a certain condition: the host welcomes the guest under the condition that the guest respects the position and authority of the host as host. But then, the double-movement of the laws of hospitality comes from the fact that the very law of hospitality dictates that one render hospitality unconditionally (hospitality being an obligation) while at the same time stipulating laws that would limit the hospitality being offered. These two laws are inseparable. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida emphasizes this point by saying that despite the irreconcilable tension between the two [laws], this tension is necessary – "conditional laws would cease to be laws of hospitality if they were not guided, given inspiration, given aspiration, required, even, by the law of unconditional hospitality."⁶³

Derrida admits to the radical difference/heterogeneity of the two laws, yet at the same time insists that these two laws cannot be dissociated.⁶⁴ In an interview, he opines on this matter:

I analyse something which is not a simple *opposition* between the 'unconditional' and the 'conditional'. If the two meanings of hospitality remain mutually irreducible, it is always in the name of pure and hyperbolic hospitality that it is necessary, in order to

⁶³ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 79.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 147.

render it as effective as possible, to invent the best arrangements [*dispositions*], the least bad conditions, the most just legislation. This is necessary to avoid the perverse effects of an unlimited hospitality whose risks I tried to define.⁶⁵

In view of the foregoing, I would like to appeal to a basic opposition: that of the *conditional* and *unconditional* hospitality. By the virtue of their separate and conflicting movements, one cannot simply reduce them to the other. Yet, as Derrida claims, they cannot be separated from one another i.e. to posit unconditionality would already be breached by conditionality, or to posit conditionality would already be driven by the thought of unconditionality. Hence, we are left in this aporetic crossroads.

But, *différance* already works within the opposition of *conditional* and *unconditional* hospitality. The next question would then be: how do we discern *différance* within these two oppositions?

Although *différance* started out as one of Derrida's strategies in undoing logocentrism, later on, he would consider it as the very condition for the possibility of any ethical or political act.⁶⁶ It was discussed in the second section, that *différance* plays a two-fold signification i.e. "to differ-to defer". In a later interview, on the other hand, when asked by his interlocutor to expound on his "assertion that discourse, knowledge, and therefore moral practice, is a process of endless *différance*,"⁶⁷ Derrida responded by saying:

Turning to the subject of 'endless difference': it is commonplace today to understand *différance* with an 'a' as simply postponement which neutralizes decision. This is something which, had some attention been paid to the text in the beginning, could have been overcome. If *différance* was simply infinite postponement, it would be nothing. If I played on the 'a' of *différance*, it is in order to keep in a single word two logics: one of the delay, the detour, which implies a process, a strategy or a postponement; and difference with an 'e', which implies heterogeneity, alterity and so on. Now, because there is alterity and the other, for example, this cannot wait. There is an unconditional commandment, so to speak,

⁶⁵ Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Hospitality" in *Parallax* 11:1 (2005), 6. Italics mine.

⁶⁶ Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida" in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London: Routledge, 1999), 77.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

not to wait, and it is because there is this possibility of postponing that we can and we must make decisions. If there was no possibility of delay, there would be no urgency either. *Différance*, therefore, is not opposed to ethics and politics, but is their condition: on the one hand, it is the condition of history, of process, strategy, delay, postponement, mediation, and, on the other hand, because there is an absolute difference or an irreducible heterogeneity, there is the urge to act and respond immediately and to face political and ethical responsibilities.⁶⁸

Following these series of arguments, the movement of *différance* in the tension between the conditional and unconditional laws may be discerned in the following manner. Firstly, let us take *différance* as *differing* in relation to the two laws of hospitality. *Différance*, in this sense, inhabits the tension in such a manner that both laws are radically different. Their opposition against each other enables us to discern *différance* as the principle of their differentiation or heterogeneity. There is no difficulty in understanding this since *différance* "as that which produces *different* things, that which *differentiates* ... the common root of all oppositional concepts that mark our language ..." ⁶⁹ Hence, it is without doubt that *différance* as *differing* would move within the oppositional concept of conditional and unconditional hospitality.

Secondly, taking *différance* as *deferring* in relation to both laws, brings us back to the notion of *deferral* as "postponement," "detour" and "economical calculation."⁷⁰ Because, there is *difference* or *differing* in the first sense of *différance*, the second sense calls for a *deferring of differing* or to *defer difference*. In the passage quote at length above, Derrida tells us that because of heterogeneity, there is a call for an immediate action—to *defer* this difference—in order for us to act. In relation to the two laws of hospitality, there is already an immediate imperative to make certain decisions between the two, as implied in the passage. Does this mean that one should choose one over the other? For him, the decision-making process is not constituted by simply choosing between one of the two oppositions.⁷¹ One cannot simply

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶⁹ Derrida, *Positions*, 9.

⁷⁰ Cf. Derrida, "Différance," 8.

⁷¹ This is important in understanding Derrida's philosophy. *Deconstruction* does not simply choose one of the two oppositions, rather it aims at striking the very root of these oppositions. Its goal is to disrupt their order or hierarchy.

think of hospitality as unconditional or hospitality as conditional. In fact, one must take hospitality as conditional *and* unconditional.

The self-contradictory nature of these two laws, as mentioned in the third section, takes place at a certain threshold. The phenomenon of the threshold allows us to think clearly of the paradox in these two laws of hospitality. On one hand, “there is no hospitality without a threshold” would imply that the threshold is where the stranger/guest may be (unconditionally) welcomed, thus making hospitality possible. On the other hand, “there is no hospitality wherever there is a threshold” would mean that it is also the threshold that makes hospitality impossible since, it is here where the stranger/guest is (conditionally) welcomed—the threshold is where the conditions are announced before letting someone pass through it. To put it simply, the threshold itself bears this paradoxical law of hospitality.

This dilemma or paradox in the law of hospitality, however, is not meant to paralyze our decisions and actions. Derrida calls us to go beyond this contradiction within the threshold; to go beyond the opposition between conditional and unconditional. It is here where *différance* as *deferment* works as a call to a certain urgency to make a decision i.e. to think of a temporary (this is another sense of *différance as deferment*) solution/mediation between these two different movements of hospitality. To ease this problematic tension would necessitate an immediate solution, a compromise, a strategy. Derrida hints, “This is the double law of hospitality: to calculate the risks, yes, but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and the foreigner.”⁷² This is perhaps a succinct yet, an enlightening remark on the matter we are discussing. The host still welcomes the stranger/foreigner/guest, but, at the same time, calculates (or economize) the risk that may be brought about by the latter. This economization of risks takes place only once the master sets down the rules and/or the conditions of the house, which is why, in the fourth acceptance, Derrida’s semantic investigation led him to the insight that the *law of hospitality* is also the *law of the household* or *law of economics*. From the following, we could surmise Derrida’s point when he said that there is a need, an urgency with respect to the sense of *différance* as *deferral*. Despite the opposition between the two laws, they cannot be excluded from one another. One must deal with a certain economical calculation in mediating the two opposing laws, yet, one must still anticipate the incalculable stranger and the future that is to come.

After discerning these two senses of *différance* in the *laws of hospitality*, I would like to emphasize that they should be thought at the same time, just as Derrida took these two senses of *différance* together. Indeed, *différance* cannot be set aside in thinking of these paradoxical accounts. By positing the

⁷² Derrida, “The Principle of Hospitality,” 6.

opposite movement of the conditional and unconditional, both senses of *différance* is already at work. But since *différance* already works as an economical concept,⁷³ there is already a call to move beyond the *differing* concepts and begin to respond to the invitation to decide to be suggested by the contradiction. Thus, one is *deferring* the opposition through the employment of a certain economical strategy that does not choose between one of the two opposing forces, but rather sees that one of the forces carries within itself the other opposing force, thus making it impossible to pick one without picking the other. So that Derrida provides us with a subtle solution to this paradox: to come up with an urgent decisive resolution (if there is such a thing) to this contradiction in the laws of hospitality that is "to invent the *best arrangements* [*dispositions*], the *least bad conditions*, the *most just legislation*. This is necessary to avoid the perverse effects of an unlimited hospitality whose risks I tried to define."⁷⁴

B. *Différance* within Hospitality: The *Subject* of Hospitality as *Host/Hostage*

After dealing with the problem on the conditional and unconditional laws of hospitality, we are now set to discuss another prominent paradox within Derrida's discourse on hospitality: the *subject* of hospitality. I shall focus particularly on the dual role of the host as host and hostage, and the reversal of roles between the host and the guest [which in French are signified by a single term: *hôte*]. In any talks of hospitality, there are always two parties involved: that of the one offering hospitality or the *host*, and that of the one receiving it or the guest. The host is also the master of the house (or country, nation, State etc.). The guest, on the other hand, is the one who arrives, who seeks asylum, a refugee, a foreigner/stranger. To put it in Levinas' parlance (to whom Derrida owes some of his analysis on hospitality), the host is the *subject*, "I", *self* while the guest is the *Other*.

In the second acceptance of "we do not know what hospitality is," Derrida provides us with an account on how the subject of hospitality, the host becomes the hostage of the *Other* (the guest). He says:

We must also pursue this terrifying and impassable strategy of the hostage in the direction of a modernity and a specific techno-politics of hostage taking ... of what Levinas calls the hostage, when he says that the exercise of ethical responsibility begins there where I am

⁷³ "There is no economy without *différance*, it is the most general structure of economy." Derrida, *Positions*, 8.

⁷⁴ Derrida, "The Principle of Hospitality" 6. Italics mine.

and must be the hostage of the other, delivered passively to the other before myself.⁷⁵

First, we must understand two things in this passage: what it means to be a hostage of the *Other* and ethical responsibility, the latter being made possible through the former. For Levinas, it is the *Other* who invites us to ethical responsibility. To be taken hostage (by the *Other*) means that the “the self ... is already *substituted* for the others.”⁷⁶ The *I* has taken the place of the *Other*, which means that even if the *I*, the host, in his mastery of the house, basks in his own power, he may still be taken hostage by the *Other* (the guest and stranger) i.e. “self as a ‘hostage’ [may be] persecuted by the other person.”⁷⁷ This is because, the *I* is as much as an *Other* as the *Other* is also an *I*. To this, Derrida writes “the other cannot be the other – of the same – except by being the same (as itself: ego), and the same cannot be the same (as itself: ego) except by being the other’s other: alter ego.”⁷⁸ There will always be a play of forces or power between the *I* and *Other*, the host and the guest. This substitution or being hostage to the *Other* is the rationale behind the reversal of roles between the host and the guest.⁷⁹ The invited becomes the host, and the one inviting becomes the guest—indeed, there is a taking of places, a substitution. As Hutchens remarks, one the senses of responsibility in Levinas is “‘responsibility’ as responding *for the other* in the sense of substituting oneself for the other person in its responsibilities.”⁸⁰ This reflects the phenomenon described by Derrida in his discussion of the reversal of roles: the host, whose responsibility lies within providing joy and comfort to the guest, becomes the guest, because his happiness depended on him offering hospitality to the guest. In short, the host who ought to fulfill the needs of his guest, turns into the guest fulfilling the needs of the host.

The subject, host or master, the *I*, or self, must then interrupt himself with this double-bind within his condition as the host and hostage. As a host, he must maintain his power and authority over the house, and at the same time acknowledge the fact that he becomes a hostage to the *Other*, guest, foreigner thus making him ethically responsible for them. This interruption

⁷⁵ Derrida, “Hostipitality,” 253.

⁷⁶ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 118.

⁷⁷ Benjamin Hutchens, *Levinas: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London & New York: Continuum, 2004), 20.

⁷⁸ Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics,” 128.

⁷⁹ Although this reversal comes from Derrida’s reading of Klossowski, he inserted the discussion of the *hostage* because, it is in this reversal of roles where we get the insight of the *host-becoming-the-hostage*. And from here, he goes on to discuss the etymology of the *hostage* (through the *Littre*) and how it is related to ethics and politics (through Levinas). Cf. Derrida, “Hostipitality,” 252-253.

⁸⁰ Hutchens, *Levinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 19.

or divide within the subject is a paradoxical moment in Derrida's ethics of hospitality. In fact, he notes that '[one] will understand nothing about hospitality if one does not understand what "interrupting oneself" might mean, the *interruption of the self by the self as other*.'⁸¹ Hence, I'll be taking this as my point of departure in discerning the movement of *différance* within the *subject of hospitality*.

In one of his interviews, Derrida remarks:

That is what is meant by self-interruption, which is another name for *différance*. Just as there would be no responsibility or decision without some self-interruption, neither would there be any hospitality; as master and host, the self, in welcoming the other, must interrupt or divide himself or herself. This division is the condition of hospitality.⁸²

This passage gives us a preliminary hint on how to respond to the problem at hand. Self-interruption is *différance*. To place this passage in context, Derrida was contrasting Edmund Husserl's phenomenology from Levinas' own version with regards to the *Other*. Unlike Husserl whose phenomenology relies on intuition in experiencing the *Other*, Levinas asserts that our relation with the *Other*—not simply as a phenomenological-intuitional— must be an ethical one.⁸³ This for him is how self-interruption in phenomenology works.

But how exactly does *différance* work within the host's self-interruption wherein "as master and host, the self, in welcoming the other, must interrupt or divide himself or herself."⁸⁴ We have already posited the two apparent conflicting forces in the subject of hospitality i.e. being host and hostage (of the *Other*). The tension or contradiction arises from the fact that, on one hand, the subject as host is constituted by the power he has over the household, the one who rules over the home. On the other hand, the subject as hostage takes the place of the *Other* or the guest when the latter finally arrives; he becomes hostage in the sense that his rule is displaced by the *Other* who comes.

Just as what we did in the previous section, allow me to discern *différance* in the subject by taking the two senses of *différance* i.e. *differ-defer* apart and attempt to trace the movement of each within the subject of

⁸¹ Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 52. Italics mine.

⁸² Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility," 81.

⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

hospitality as host and hostage. First, *différance* as *differing* is explicit within the subject as host-hostage by the mere fact that a host serves a *different* function from a hostage. In fact, it is quite uncanny that the master of the house be taken hostage by the guest. As was stipulated earlier, the host and the guest perform different functions. But in the situation of hostage-taking, the host substitutes the guest i.e. taking the latter's place. Thus, the heterogeneity that exists between host and hostage that is characterized by the separate function that they perform is the root of *différance* as *differing*. Host and hostage still belong to the realm of conceptual oppositions that is produced by *différance*.

Secondly, *différance* as *deferring* is the movement of delay, postponement, temporization, detour. The paradoxical instant of the subject being the host and hostage at the same time may be mediated through this sense of *différance*. How does this work? It was said that the host (*I*) takes the place of the guest (the *Other*) by being the latter's hostage. The play of substitution here is similar to what is being signified by *différance* as *deferral*. This is to say that even before the guest's arrival, the host already carries within himself the fact that he is also a hostage (of the *Other*) because the host is not simply a sovereign *I*, exercising authority over everyone else. This very host or *I* is also an *Other* to the guest, who also recognizes himself as an *I*. In short, "I am also essentially the *other's other*."⁸⁵ For Derrida, this is the most economical gesture possible: for the *I* to recognize that the *Other* is also an *I*.⁸⁶ Again, one of the underlying significations of *différance* as *deferral* is the provision of a strategy or economical calculation due to a certain demand for urgency. The urgency being demanded in hospitality is ethical—the call for the host to welcome and be responsible for the guest/*Other* who arrives. In substituting myself for the other, I am not only responsible to this *Other*, I am also responsible to the responsibilities of this *Other*.⁸⁷

Briefly, the movement of *différance* in the subject of hospitality lies within the tension between the subject as host *and* hostage. But just as we have said in the previous section that *différance* must not be thought apart as two separate movements: as *differing* on the one hand, and *deferring* on the other. As Derrida underscores, it is because of *difference* that there is *deferral*; it is this alterity that invites and urges us to respond, to employ a certain strategy that will mediate this alterity.⁸⁸ For Levinas, this alterity is what invites the *I* to a certain ethical responsibility—for it is only through ethics that the *I* is

⁸⁵ Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," 128.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Cf. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 117.

⁸⁸ Cf. Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility," 77.

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mediated with the *Other*,⁸⁹ that the *I* is called to welcome and be held responsible for the *Other*, who takes the *I* as hostage.

Conclusion

To sum up, allow me to share some words by Derrida from his work *On Cosmopolitanism*. He says:

Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality.⁹⁰

"*Ethics is hospitality.*" If there is one phrase that would capture the essence of Derrida's thoughts on hospitality that is: being ethical is tantamount to being hospitable. Despite this ethical demand, the problems one may encounter in offering someone hospitality is still undeniable. I have presented this issue at the beginning of this project when I mentioned about the crisis our world faces today with regards to the sudden surge of refugees seeking asylum in other countries. Although, some have already welcomed refugees into their country, the recent attacks by radicals in some major cities in Europe (Paris, Belgium, etc.) opened the question on the extent of hospitality being offered to these people. The apparent difficulty of being hospitable to a foreigner/stranger and the probable risks that it may pose to one's self or country was thoroughly explored and discussed by Derrida.

By examining Derrida's notions of *différance* and his ethics of hospitality, indeed we can discern a movement of *différance* in hospitality through the paradoxical tension between the laws of unconditional and conditional hospitality. Because of the radical heterogeneity of these two laws i.e. they move into separate and conflicting movements, *différance* as *differing* inhabits these two opposing forces. By *différance* as *deferring* we do not mean, that our decision is paralyzed between these two conflicting movements. Rather, Derrida calls us to go beyond the opposition between conditional and unconditional. It is here where *différance* as *deferment* works as a call to a certain urgency to think of a provisional solution/mediation between these

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001), 16-17.

two different movements of hospitality. In other words, it also calls for an economical strategy that would reduce the potential threats of the unconditional, by stipulating conditions at the threshold, while remaining to be welcoming to the guest/stranger/*Other*.

Another paradox that unveils in Derrida's discussion of hospitality may be found within the subject of hospitality being a host *and* hostage (of the *Other*). This is considered to be a tension within itself since, the subject as host is the master and power that governs the house. He is the sovereign authority that lays down the laws of hospitality. But he is also a hostage of the *Other* i.e. the host is captivated by *Other* who demands ethical responsibility. The subject, then must interrupt or divide himself into being a host on the one hand, and being a hostage on the other. This interruption, according to Derrida, is none other than *différance*.

From here, I discerned the movement of *différance* in the following manner. First, *différance* as *differing* is already exhibited into the heterogeneity of the functions between the host and the hostage i.e. the host's role is different from of the *hostage*. This difference is what constitutes the *différance* (as *differing*) within the subject as host *and* hostage. Secondly, given the reversal and substitution of roles (between host and guest) brought about by hostage-taking, the host-taking-the-place-of-the-guest is the substitution that is similar to what is being pointed by *différance* as *deferral*. This is because the host, even before the guest arrives, *already carries* within himself the fact that he is also a hostage (of the *Other*). For Derrida, this is another economical gesture (which is an implicit meaning of *différance* as *deferral*) that the host must recognize that he is also an *Other* to the guest, inasmuch as the guest realizes that it is also an *I*. Hence, this economy that plays between the host and the guest, opens up the urgency and the ethical demand of hospitality i.e. the demand for the host to welcome the guest.

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Article

The Limits of Liberalism and the Crisis of Democratic Cosmopolitanism

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Abstract: The twentieth century saw the rise of internationalism among various liberal nation-states. By the end of twentieth century, there was hope among liberal intellectuals that the end of the Cold War would usher in the “end of history.” However, the twenty-first century has seen a resurgence of isolationist and relativist doctrines in the sphere of international politics that threatens to impede the influence of liberal doctrine, institutions, and most importantly, international law. This paper assesses the development of Western liberalism and the “idea of progress” through the following: conflict; liberalism’s implied epiphenomenalism over and against historical circumstances that led to the rise of liberal democracies; how various Hegelians have utilized Hegel to understand the liberal vision; and why the expansion of liberalism as a global and universal political philosophy has slowed.

Keywords: Hegelianism, liberalism, political philosophy, democracy

The contemporary crisis of political liberalism has become a recent focus of many studies and has been diagnosed to be a result of a crisis of self-confidence, the abandonment of faith in the idea of progress, failure to achieve a more equitable political economy for all, or more apoplectically, as a wholesale rejection of the so-called “Enlightenment model” of politics which threatens liberal democracy itself.¹ The current state of liberal despair contrasts acutely with the enthusiasm for liberalism that was seen at the end of the twentieth century, which saw the rise of internationalism among liberal nation-states through the promotion of a (hopeful) new international order where democracy, human rights, civil rights, and global economics would flourish. All of these led some to speculate about the possibility of the “end

¹ For recent studies, see Edward Luce, *Retreat of Western Liberalism* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017); Mark Lilla, *The Once and Future Liberal* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017); Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2017); and Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015) for such examples.

of history.”² However, the twenty-first century has seen a resurgence of isolationist and relativist doctrines in the spheres of both domestic and international politics that supposedly threaten to impede (if not cause the collapse of) the progress of liberal gains over the past half-century.

One of the greatest issues that the international community will struggle with is one which the world has been struggling with since the end of the Cold War, namely, the tension between liberal expansion and retrenchment (or retreat) on the global stage. By liberal expansionism, I am referring to the idea that liberal democratic states should work together, economically, politically, and even militarily (though often minimally advocated) to advance liberal goals and establish a global order that all nation-states (irrespective of geographic location, culture, religious identity, and internal politics) should be bound to some form of adherence to international law and treaties, market-oriented economics, and human rights moreover than purely domestic political constitutions and concerns which, in many instances, run counter to these aforementioned ideals. The current crisis of global liberalism can seemingly be attributed to the rise of “homogeneous mass democracy” which promotes a collective identity wrapped in the language of liberalism and equality, but denies any such rights to the foreign non-national.³ This crisis is highlighted in the moral dilemma that arises when liberal societies adopt realist principles in the pursuit of national or internationalist ends,⁴ which has been exacerbated in our growing globalized and pluralized world.

The problem of pursuing any long-standing international political theory is that it is ultimately tied to the domestic body politic—or as Max

² I take this quote from Francis Fukuyama’s thesis and elaboration on a liberalized Hegelian reading in his essay “The End of History?” in *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989), 3-18. See his expanded version, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). Fukuyama, while revising aspects of his original thesis, still maintains that liberal democracy is still the unchallenged primary model for socio-political development and governance. For this, see Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

³ Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. by Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 1-17. Schmitt’s “homogeneous mass democracy” can be surmised as being a highly nationalistic and exclusivist approach to democratic politics. This is highly nationalistic and exclusivist approach to democratic politics serves as the major hurdle for the internationalist democratic spirit to overcome. Schmitt himself seems to be aware of this tension in *The Concept of the Political*, where he later explains the antitheses of the politic are hindrances for the consummation of the political State.

⁴ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 8-9. Here, he argues that while “realist” foreign policy has some merit, it otherwise lacks a humanitarian and moral foundation. He asserts that a new internationalist foreign policy, while taking into consideration realist (economic, or, national security interests) concerns, needs to be re-invigorated with moral sensibilities and humanitarian concerns as well.

Weber calls it, *Sache*.⁵ The *Sache* (cause) of the domestic body politic, furthermore, tends to be narrowly focused on immediate material concerns with the tendency toward an exclusivist outlook concerned with the “matter in hand” that poses problems for a political cause that is more universal in outlook.⁶ The domestic political cause seems to be closer in the spirit of Schmitt’s “homogenous mass democracy” where concern for the friend—or “us”—takes primacy over the “other” and is at the heart of the concept of the political.⁷ And if politicians, in concordance with *Sache*, mean that they will act with a sense of responsibility to the cause,⁸ the immediate question arises: to which cause, then, does politics decide to passionately engage in? Moreover, what balance, if any, can be struck between the exclusive and universal?

These issues pose inherent problems to the very notion of liberal internationalism, which, through its implicit universal conception of itself, attempts to forge and maintain an internal order and promote an internal agenda that inevitably might find itself at odds with the domestic political body. After all, the very notion of the realist “national interest” outlook—while not necessarily excluding internationalism and multilateralism by any means—takes a more serious and sobering account of what is ultimately in the interest of the domestic body politic over and against international concerns of humanitarianism, human rights, and global idealism. I will insist that the crisis of liberalism and the phenomenon of cosmopolitan democracy was the result of the embrace of an implicitly deterministic view of history that originally understood itself in a revisionist Hegelian manner of an actualized universal self-consciousness that embraced the concept of global community over and against national or tribal bonds.⁹ Presently, that vigorous embrace of a progressive reading of Hegel that propelled modern liberalism to the fore as the triumphant and universal ideology over its competitors is now in question. Is liberalism, construed as the ultimate

⁵ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” in *The Vocation Lectures*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 76-77. In using *The Vocation Lectures*, which includes “Science as a Vocation” and “Politics as a Vocation,” I have focused solely on Weber’s “Politics as a Vocation.”

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 26-27.

⁸ Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 77.

⁹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), § 566-569. Hegel discusses, in these sections, how the “act of consciousness” sublates “faith” but that faith acknowledges contingent knowledge which permits concrete relationships with others (or “contingent things”). It is this outgrowth of consciousness from faith which, I argue, expands itself to the universal as appropriated in the growth of a political consciousness that moved to sublimate old national communities and progress toward the embrace of the global community within modern liberalism.

outcome of the march of history, just a philosophy that advances material gain via conatus and individual self-interest and survivalism,¹⁰ or does it have roots in culture, religion, and history from which these roots and circumstances help form the grounding for ethical action in the world?¹¹

The Roots of Liberalism and Its Evolution

Historically, democracies have been highly nationalistic and have tended to be exclusive and homogeneous, rather than multicultural, cosmopolitan, and universalistic.¹² The roots of these nationalistic and exclusivist origins of democracy and republicanism which later evolved into what we might call “liberalism” today can be traced back to religion.¹³ For example, three of the greatest powers that spurred the Western republican and democratic traditions—the Dutch Republic, England (United Kingdom), and United States—were all fervently Protestant nationalist strongholds that held deep anti-Catholic prejudices, often with exclusionary laws forbidding non-nationals the right to vote or equality under the law (until recently).¹⁴ The very institution of the nation-state and of liberal political philosophy grew in the soil of nationalism and suspicion of others, particularly within the Protestant-Catholic sectarian division in Europe and North America in which “Protestant[s] summon[ed] to return to the Biblical text [and] with it incessant appeals to God’s constitutional preferences as embodied in Scripture.”¹⁵ As Bertrand Russell also noted, liberalism, in some way, was the “product of England and Holland ... it was Protestant [in character].”¹⁶ This is not a claim defending a vague notion of “Protestant Exceptionalism,” but a historical observation that many observers in philosophy and political theory have long noted: the original liberal nation-states, or the nation-states that are identified

¹⁰ This is the basic thesis in the political tracts of the classical liberal fathers: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Baruch Spinoza. See, in particular, John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. by C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), § 25-51.

¹¹ See G.W.F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T.M. Knox (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), § 142-157. Hegel does not argue that “liberalism” finds its ethical justifications through its shared community, “bond[s] of duty,” family, or other particularities, but that ethical action itself is rooted in such bonds and duties of particularity from which all is unified in the constitution of the state.

¹² See Yoram Hazony, “Nationalism and the Future of Freedom,” in *Mosaic* (6 September 2016), < <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2016/09/nationalism-and-the-future-of-western-freedom/>>.

¹³ See Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-22.

¹⁴ Hazony, “Nationalism and the Future of Freedom.”

¹⁵ Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 2.

¹⁶ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 545.

as having been leaders in the ascendancy of liberalism, tended to be rooted in the Protestant religion.¹⁷

Over time, these Protestant nations tended to “liberalize” themselves by embracing stronger republican and democratic qualities as a reflection of national identity and self-determination in contradistinction to their Catholic rivals. This helped foster a culture of anti-Catholicism, whereby Catholic immigrants were perceived as having an allegiance to the Papacy instead of the Protestant national body politic that promoted civil Protestantism and civic nationalism as a means to preserve the newly won freedom and liberty.¹⁸ The principle of anti-Catholicism was not anti-Catholicism per se, but the “othering” of foreigners not part of the original national construction, which can be long attested to throughout human history. As Yoram Hazony states, “What made this possible, however, was not a doctrine enumerating a list of ‘universal rights.’ Rather, ‘the ancient customs and privileges’ of the [Protestant] people themselves were said to be responsible for their country’s special regard for intellectual and religious freedom.”¹⁹

What is often neglected in public commentary is the deliberate exclusivist (anti-Catholic) construction of Protestant notions of “liberty” to push out the ideas of universalism and sacral authority associated with Catholicism.²⁰ Even the notion of the now idealized “separation of Church and State” was an anti-Catholic Protestant construction.²¹ National identity, itself exclusionary and ubiquitous in the formation of notions of modern liberty during what Eric Nelson has called “the Hebrew Revival” of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,²² is one of the historical roots of modern democracy which materialized itself as self-determination rather than the

¹⁷ In the particular case of the United States, the works of Perry Miller, Sacvan Bercovitch, Talcott Parsons, Louis Hartz, and Francis Bremer have all noted on the importance of Puritanism, in some fashion, helping to ground and shape American ideas of nation, democracy, and liberalism.

¹⁸ One of the most glaring examples of such prejudices is seen in Paul Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), where he argued that Catholic loyalties (to the Holy See) were antithetical and incompatible with the values that formed the basis of American political life and the Constitution of the United States. See also Glenn A. Moots, “The Protestant Roots of American Civil Religion,” in *Humanitas* 23:1-2 (2010), 78-106 for the influence of Reformed Protestantism and anti-Catholic tendencies in shaping American political culture and civil society. Note, Prof. Moots’ article is not promoting anti-Catholicism like Blanshard’s book, but is a historical treatise on the importance of anti-Catholicism in early American history that subsequently became embedded in American public (Protestant) culture.

¹⁹ Yoram Hazony, “Nationalism and the Future of Freedom.”

²⁰ Christopher Ferrara, *Liberty, The God that Failed* (Tacoma: Angelico Press, 2012), 42-48.

²¹ See Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²² Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 4.

incomparable abstraction of *demos* from Greek philosophy,²³ Notwithstanding that the Greeks themselves were exclusionary in their thought as well. Therefore, one of the roots of modern democracy is national self-determination as the exercise of freedom of (religious) conscience. This is especially in religious matters that led to the Treaty of Augsburg which enshrined the principle: *Cuius regio, eius religio*.

The Treaty of Augsburg ultimately led to an idea of “constitutional pluralism”²⁴ that separated differing conceptions of governance and religious fidelity, rather than promote a universal abstraction as is the case with modern liberalism’s insistence on human rights and democratic federalism. In other words, there was a well-defined constitutional principle that established well-defined borders that were to be respected during the *origo* of liberalism that was the residue of sectarian violence and religious wars. After all, the birth and growth of liberal democracies (and republics) in the Western World generally came out of the fires of sectarian violence, religious wars, and civil wars during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries rather than the more “humane” metanarrative of an embrace of skepticism, tolerance, and openness of the Enlightenment that is often told.²⁵

The evolution of a liberal democratic politics through the fire of hardship and the death of old orders can also be contrasted with liberalism’s metaphysical, and broader philosophical, foundations in Baruch Spinoza, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, in which “liberalism’s” chief metaphysical claim is that all human action is driven by rational self-motivation—or conatus. “Reason is not opposed to conatus, but conatus itself. It is not opposed to power, but power itself.”²⁶ Through self-survival as the primary means of progress, the classical liberal theorists implicitly laid the groundworks for the eventual transcendence of liberalism’s historically Protestant character. It was not Protestantism, per se, that influenced liberalism—since Protestantism was just a contingent epiphenomenon of material self-interest and survival—but that Protestantism lent itself to the

²³ Hegel himself suggests that various roots: religion, culture, and language, along with personal will, lead to the union of the citizen with the emergent state in history. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Reason in History*, trans. by Robert Hartman (Upper Saddle River: Library of Liberal Arts, 1997), 49. In this sense, the Protestant nations that would become the core liberal nations by the late Enlightenment achieved that divine idea of the state on earth with their constitutions and political institutions embodying their essential Protestant character, harkening back to what Eric Nelson claimed was the incessant Protestant appeal to form political orders according to “God’s constitutional preferences as embodied in Scripture.” See Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 2.

²⁴ Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 3.

²⁵ This is undoubtedly the case with Britain, Holland, and the United States, whose liberal mentality and politics were forged from religious wars, wars of independence, and civil wars during the “Enlightenment Era.”

²⁶ Modesto Gómez-Alonso, “Spinoza on Freedom, Individual Rights, and Public Power,” in *Praxis Filosófica Nueva serie* 40 (enero-junio 2015, 23).

advancing interests of self-survival in a harsh world. In the sectarianism of the seventeenth century Protestantism coincidentally happened to align with, and support, the emergence of liberal thought. Thus, despite liberalism's and Protestantism's intertwined heritage—something that is not lost in the memory of certain Protestant sects—modern liberalism has now moved beyond Protestantism and its own historical boundaries and roots for having regarding these factors as mere coincidence and contingent epiphenomena of the exertion of one's individual conatus. Or has it?

Recent political developments across the world in the past few decades—from the Tiananmen Square Riots, the collapse of the Communist Bloc, and to the rise of the Arab Spring—would be pointed to as evidence of the universality of liberalism that stems from a universal rationality that emanates from our conatus. Lurking in contemporary democratic movements is a danger, however. In each case we can ask, what form of democracy is being appealed to: a nationalistic collective identity appeal (perhaps best seen in the latter developments of the Arab Spring revolutions by highly exclusivist politics and ethno-religious appeals), or a more open and pluralistic appeal? This only magnifies the problem for any international politics and international polity. Furthermore, the twenty-first century idealization of democracy often discounts the historical account of democracy's slow evolution from its own exclusivist and nationalist *origo*, not to mention whether it is actually correct to see any cultural and religious connection to liberalism as mere epiphenomenon or something far deeper.

Max Weber asserted with a bleak attitude that politicians were unlikely to make such commitments because it would betray the "passion" of the domestic political apparatus and their constituents.²⁷ Likewise, Carl Schmitt observed a contradiction between the concerns that an ethnic national might have toward anyone who is deemed an enemy.²⁸ In both cases, culture, domestic politics, and history are important to the liberal political project, not mere self-survivalism and economic rationalism that reduces all other "influences" as mere epiphenomenon. For Schmitt, the meta-political is rooted in the friend-enemy distinction, rather than ethical universalism or rationalistic consumerism.²⁹ This reality returns us to the need for strong-willed international institutions, which themselves are dependent upon the strong leadership of supporting states; this is itself problematic out of the liberal heritage which also venerates the idea of a limited government in certain circles.

This strong will, however, of the liberal State in maintaining and promoting a global universalism runs into the dilemma of the State's

²⁷ Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 35, 75-77.

²⁸ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23..

domestic obligations.³⁰ In any democracy, the domestic citizenry confers the legitimacy of the State since no democracy can sustain itself without the public trust and will. Yet, for Schmitt, such political universalism has to do away with markers of plurality and distinction since such distinctions are the antithesis of the political.³¹ Only by achieving this erosion of plurality can the State act free of its domestic obligations, the concerns of its peoples, and overcome historical culture, religion, or economic heritage³² and achieve its consummation in history. “In this universal society, there would no longer be nations in the form of political entities, no class struggles, and no enemy groupings.”³³ Inherent to Schmitt, then, is the opposing view that liberal democracy is not just rooted in pure conatus and self-survivalism but has additionally embedded roots in culture, religion, heritage, and self-identity (all of which now serve as antitheses to the universalism of liberalism which liberalism must overcome in order to actualize itself in totality).

The deterministic and epiphenomenal conception of liberal politics, however, doesn’t take into account the democratic counter balance of the citizen’s vote. At any given election, the domestic body politic can reject the State’s universalism and seek a restoration of the politics with strictly domestic foci. In democracy, there always exists the possibility of rejecting the supposed synthesis through political voting.³⁴ This “reactionary” counter to the consummation of the political, which serves to prevent the superseding consummation of the political against its antitheses, counteracts what Ryszard Legutko claims as “the idolatry of liberal democracy.”³⁵ The totalitarian impulse in liberalism is the idolatry of the conception of the liberal politics as it seeks to supersede (and destroy) all competing antitheses to it—the *Bodenständigkeit* of any peoples. The totalitarian impulse emerges in response to the reaction against the universalizing tendency of the concept of the political; the “reactionary” impulse for a return to a politics of the domestic becomes the hurdle by which the liberal politic must now overcome—to achieve the *Aufhebung* that Hegel speaks of in the process of historical advancement.

Here emerges an additional tension between the *Aufenthalt* (dwelling) of liberalism’s rootedness against its contemporary historicized universalistic ambitions. As Heidegger explains, our dwelling—which takes

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

³¹ *Ibid.* 23-24.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 28. Schmitt claims that there is always the hope of the antithesis (the enemy in the friend-enemy distinction) being “vanished from the world.” Insofar that nations are built on the “friend-enemy” distinction, and that this is the very nature of the concept of the political in of itself, there is no progressing beyond this antithesis.

³⁵ Ryszard Legutko, *The Demon in Democracy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2016), 24.

some form from the primal roots of our being-in-the-world—leads to an independent dwelling with others,³⁶ but one in which there is no attachment (or dwelling) with the “other.” The in-dwelling consciousness of liberalism’s exclusivist, nationalist, and broadly Protestant heritage, in which its liberty was won through conflict against the other for-itself, now comes into conflict with the expansionist ideal of universalizing liberty beyond its own borders. The friend-enemy distinction that was engrained in early liberalism’s consciousness now struggles, as Schmitt foresaw, to perceive and interpret itself in the world in much the same manner that Heidegger notes, that any dwelling seeks a want to preserve itself and refrain from being manipulated and used (by something) when it encounters another form of dwelling.³⁷ There seems to be a natural insistence on wanting to preserve one’s own roots which give meaning to one’s being-in-the-world; and ethical order is grounded in one’s possessed roots and experiences.³⁸

The isolationist wing of the domestic body politic that is opposed to universal and international commitments might invoke nationalistic exclusionary democratic tendencies in arguing why one should not promote a cross-cultural and internationalist policy by returning to an “us vs. other” mentality. This would be a full reactive return to the politics of the domestic rooted in its historical past. Such “isolationist” sentiments would naturally strike the Hegelian liberal as reactionary and anti-progressive. That the inherent worth of human dignity and potentiality of the human spirit is contained in all, regardless of race, sex, or religion would no longer a guiding principle in political action. The struggle for dignity and the recognition of dignity, principally through the consummation of liberty, as the slow march of progress over time, would seem to be at bay and run opposite of liberalism’s progressive and progressing understanding of itself in the world. In this reading of liberalism’s ascendancy in history, the rise of liberal democracy follows a simple pattern through history: nationalistic and exclusionary at first, becoming pluralistic as persons of differing ethno-religious backgrounds begin to compose a larger demographic of the population, then emerges multicultural, cosmopolitan, and internationalist as a result of the concern for others becoming a top priority because the democracy is now filled with people from all across the world.³⁹ Here, I need

³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), I.II.62.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, § 153.

³⁹ For example, the United States was largely composed of English persons with a Reformed Protestant religious background by the signing of the Declaration of Independence and formation of the Constitutional Government in 1788. America was dominated by the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant from the eighteenth century until the early twentieth century. As America became more diverse with the arrival of Irish, South German, and Southern European

to address what I mean by multiculturalism. By multiculturalism I mean people of different cultures, religious backgrounds, and ideological worldviews coming together to build a united and covenant-bound society, which is never statically ascertainable but always a work in progress.⁴⁰ Accordingly, to support democratic movements that might be nationalistic in disposition is the first step toward the evolution of a cosmopolitan democracy. By cosmopolitan democracy, I am referring to a multidimensional democracy not in the sense that one community is able to splinter off in peace and privacy to continue building communal enclaves of their own culture or religion and perpetuate a process of Balkanization, but coming together with persons of differing ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds to build a truly unique, cosmopolitan, and multicultural society. This internal cosmopolitan democracy, and how it emerges, is analogous to what Jacques Derrida calls the “democracy to come.”⁴¹

I should assert, or at least point out, that the evolution of democracy that was achieved through internal conflict that eventually fostered in democratic societies the ideal of free speech, a tolerant civil society, and the politics of self-correction.⁴² The greatest achievements of social and political reform were necessarily achieved through broad and committed social movements that relied on dialogue, conversation, and political assembly to advance their messages and influence the wider public. In time, the synthesis

Catholics, America became more cosmopolitan and the Anglo-Protestant stronghold in American politics receded and the former “foreigner” gained substantial rights and power. The twentieth century saw the influx of Jews and persons of a non-Abrahamic religious background flock to America for new opportunities, and the United States abandoned its longstanding policy of isolationism in favor of a broad internationalist commitment to the spread of liberal political philosophy, human rights, and civil rights, thus following the cycle of nationalist democracy, to cosmopolitan democracy with increasing rights to the former “non-national,” to a democracy with internationalist concern and a cosmopolitan composition. See also, John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 179-180. Rawls asserts that a pluralistic society of differing ethnic, religious, and philosophical backgrounds holding to seemingly irreconcilable doctrines helps foster a more reasonable society which is the hallmark of a liberal democratic state.

⁴⁰ I borrow this idea of multiculturalism as an ongoing work in progress from Charles Taylor, Professor Emeritus at McGill University.

⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. by George Collins (New York: Verso Books, 2005), 104. Derrida maintains that the expansion of democracy is a work in progress—“in the name of a democracy to come”—in which all persons are equally free in the standing of the democratic society in which they find themselves. There remains an inherent tension within democracy between the struggle between sovereignty (liberty) and equality. Derrida’s “democracy to come” is not eschatological, or future oriented, but is about the ability of democracy to internally overcome its conflicts and shortcomings.

⁴² The “politics of self-correction,” as I have outlined, seems to be analogous to Derrida’s “democracy to come.”

that emerged after the dialectic of conflict was one of a more liberal,⁴³ peaceable, and multicultural society, with laws now reflective of the newly accepted political beliefs forged through conflict and hardship moreover than the embrace of a lofty ideal that emerged only after the fact.

The genius of democratic evolution, so to speak, was the eventual push towards egalitarianism, which Alexis de Tocqueville observed as early as the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ However, this push toward greater egalitarianism has generally been only among national citizens in the domestic body politic with scattered global and universal concerns visible—even into the twenty-first century. There remains, then, what Schmitt observed, a hesitancy and tension within liberalism to extend its hand outward politically, but always willing to globalize economically. Thus, it became necessary for liberalism to overcome this political barrier in the twentieth century. But it was this overcoming of domestic, or national, liberalism that has led to discontent from the domestic body politics as Weber anticipated and Schmitt said is part of the inherent tension within (liberal) democracies.

Modern Liberalism and the Struggle for the End of History

Max Weber, using the same language as Hegel with regards to personal cause (*Sache*), and aware of the ethical dilemma involved in politics (what to concern oneself with), called for politicians to embrace their vocation with a passion while simultaneously rejecting the inflexible partisan commitments associated with a one-sided ethic of conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*). Weber promoted an ethic of conviction that has not been tempered and alloyed with the political ethic of responsibility, or *Verantwortungsethik*.⁴⁵ To convey this point to his German audience, Weber deftly plays on resonances in the word *Sache*, meaning “cause” or “issue.” In politics, passion, as Weber observes, is indispensable. Yet, passion for the *Sache* properly expresses itself in the virtue of the *Sachlichkeit*, “impartiality” or in Weber’s usage, “realism.”⁴⁶ Weber, then, enlists *Sachlichkeit* as the core of his political ethic of responsibility that might stand in opposition to the domestic body politic and political constituency for something more than mere petty and exclusivist politics. In a certain sense, although a realist, Weber argues along similar Hegelian lines of finding the necessary cause in

⁴³ By dialectic I am merely referring to the struggle between opposing forces, more analogous to the view offered by Schmitt; though Hegel also seems to posit that the essence of the dialectic is one forged and advanced through conflict.

⁴⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2000), 543-545, 616-617.

⁴⁵ Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 82-83, 92-94.

⁴⁶ This impartial objectivity ties together with passion to attain realistic goals while not betraying the *Sache* one is devoted to. It mixes passion for a realistic, or attainable, end.

politics to transcend the domestic agenda that will almost inevitably be favored over any international cause, concern, or strategy. The promise of a progressive world seems to have been *Sache*, manifest through modern liberalism's attempt to consummate universal peace and peaceable consumerism through the rise of liberal internationalism.

A key element to the success of this international liberal end was the strong political commitment to internationalist causes built upon by a new solidarity premised on a conflictual dialectic, principally the friend-enemy antithesis laid out by Schmitt. In the Cold War, for instance, it was easy for broadly "liberal" nations to work together against a mutual enemy (in this case, Stalinism). Fear, which Locke also identifies as making us willing to quit the original condition⁴⁷ of the expansion of illiberal communism also eased the progression away from national isolationist tendencies toward a united international front which tied nations together politically, economically, and intellectually, to confront the source of this anxiety (real or imagined). In this sense too, so-called classical liberalism already has a foundation (in Locke) for the movement away from the transient national commonwealth to an embrace of something more concrete and progressive which binds multiple commonwealths together as one.

To counter, however, the potential fallback to a politics only concerned with the domestic cause, a wholly new concept of the political was needed: mainly, the embrace that an idea is revolutionary and to achieve the unanimity of liberal democracy across the globe, one must embrace a new dialectical orthodoxy because the dialectic is itself, revolutionary (and conflictual).⁴⁸ The new dialectic—which saw liberalism overcoming its political opposition in the world through history—in support of internationalism would help spur a commitment to the advancement of democracy regardless of how "primitive" or nationalistic it would initially be. The promotion of liberal internationalism by way of this new conflictual dialectic in history would provide a greater awareness and reality of our relationship with all persons through a new human consciousness which achieves the dialectical "conception of totality."⁴⁹ Through this dialectical process of conflictual overcoming, one achieves a totality of consciousness where one's duty is to participate in the unfolding of the "right side" of history and aiding others in the struggle for "freedom." This new consciousness—a conscionable morality opening our awareness to the pains, struggles, and desires of all persons in the world who strive and struggle for freedom—would therefore necessitate a moral duty of action and take into

⁴⁷ Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, § 123.

⁴⁸ Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3-12, 14.

consideration the international welfare of others, rather than abjectly turn a blind eye to their plight, which shall bring forth a personal fulfilment of the moral duty required for the universal end.⁵⁰

To this end, twentieth century liberalism underwent a metamorphosis from national democracy to a conscionable universalism—a progressive *Weltanschauung* (worldview) in which this universal consciousness for freedom transcended all markers of plurality, nation, history, culture, and religion which were understood as the engines that drove the conflicts of the twentieth century and bound peoples and nations together in a common international cause. This shift, of course, was forged primarily through the Second World War. The Second World War opened anew the possibility of grounding a new shared experience and sense of duty to others which could serve as the grounds for new (universal) action in the world.⁵¹ At the same time, however, such a radical reappraisal of rights and duties could come into conflict with domestic concerns, issues, and particularity, which would have to be overcome in order to consummate this new worldview of the progressive unfolding of liberalism writ large.

The emphasis on general dialogue through the advocacy of a dialectic promoting democratic universalism would have to achieve the realization and self-knowledge that moral action supportive of the global whole is in the right: from pure self-consciousness achieved through a new moral consciousness that derives itself through absolute moral duty found in aiding other humans around the world which permitted moral obligation to extend beyond “internal division which [gives] rise to dissemblance.”⁵² In sum, a new ontology of existence needed to be achieved in human reasoning and consciousness to overcome the tendencies of exclusionary practices and politics in an increasingly global and international world, through the spirit of ethical conduct that finds duty to be the absolute essence, and that duty is tied to the well-being of others.⁵³ And yet, this universalism necessarily comes into tension with the simultaneous hope for multiculturalism and localism. Therefore, there was a reevaluation and re-contextualization of Hegelian dialectic of conflict for the twenty-first century that is supportive of global liberal goals and international concern innately tied to a universal moral

⁵⁰ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 601. See also, Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, § 155.

⁵¹ Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, § 157. If, as Hegel says, ethical action finds its fulfillment in a constitution (of a state), then the constitutions of universal human rights served as the *de jure* constitutions that would hopefully serve as the end to which substantial and universal order, along with public life, would be grounded on in modern liberalism.

⁵² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 634.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, § 601.

conviction,⁵⁴ and was this not the end to which Fukuyama theorized? In this manner, modern global liberalism appropriated the form of Hegel's philosophy of history while rejecting its content.

By the embrace of this new dialectic in promotion of liberal internationalism (which is principally a dialectic of a *struggle for*), persons would no longer be dichotomized in the classical Marxist distinction of the proletariat against the capitalist, or the "constitutional pluralism" that Eric Nelson noted that was so profound in the formation of modern Europe.⁵⁵ Rather, people would see one another as being part of a universal human family (which would transcend race, gender, religion, and social class), united in the common struggle to actualize the ideals of freedom, liberty, equality, and inherent dignity that each person holds in the world. This understanding of oneself in the world would provide the authentic experience of moral living and endeavor in which the emptiness of doubt is replaced by reason leading to moral action. Such transformation on a personal and global stage was revolutionary. The erosion of nationalistic and exclusionary tendencies was the greatest hurdle for liberalism in the twentieth century to overcome. For only in that overcoming could a sustained commitment to internationalism be achieved. But what underpinned this struggle for internationalism was precisely the conflictual dialectic between liberalism and communism after 1945.

As a result, the hope of liberalism was that humans would recognize our relationship and responsibility to the global society but without the class distinction of the proletariat against the capitalists at the forefront, rather, the human drive for liberation against the institutions and classes inhibiting such liberation would be made paramount and would be the struggle for the common person as well as those committed to effecting change on an international level.⁵⁶ It makes sense that liberalism would reject the Marxist analysis and move to a liberal Hegelian reading in its understanding of itself. Furthermore, the struggle for human freedom is a historical battle that concerns all persons regardless of nationality, religion, or political persuasion. Thus, the dialectic of modern liberalism and cosmopolitan democracy would necessarily inform society of the realization that democracy was the necessary course that History was taking—the triumph

⁵⁴ It is not my opinion that the re-contextualization of Hegel to fit a more progressive, liberal, model of historical progress was what Hegel intended. That said, various liberal theorists have used the Hegelian model to posit the end of history as the triumph of modern liberal-democratic-capitalism.

⁵⁵ Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 3-4.

⁵⁶ Lukács, 19-22.

of liberal-democratic-capitalism at a universal scale to which all persons were innately yearning for.⁵⁷

The crisis with this embrace of an idea, however, is that it lacks the “bond of duty” by which the actualization of substantive liberty manifests itself.⁵⁸ And without the rootedness of ethical order,⁵⁹ the abstraction of only an idea to guide human ethical action in the world is in tension with Hegel’s bond of duty being rooted in particularity.⁶⁰ Furthermore, in the aftermath of the shared experiences of the Second World War, it was easier for that generation, with its shared experiences, to move away from what was perceived as the problems that led to the catastrophe that swept across the world. What would then happen with the rise of the generation(s) without that experience and memory?

For these reasons, an entirely “new” conception of history was imagined in liberalism’s understanding of itself in history, one in which conflict itself was being overcome by the march of progress in history and that history itself was destined to see the consummation of liberalism writ large. But as John Gray points out, this entire notion of humanist universal progressivism is but a secularization of Salvation History offered in the Abrahamic religions.⁶¹ Others before Gray, like Karl Löwith and Robert Nisbet, have also reminisced on the idea of progress as a secularization of salvific doctrine in Christianity.⁶² The problem with this new historicism, if course, is this: what happens when its determinist vision of History doesn’t come true and when peoples have placed their faith in such a metanarrative? Like Dialectical Materialism, the strong-determinist vision of the future opens itself to disappointment when not realized. As Leo Strauss noted, the uniqueness of modernity was not the abject abandonment of “faith” but the marriage of Jerusalem (faith) with Athens (reason) to create a new *Weltanschauung* embodied in the zeal of ideology that presented faith as a reasoned determinism. Yet, long ago, Giambattista Vico equally warned against this conflation of faith and reason as he claimed that history was the invention of humans, premised upon what humans have thought up in their

⁵⁷ In this sense, the evolution of democracy is also compatible with Hegel’s evolutionary concept of human history, moving from despotism, to aristocracy, to the final state of human freedom and the realization of the State in history. That it was necessary for History to unfold in this manner is confirmable, of course, only in retrospect— the Owl of Minerva taking flight just as the “shades of night” are appearing.

⁵⁸ Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, § 149.

⁵⁹ Refer back to supra note 11.

⁶⁰ Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, § 154.

⁶¹ John Gray, *Straw Dogs* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 4.

⁶² See Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) and Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

mind which he called “the conceit of nations” and “conceit of scholars,”⁶³ which perpetuated what David Hume later called “false philosophy.”⁶⁴

The aftermath of 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Bloc did not signal the end of history in terms of liberal-democratic capitalism having emerged as the universal victor in the realm of the political. Rather, it simply marked the end of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc as the enemy of the antithesis of Schmitt’s national democracy built on the friend-enemy distinction. The fall of the Soviet Union led to the enemy “being vanished from the world” and thereby left the liberal West with no dragons left to slay, no mutual enemy to rally against for the cause of internationalism. The result has been the return to the domestic *Sache* rather than the international *Sache* of liberal expansionism as originally hoped, and the re-opening of internal conflicts that were only transiently overcome due to the phenomena of the Second World War and Cold War.⁶⁵ This, in a way, opens anew the possibility of a return to the politics of self-correction which is inherent to national democracy but absent on the international level; a return to the bonds of duty and particularity Hegel discusses as the grounding for ethical action in life.⁶⁶ Moreover, the historicist consciousness of progressivism which finds itself believing itself to be the universal dictum for the whole world runs the risk of becoming “violent and despotic ... in the name of [its] solution because it desire[s] to remove all obstacles to it.”⁶⁷ Isaiah Berlin also noted that the pluralism of Romanticism and traditional conservatism were indispensable in taming the monistic tendencies of the idea of progress. Progress’s drive to remove all obstacles to its consummation in the world returns to what Schmitt observed as a defining antithesis to democratic universalism: religion, culture, economics, and pluralism itself.⁶⁸ Liberal democracies have now returned to their internal cores having flirted with universal and international ambitions only because of the circumstances of history in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

This is the great limit facing liberalism in the twenty-first century: the very dynamics which allowed it to flourish—the conflictual dialectic found

⁶³ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, trans. by Dave Marsh (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 1.2.120-124.

⁶⁴ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003), 127.

⁶⁵ In some sense this is the return to Derrida’s “democracy to come” located within the nexus of particular nations rather than the consummation of a universal order.

⁶⁶ Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §149, 154.

⁶⁷ Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 146.

⁶⁸ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 23.

in the Second World War, the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and the Hegelianized reading of history of overcoming adversaries—have vanished. The idea of progress, as Robert Nisbet said even before the fall of the Soviet Union, was long at bay.⁶⁹ As he mused in 1980, “While the twentieth century is far from barren of faith in progress, there is nevertheless good ground for supposing that when the identity of our century is eventually fixed by historians, not faith but abandonment of faith in the idea of progress will be one of the major attributes.”⁷⁰ Robin Niblett, frank about the role that faith in progress has played in the development of liberal internationalism, even wrote, “The liberal international order has always depended on the idea of progress. Since 1945, Western policymakers have believed that open markets, democracy, and individual human rights would gradually spread across the entire globe. Today, such hopes seem naïve.”⁷¹

The limits of liberalism and the crisis of cosmopolitan democracy are nothing short of the untenable and unstable metaphysics and historicism that undergirded it and attempted to transcend the historical foundations and rootedness of so-called liberal cultures. Like Marxism, the progressive impetus of modern liberalism took on a determinist view of history and secularization of certain precepts found in Salvation History that ultimately sowed the seeds of its own demise. This is not to say that liberalism itself is in crisis of disintegration, but the belief that liberalism would usher in the end of history seems unlikely to be revived any time soon.

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⁶⁹ Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, 317.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Robin Niblett, “Liberalism in Retreat,” *Foreign Affairs* 96:1 (January/February 2017), 17.

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Plato on the Responsible Use of Poetry and Fiction in *The Republic* and *The Laws*

Kristoffer A. Bolaños

Abstract: Today, it is not so common among teachers of philosophy and literature to attempt to understand what keeps young readers engrossed in fiction/poetry—is it the form, the beauty, the intertwining of character/circumstance (*à la* Sophocles), or just the spectacle of the scandal and outrage, even the mere popularity of the work? Should we also engage the moral implications of the work? We raise these questions as we heed the advice of Plato in *Republic* and the *Laws* about storytelling. Despite that he was almost too easily branded as an austere and too “legalistic” a philosopher, we might just be able to learn something from him that can be of use in teaching poetry, especially in dealing with the current generation of learners, many of which, if you may, have become mere passive consumerists.

Keywords: ethics, responsibility, culture, pedagogy

Introduction

The Greek philosopher Plato (428-348 B.C.) is one of the most appreciated but also one of the most misunderstood thinkers in Western history—we attribute the latter to the fact that it will take a lifetime to grasp the massive and voluminous collection of works and dialogues. One semester of reading the *Republic* alone can be truly intellectually gratifying but requires a whole lot of time and effort. If there is one sure thing that almost everyone can agree about, it is that Plato, without any suggestion of patronizing him, will continue to be recognized as a massively brilliant and inquisitive mind, one who is indispensable if one is to engage in any form of philosophical discourse. He will remain an unmistakable voice in today’s social practices, politics, even education.

Like any major philosopher called to mind today, Plato can just as easily be branded, at times in the most haphazard and unsystematic fashion, as an overly austere, plain, severe, and at worst, a totalitarian thinker. These are stereotypes that never do justice to the beauty and harmony inherent in

his philosophical works. There are plenty to like and dislike about Plato. As the commentator Anthony Kenny was quick to tell, “The state that Socrates [through Plato] imagines in books 3 to 5 of the *Republic* has been both denounced as a piece of ruthless totalitarianism and admired as an early exercise of feminism.”¹ As Plato suggested, the most elaborate education is reserved for the guardians only and not for the rest who have designated for themselves their place in the hierarchy; procreation and intercourse are to be regulated, guardians, although given resources free of charge, are not to own property, but women can also be auxiliaries—these are but some examples of social regulations to which a part of Plato’s readership have expressed misgivings about. For this paper, efforts will be made to interrogate especially the portion in Book II of the *Republic* where Plato stressed the necessity of supervising and, at times, putting restraints on certain forms of story-telling, particularly to children—so much so that if we can avoid telling them about the gods, who often do not make the best role-models of themselves in terms of conduct, then we should do so. This part is, perhaps, what many enthusiasts of Greek tragic drama, mythology, and fiction would grumble about; many would argue that poetry should be totally exempt from all forms of restriction.

And this might serve as the main thrust of this paper project: We need to inquire if we, as educators, should critically interrogate, regulate, and correct (if they become too licentious) the way we teach poetry and narratives, because we see such as instrumental to the cultivation of characters and natures in the soul, for better or worse. But for argument’s sake, we are compelled to raise some questions: is there such a thing as bad fiction, as Plato conceived? When, and under what circumstances, can a tragedy/fiction become dangerous?

We now seek Plato’s voice in addressing these as we feel that Plato’s demand for responsibility in checking what people read or listen to deserves a second look, not so much because we simply want to negate or censor them, but because they do have a profound influence on a person’s imagination, disposition, and sense of valuation and worth. As Plato would have supposed, interrogating poetry (as opposed to terminating all poetry outright, which, we believe, was not Plato’s idea!) has a lot to do with mastering one’s soul, which happens to be a big part of the education of guardians.

¹ Anthony Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1 of *A New History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58.

Plato's Treatment of Poetry and Fiction: Some Appraisals

Concluding the first book of the *Republic* by hinting that a man of justice is one that works out the excellence in his soul, Plato (through the character Socrates) lays down a starting point for further elaboration of what he deems to be a just city. In general understanding, the formation of a just city, for Plato, necessitates cultivation of excellence in every citizen if possible, but most especially, in the guardian, who is to rule. As such, the education of the guardian, who is characterized ideally to be “a lover of wisdom, high-spirited, swift and strong by nature,”² must be regulated and planned carefully. Like a tender plant, a guardian must be nurtured right from childhood, and special emphasis must be devoted to how he was to be schooled. What was initially suggested was to train the child in the arts, which might constitute *mousikē*, before immersing him into gymnastics and physical training.³ Of course, this necessitates for Plato a supervision of the child's literary understanding: “[We] first tell stories to children. These are, in general, untrue, though there is some truth in them.”⁴ Plato might be speaking here of myths and legends that we generally use as metaphors for everyday life, though they are fictional. Arts training in students, especially the young, now calls for a responsible supervision, and even storytellers will need to be checked. Here the character Adeimantus seems to agree with Socrates:

Shall we then carelessly allow children to hear any kind of stories composed by anybody, and to take into their souls beliefs which are for the most part contrary to those we think they should hold in maturity—We shall certainly not allow that. Then we must, first of all, control the storytellers. Whatever noble story they compose we shall select, but a bad one we must reject. Then we shall persuade nurses and mothers to tell their children those we have selected and by those stories to fashion their minds far more than they can shape their bodies by handling them. [However,] the majority of the stories they tell must be thrown out.⁵

² Plato, *Republic*, trans. by G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1974), 2.376c. Hereafter cited as *Republic*.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.376e.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.377a.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.377b-c.

The argument presented by Plato appears to be so: Regulation of narration and storytelling is necessary because we need to cultivate in men and women, even would-be guardians, the proper natures and characters as what should best fit them; any corrupt nature or character (say, for instance, of the envious and malevolent temperament of the gods of mythology) may just as easily be implanted in the minds of listeners as good and just natures — if we aim for a just society, care and supervision even in storytelling becomes indispensable. Plato appears to claim here, too, that whatever is instilled in a young mind stays with that mind even into advanced years of his life; a corruption introduced early in life, as with negative habits and custom, cannot be corrected easily. As we examine the text, we also do away with the misunderstanding that Plato totally rejects all kinds of poetry. On the contrary, he would allow poetry that is proper in the instilling of proper virtue. Plato was no hater of poetry. His position, though, is scorned at by other poetry enthusiasts as limiting and negating, because, for them, free exercise of poetry, like other forms of art, should operate well beyond imagined ethical boundaries. As such, Plato is labeled as austere and legalistic in approach. The point of Plato's argument, however, is reconsidered by other readers because guardianship demands, not only creative imagination, but also responsible, that is, ethical, rule and statecraft. This Platonic view was brought up once again by the Athenian in *Laws*, who viewed education as the activity of harmonizing the soul (especially of the young who are less diligent) which is likened to a physician's treatment of bodily ailments:

[J]ust as, when people suffer from bodily ailments and infirmities, those whose office it is try to administer to them nutriment that is wholesome in meats and drinks that are pleasant, but unwholesome nutriment in the opposite, so that they may form the right habit of approving the one kind and detesting the other. Similarly in dealing with the poet, the good legislator will persuade him—or compel him—with his fine and choice language to portray by his rhythms the gestures, and by his harmonies the tunes, of men who are temperate, courageous, and good in all respects, and thereby to compose poems aright.⁶

Contrary to what many critics hold, we are sure that the Plato of *Laws* was no despiser either of dramatic performance that calls for role-play and

⁶ Plato, *Laws*, trans. by R.G. Bury (London: Harvard University Press, 1926), 2.660e. Hereafter cited as *Laws*.

imitation. What he seems to be concerned about is the habituation of certain unbecoming conduct due partly to imitation. This is undeniable even in TV shows and movies today. Not only drunkenness, debauchery, wickedness, slavery to appetites, but also spiritual imbalance due to enslavement to passions, even “moral subservience,” are habits that, as they become manifest in characters of a play, characters ranging from the chief to the peripheral, have the ability to create the impression of themselves as delightful and proper habits, especially to an unreflective audience. It is in this sense that fiction becomes detrimental to the soul. The television industry of our day,⁷ propelled by production and selling of extravagant sights and sounds, seems totally indifferent to the repercussions of demonstrating bad characters, and often glorifies them as worthy of emulation. What Plato seems to suggest, in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, is that, although imitative poetry will remain as art, a reflection of oneself and one’s action should accompany it. Plato’s argument is implied in this brief exchange between Clinias and the Athenian Stranger, where the same philosopher puts his inquisitive mental processing at work:

ATH. Inasmuch as choric performances are representations of character, exhibited in actions and circumstances of every kind, in which the several performers enact their parts by habit and imitative art, whenever the choric performances are congenial to them in point of diction, tune or other features (whether from natural bent or from habit, or from both these causes combined), then these performers invariably delight in such performances and extol them as excellent ; whereas those who find them repugnant to their nature, disposition or habits cannot possibly delight in them or praise them, but call them bad. And when men are right in their natural tastes but wrong in those acquired by habituation, or right in the latter but wrong in the former, then by their expressions of praise they convey the opposite of their real sentiments; for whereas they say of a performance that it is pleasant but bad, and feel ashamed to indulge in such bodily motions before men

⁷ Think, for instance, of the easy access of children to TV shows such as the *Ultimate Fighting Championship* that features gladiator-like fighters performing mixed martial arts (and thus, violence) on each other, merely for entertainment. Local TV is not exempt, because even children are exposed to noon time shows like *Wowowee* or similar programs, heavily infused with the notion of “easy money” and charged with sexuality by women dancing in skimpy wear—and this is shown to everyone at midday.

whose wisdom they respect, or to sing such songs (as though they seriously approved of them), they really take a delight in them in private.

CLIN. Very true.

ATH. Does the man who delights in bad postures and tunes suffer any damage thereby, or do those who take pleasure in the opposite gain there from any benefit?

CLIN. Probably.

ATH. Is it not probable or rather inevitable that the result here will be exactly the same as what takes place when a man who is living amongst the bad habits of wicked men, though he does not really abhor but rather accepts and delights in those habits, yet censures them casually, as though dimly aware of his own turpitude? In such a case it is, to be sure, inevitable that the man thus delighted becomes assimilated to those habits, good or bad, in which he delights, even though he is ashamed to praise them. Yet what blessing could we name, or what curse, greater than that of assimilation which befalls us so inevitably?

CLIN. There is none, I believe.

ATH. Now where laws are, or will be in the future, rightly laid down regarding musical education and recreation, do we imagine that poets will be granted such licence [*sic*] that they may teach whatever form of rhythm or tune or words they best like themselves to the children of law-abiding citizens and the young men in the choirs, no matter what the result may be in the way of virtue or depravity?⁸

As one can probably realize from the foregoing analysis, Plato is not as plain and severe as most critics commonly imagine him to be. Such a thought can be reassuring to curious readers in a way that there should not be any cause for them to halt before getting past the first five pages of Plato.

⁸ Plato, *Laws*, 2.655e-656c.

Furthermore, Plato is not bent on forever holding back the “secrets” of the mythological gods. He welcomes the divulging of such secrets by a master albeit to a more mature, substantially trained, level-headed, and emotionally stable apprentice, as Socrates suggested:

[Even] if the deeds of Cronos and what he suffered from his son were true [as it was told in *Theogony*, 453, 506], I do not think this should be told to foolish and young people; it should be passed over in silence. If there were some necessity to tell it, only a very few people should hear it, and in secret, after sacrificing not a pig but some great and scarce victim ... Nor should a young man hear it said that in committing the worst crimes he is not doing anything out of the way, or that, if he inflicts every kind of punishment upon an erring father, he is only doing the same as the first and greatest of the gods ... Nor indeed ... any tales of gods warring and plotting and fighting against each other ... if those who are to guard our city are to think it shameful to be easily driven to hate each other ... stories about Hera being chained by her son, or of Hephaestus being hurled from heaven by his father when he intended to help his mother from being beaten, nor the battle of the gods in Homer ... The young cannot distinguish what is allegorical from what is not, and the beliefs they acquire at that age are hard to expunge and usually remain unchanged. That may be the reason why it is most important that the first stories they hear should be well told and dispose them to virtue.⁹

This is perhaps good Socratic advice. Unfortunately, today, instead of watching over what they tell the masses, many storytellers would rather capitalize on controversy, and sensationalization (as with the mass media), exploiting petty quarrels and trivial competition in order to sell their work, and since the younger generation is not too inclined to reading substantial material (let alone philosophy), the market-driven media and television, the dramatic performances of peak time programming tend to take over.

There should be no harm in using Plato’s lenses to identify contemporary problems in today’s literature, arts, and cinema. One good example of an overly-sensationalized material, perhaps, without offending

⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 2.378a-d.

the fans of Dan Brown, is his novel *The Da Vinci Code*, which sold for over 80 million copies since its first publication in 2003. In the same year, an interview was done by CNN, and when Martin Savidge asked Brown how much of the story is fabricated and how much was true, the latter answered, “99 percent of it is true. All of the architecture, the art, the secret rituals, the history, all of that is true, the Gnostic gospels. All of that is—all that is fiction, of course, is that there's a Harvard symbologist named Robert Langdon, and all of his action is fictionalized. But the background is all true.”¹⁰ It seems, then, that we can make the author wholly or partly liable (along with the media, of course) for the growing misconception among readers (especially the unreflective majority of them), that the contents of the book are actual historical facts, and not fictional. This interesting phenomenon occurs even if these readers picked up the book from the “fiction” shelf of the store. But the so-called “facts,” as far as many level-headed historians are concerned, still remain lacking in evidence and are continuously being challenged; who would have imagined that so many from the younger generation today impulsively believe that Christ and Mary Magdalene were married and had children who, according to the movie that promoted the book, started the line of Mirovingian monarchs, and that, in line with gnostic teaching, the early Christians allegedly stole Christ's body and buried it somewhere? Perhaps, these notions are products of a playfully imaginative mind, but their veracity and authenticity call for further critical interrogation. However, a lot of overly-enthusiastic devotees to popular culture today would set aside debate and scientific investigation, and would rather engage in swallowing the spectacular, the provocative, and the scandalous—as if scandal and petty malice were the only things that could move their passions and excite their spirits! Compelled by necessity (and less on trying to prove scripture), we examine some opposition. Writers Carl Olson and Sandra Miesel, who are advancing ideas in their *Ignatius Press* website, were more than willing to dismiss many of Brown's assertions as historically inaccurate.¹¹ For instance, contrary to Brown's claim that the divinity of Christ was established *only* by the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., a minority of Hebrew devotees as early as the first century (the apostles included) already saw Christ as possessing divinity; He even had a Hebrew name and was referred to as *Mashiach* (Messiah).¹² The debate that transpired in the Council was about whether or

¹⁰ Dan Brown and Martin Savidge, “An Interview with Dan Brown,” in CNN (25 May 2003), <<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0305/25/sm.21.html>>, 21 May 2017.

¹¹ Carl E. Olson and Sandra Miesel, “Facts vs. Fiction in *The Da Vinci Code*,” in *Ignatius Press* (2006), <<https://www.ignatius.com/promotions/davincihoax/thefacts.htm>>, 21 May 2017.

¹² The Hebrew believers of Yeshua whom they call Messiah were not actually addressed as “Christians,” but rather they were better known as followers of *the Way*, which is the manner by which Shaul (Paul) introduced himself. “But this I confess to you, that according

not the Son was co-equal with the Father, as claims to the “divinity” of the Son was already an existing culture. Another error found was concerning the explanation of Robert Langdon (the chief character in Brown’s novel) about the origin of the tetragrammaton YHWH; Langdon apparently stated that it came from the term Jehovah, an androgynous name that intertwines the masculine *Jah* and the pre-Hebraic name of Eve, *Havah*. For Olson and Miesel, nothing can be farther from the truth. And their position stands with teachers of Hebrew, the original language of scripture. One schooled in the Hebraic understanding (which apparently Brown was ignorant about) knows that Jehovah was derived from YHWH (יהוה) which was the name first revealed to Moses and his people—an early occurrence in Deuteronomy 5:6 reads “I am *Yahweh* your Elohim, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.” Old Hebrew, characterized by picture-language, did not have vowels and the vowel points were only added later by the *Masoretes* for easier pronunciation and translation especially for non-Jewish Torah students; Accordingly, *Yahweh* and *Jehovah* must derive from the original tetragrammaton יהוה, but are considered references to the same God of Israel in scripture. And there is absolutely nothing androgynous about the name! Most readers would rather not go into detail but will embrace popular notions even if the propagators of such notions do not display historical competency.

Now the point here is not so much about becoming biblically apologetic as it is about being intellectually responsible, the lack of which must be a sure sign of cultural decline. Plato’s cautions about mediocrity, about those who choose to remain “lovers of sights and sounds”¹³ without understanding the nature of what is true, become quite suitable in diagnosing contemporary culture. And this must be appropriately addressed.

Yet again, it cannot be overemphasized that Plato is willing to disseminate such classic narratives about mythological gods to a responsible and reflective mind—although perhaps he expects a manner of storytelling that teaches not just imitation but imitation with mental processing, with the prospect of surpassing degenerate culture, even the perverted culture of most mythological gods. Plato would have believed this kind of literary understanding to be attainable. Otherwise, he would not even have considered telling such narratives to any one at all, not even to philosophers-in-the-making. Again, selective divulging of the details of myth to a trusted apprentice is up to the discretion of a skilled teacher, and situations like that do occur in academic circles.

By what means, then, do we recognize that an apprentice is worthy of hearing the secrets of the gods? Perhaps an important element of ethics,

to *the Way*, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophet.” See Acts 24:14.

¹³ Plato, *Republic*, 476c.

the recognition of oneself as a moral agent, as a moral individual capable of acting rightly or wrongly, and as a self who becomes *accountable* to his own actions (as opposed to acting because one is simply compelled to do so) is a quality that this apprentice must already possess. Accountability may be associated with the Greek term *askēsis*, which is, to borrow the characterization of the philosopher Michel Foucault, no other than the “exercise of oneself in the activity of thought.”¹⁴ One good manifestation of *askēsis* perhaps is how one takes care of his speech; the importance of which cannot be underestimated. If one was told a secret, one can either treat it with confidentiality or spread it around, or worse, one can inflate and exaggerate to make the story of another person’s life sellable, like a “good story” of another person’s infirmities. Nowadays, even the media thrives on such character assassinations. Even if such information was true, it is not the business of a just man to kindle fire as to defame and slander others, rather, a just man would promote excellence in himself, and encourage others to do the same. In our day’s consumer-driven environment of celebrity and fame, everything is consumed, even the private lives of people, leading to untold suffering, malice, degeneracy, and publicized men and women often resort to drug addiction and suicide. Bad culture, of course, can be avoided. Plato’s advice: start with becoming responsible in disclosing and receiving information. And we must educate.

Plato and the Potentials of Poetry in Transcending Culture

Philosophy has long been associated with the enterprise of liberation, a kind of cultural critique as the social conditions of the time would require — this has been the predisposition of philosophers ranging from Plato to Nietzsche. We can become physicians of culture indeed. But come to think of it, by what better vehicle can we carry out this preoccupation than by education in the letters, through storytelling, mythmaking, and poetry. The Plato of the *Laws* indeed held such a view. An educational and socially transformative function for culture, then, is assigned by him to poetry, epic, and tragic drama, without denying that these at the same time are pleasurable pursuits. The Athenian of the *Laws*, then, applauds poets and musicians who can entertain their spectators with rhythm, melody, or even with the anticipation of horror, fear and pity in classical tragedies. But more than that, the Athenian, if he was to award merrymakers, regards as better the most educated of poets:

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume II: The Use of Pleasures*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 9.

I should regard that music which pleases the best men and the highly educated as about the best, and as quite the best if it pleases the one man who excels all others in virtue and education ... the true judge should not take his verdicts from the dictation of the audience, nor yield weakly to the uproar of the crowd or his own lack of education; nor again, when he knows the truth, should he give his verdict carelessly through cowardice and lack of spirit ... For, rightly speaking, the judge sits not as a pupil, but rather as a teacher of the spectators, being ready to oppose those who offer them pleasure in a way that is unseemly or wrong ; and that is what the present law of Sicily and Italy actually does: by entrusting the decision to the spectators, who award the prize by show of hands, not only has it corrupted the poets (since they adapt their works to the poor standard of pleasure of the judges, which means that the spectators are the teachers of the poets), but it has corrupted also the pleasures of the audience ; for whereas they ought to be improving their standard of pleasure by listening to characters superior to their own, what they now do has just the opposite effect.¹⁵

Plato's proposal, then, is not to shun pleasure, and divorce it from poetry, for that would be the undoing of poetry itself. Instead, he calls for the pleasures, as generated in the crowd, the judges, the characters/role-players, to be thoroughly evaluated. Such pleasures may be gained from imitation (but not necessarily limited to that), usually drawn by the crowd from characters whom, by exhibiting authority, higher power, or moral ascendancy (as with gods and kings), they deem worthy of emulation—one can indeed imagine himself to be the hero Odysseus in order to take pleasure in Homer's epic. Pleasure can be gained from other means, of course. As Aristotle observed, there is pleasure, for instance, in endeavoring to follow the complex plot, as when tragedy keeps one preoccupied with the ever-changing action: in the case of *Oedipus Rex*, there is movement from "finding the cure" towards "finding the slayer of Laius." Besides the action, an even more essential pleasure component of tragedy is the element of fear and pity, which arouses one's imagination. Even Aristotle favors fear and pity that comes not from the aid of primitive "spectacular display" but rather from the complex structure of the narrative itself, "Those who employ spectacular

¹⁵ Plato, *Laws*, 2.659a-c.

means to create a sense not of the terrible but only the monstrous, are strangers to the purpose of tragedy...the pleasure which the poet should afford is that which comes from pity and fear through imitation."¹⁶ Such pleasure is achieved by imitation (portrayal) of roles within seemingly absurd but less "larger than life" circumstances, as when tragedy occurs between kindred and family relations, "if, for example, a brother kills, or intends to kill, a brother, a son his father, a mother her son, a son his mother, or any other deed of this kind—these are the situations looked for by the poet."¹⁷ Perhaps Aristotle, at least in part *XIV* of *Poetics*, was not too concerned yet with the moral implications of generated pleasures, and is rather focused on the quality of pleasures based on their point of origin; for him, it would be better if those pleasures would at least initiate a reflection about life and the fragility of human relations rather than from raw sights and sounds.

In Francis Fergusson's reading of *Poetics*, it was suggested that Aristotle was content with a summative *theoria* for *Oedipus Rex* dealing simply with how fleeting human life is, as Oedipus underwent the same course of existence like all other mortal men.¹⁸ True enough, the last lines of the Chorus goes: "... Behold this Oedipus, him who knew the famous riddles and was a man most masterful; not a citizen who did not look with envy on his lot—see him now and see the breakers of misfortune swallow him! Look upon that last day always. Count no mortal happy till he has passed the final limit of his life secure from pain."¹⁹ While this makes a lot of sense, a number of scholars, akin to a more Platonic view, might feel that there is a whole lot more to the story than just that.

And here is where a critique *à la* Plato may be of use. There is also *à la* tent message drawn from Sophocles, one that highly suggests an examination of culture: besides pitying Oedipus in his misfortune, readers should have been moved to protest the gods who excel more in bringing misfortune and death than comfort to the citizens of Thebes, or even against the people's lack of courage and initiative to take themselves out of their miserable conditions set by the gods. Such is the culture characterized by moral subservience. For Plato, such culture is a degenerate one, since a capitulation to it would mean that one's reason has been overcome by fear of the gods, or of the crowd, resulting to one's refusal to stand up against injustice. Let us not forget Plato's reminder about cowardice. Not every

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by H. Butcher (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), XIV.4-7. Hereafter cited as *Poetics*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Francis Fergusson, Introductory Essay to Aristotle, *Poetics*, 12-13.

¹⁹ Sophocles, "Oedipus the King," trans. by David Greene in *Greek Tragedies: Volume I*, ed. by David Greene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 1530. Hereafter cited as *Oedipus the King*.

scholar is at home with the idea of blaming Oedipus for his own misfortune, as many traditional literary critics suppose. David Greene remarked, "It would be difficult to interpret Oedipus the King as a story of the punishment of pride," which is quite erroneous; he continues, "The deeds for which the hero would be 'punished' were pre-ordained before he was even conceived."²⁰ So how can we possibly interpret the story the other way?

Despite Plato's misgivings and reservations about the "majority" of poetic narratives, it is easy to imagine that he could have sympathized with a few exceptional characters of tragedy, had he come to know them. The titan Prometheus, in plays attributed to the poet Aeschylus, is one who can probably meet Plato's expectations, and exemplify a morally courageous character. In the infamous narrative retold by many as *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus stole the fire (symbolic of knowledge) from Mt. Olympus and conferred it to man in order save man from destruction, granting the abilities necessary for human survival—not only kindling fire, but creating shelter, medicine, and the ability to use stone and metal, advanced understanding in science and mathematics, and so on. But in doing so, Prometheus suffered the wrath of Zeus, who had the titan chained to a rock in the Caucasian mountains, where his liver was to be eaten by a vulture day after day.²¹ Despite the tragic consequences born of courage and love (and not of pride), this may be viewed as an admirable display of spiritual beauty, characterized by sacrifice. More importantly, the liberating message of poetry is made even more explicit in Aeschylus' work, because the character Prometheus becomes symbolic of one who dares to transgress the boundaries set by the gods (Zeus was utilized as a tyrant figure), of one who dares to fight against injustice and moral servitude, instead of capitulating to the gods' passions, caprices, and whims by blind obedience.

It appears that Aeschylus remains true to what is generally conceived as the motivating theme behind the epics and tragic drama of Greek antiquity, which is the idea that man has the capability of making his own destiny through his own choices, be it for betterment or for ruin. But this theme is not exclusive to Aeschylus, for one might already find traces of it in the likes of Homer, or even hints of the same in other great dramatists such as Sophocles. True, Plato cannot hinder us from enjoying our poetry, but he constantly reminds us not to underestimate the power of myth in shaping culture and civilization.

²⁰ David Greene, Introduction to *Oedipus the King* in *Greek Tragedies: Volume I*, 108.

²¹ See Donna Rosenberg and Sorelle Baker, *Mythology and You: Classical Mythology and its Relevance to Today's World* (Illinois: National Textbook Co., 1992), 104-7.

Conclusion

That Plato remains relevant in contemporary situation is beyond doubt. We have learned that there is nothing wrong with igniting the passions with pleasurable verses, choruses, and rhyme. However, when it comes to the formation of culture, building the right character, and eventually establishing social harmony, we cannot go wrong by being selective, by becoming accustomed to habits that, despite being drawn from poetry and myth, are oriented to empowering, balancing, and nurturing the soul. The enjoyment of poetry by imitation should indeed be accompanied by responsible philosophical reflection.

We are, of course, aware that not everyone will be pleased by Plato's treatment of poetry. But if we were to put ourselves in the shoes of a man who was facing moral degeneracy in Athens in his day, many of us would probably understand why he was a little restrictive. To repeat what we have already established earlier, myth has, and will continue to have, an impact on the kind of lives we live, and the social realities we constitute for ourselves. And does our moral situation not resemble that of Plato's day? What is true perhaps is that there are "Zeus" figures that oversee the engines producing today's myths and legends, in literary production and filmmaking and other means, and unfortunately, they have succeeded in keeping us engrossed, enslaved to mere sights and sounds; we buy what is spectacular. In other words, literary production is now designed so that the passions will be excited more about the scandalous and trivial, and less about what is valuable—which is what Plato meant in speaking of the untrained and uncultured mind who, unwilling to test his pleasures, cannot tell the difference between the allegorical and the real. It would seem as if Plato would call on some souls to make a difference, not exactly to fancy themselves as Prometheus the titan, but to be philosophers in a more real sense—such a life will not be the most comfortable one, but such a life is what Plato would stylishly and poetically write about:

Of this small group, those who have become philosophers and have tasted how sweet and blessed a profession philosophy is, when they have fully realized also the madness of the majority ... that there is no ally with whom one might go to the help of justice and live—then like a man who has fallen among wild beasts, being unwilling to join in wrongdoing and not being strong

enough to oppose the general savagery alone ... he keeps quiet and minds his own business.²²

That manner of life might bore a great majority, but would certainly bring stillness in the soul for the comfort of a select few who, away from the crowd's noisy pestilence,

[take] refuge under a small wall from a storm of dust or hail driven by the wind ... seeing other men filled with lawlessness, the philosopher is satisfied if he can somehow live his present life free from injustice and impious deeds, and depart from it with a beautiful hope, blameless and content.²³

Life may be construed as an aesthetic of determining the best manner of existence before one enters his period of decline and eventual expiration. One must strive to keep one's soul undivided. This, too, is poetry.

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²² Plato, *Republic*, 6.496c-d.

²³ *Ibid.*, 496e.

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Employee Profit Sharing: A Moral Obligation or a Moral Option?

Franz Giuseppe F. Cortez

Abstract: This paper will explore the ethics of employee profit sharing. It will challenge the view that profit sharing is and will always remain a moral option of the employer—that it has no obligatory character whatsoever. Normative arguments grounded on justice, equity, rights, and general welfare are necessary, but they are not sufficient to account for the ethics of employee profit sharing. Building upon the insights of some meta-ethicists, I will show that granted that employee profit sharing is not morally obligatory, to call it morally optional in all instances is simplistic and evasive of possible nuances in moral life and the complexities of the business sphere.

Keywords: profit sharing, supererogation, moral judgment, meta-ethics

Introduction

You are the owner of a medium enterprise. In the 20 years of its existence, your profits have always been over and above your target. You recovered your capital in less than 2 years of the business's existence. Costs and provisions for expansion are covered. By all accounts, your efforts and risks are rewarded. You have enriched yourself because of this business. You have profits more than what you and your business need. Are you morally obliged to share a portion of these profits to your employees?

The standard instinctive reply (and probably, the dominant one) to this question is that the business owner has no moral obligation at all. If he is neither violating any labor law nor is he breaking any terms of contract between him and his employees, he is not morally required to share anymore.

Its performance is beyond moral duty. Not to share does not incur **any** moral failure on the employer's part.¹

Moreover, as far as the legal obligation is concerned, it can be said that almost all societies do not have a law that requires the employer to implement a profit sharing scheme. And so generally speaking, profit sharing is not a legal obligation.² But of course, a basic dictum in ethics is that legality is different from morality. In the court of law, an employer may not be obligated to share the profits. But in the court of morality and conscience, does the proposition remain uncontroversial and defensible?³

This paper will explore the ethics of employee profit sharing. It will challenge the view that profit sharing is and will always remain a moral option of the employer—that it has no obligatory character whatsoever. I will start with some important clarifications of the concept of employee profit sharing. Then, I will survey some notes of scholars regarding the ethics of employee profit sharing. Afterwards, I will present my take on this practice

¹ "Although there are a lot of economic reasons to share profits with employees, from an ethical point of view there can be no obligation for a company to do that. Therefore, this would be an act of generosity of management towards employees." Stefan Georgescu and Loredana Bosca, "Management's Duty towards Employees: A Business Ethics Approach," in *Proceedings of the 7th International Management Conference* (Bucharest, Romania: 7-8 November 2013), 161.

According to Benjamin Masse, "Has it (UAW [United Automobile Workers]) a right to demand profit-sharing for workers? If there is a question of moral right, a right founded in the natural law, the answer is 'no.' Workers have a right to a wage ... But once employers have discharged this duty they have no further obligation in justice to their employees." Quoted in Gerard Rooney, "The Right of Workers to Share in Ownership, Management, and Profits," in *Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Convention* (St. Louis, Missouri, 24-27 June 1963), 143.

"Payment of a profit-sharing bonus to non-management employees typically takes place at the discretion of the company and does not constitute an entitlement, although if it is paid routinely and year after year, employees may come to count on it as part of their compensation." Anaxos Santore, "Profit Sharing," in *Encyclopedia of Small Business*, 4th ed., ed. by Virgil L. Burton III (Michigan, USA: GALE Cengage Learning, 2010), 1012.

² However, even if it is not a legal obligation, it must be noted that there are attempts to strengthen it in the legal sphere. For example, the largest companies in France are mandated by law to establish their profit sharing programs. The law covers companies with at least 50 employees for 6 months during the fiscal year. "Below this size requirement, the profit-sharing plan is optional. Companies who decide voluntarily to set up a profit sharing plan can benefit from the tax exemption concerning the sums distributed to the employees." It makes one wonder what could spur this attempt by the French government to establish the practice as a legal obligation. See AFIGEC, "Profit Sharing Plan in France," in *AFIGEC: Expert Comptable and Conseil*, <<http://www.afigec.com/data/en/pdf/24/profit-sharing-plan-in-france.pdf>>, 7 February 2017.

³ In a dominant capitalistic society, one can also observe an easy way of interchanging the notion of legal and moral. Moral obligation is oftentimes tied to the notion of legal obligation so that the distinction between the two is usually blurred. Furthermore, the right to property is at once invoked in an ordinary evaluation of the non-obligatory character of employee profit sharing. This dominant thinking in the capitalistic society can be a hindrance to an attempt for clarifying the moral aspect of employee profit sharing.

using some moral thinkers' analyses of the meaning of moral obligation and moral option. I will end with some concluding remarks.

Clarifying the Concept of Employee Profit Sharing

Profit sharing can take two forms: employee profit sharing (EPS) and shareholder profit sharing (SPS). As the terms obviously imply, EPS is the profit shared with and among the employees while SPS is the sharing of profits among people who "provide capital for and derive *returns* in the form of profits and dividends from companies."⁴ The concern of this paper is EPS and not SPS. And when I use the term profit sharing, I refer simply to EPS.

In the field of economics, there are also scholars who have considered profit sharing schemes as a kind of supplement or even alternative to the generally accepted wage scheme. For example, as early as 1887 the American economist Franklin Giddings suggested that a profit sharing scheme is economically and morally better than the wage system.⁵ In the modern era, Giddings' suggestion is best echoed by the studies done by Martin Weitzman. Concerned with the economic problems of joblessness and high inflation, Weitzman proposed what is now known as *Share Economy Theory*. In his macroeconomic analysis, he suggested that an economy based on the principles of profit sharing has the natural inclinations towards sustainability and non-inflationary employment compared to an economy of wage capitalism.⁶ In a later publication, Weitzman clarified that profit sharing scheme would not completely replace the wage system. Rather, he suggested a fundamental reform in employee-compensation schemes.⁷

Because this issue has caught the attention of scholars and practitioners alike, my concern for EPS does not cover this economic concern of supplementing the wage system with a profit sharing scheme. This is not my expertise. Thus, when I talk about EPS on this paper, I do not specifically refer to what Giddings expounded and what Weitzman subsequently elaborated and defended.

It is of utmost importance to define the term profit sharing because throughout its known history, various definitions have already been offered. One of the earliest formulations comes from the 1889 *International Cooperative Congress* held in France. The congress stated that profit sharing involves "an

⁴ John Reynolds, *Sharing Profits: The ethics of remuneration, tax and shareholder returns* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 73.

⁵ Franklin H. Giddings, "The Theory of Profit-Sharing," in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 1:3 (1887), 367.

⁶ Martin Weitzman, "The Simple Macroeconomics of Profit Sharing," in *American Economic Review* 75 (1985), 937-953.

⁷ Martin Weitzman, *The Share Economy: Conquering Stagflation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

agreement freely entered into, by which the employees receive a share, fixed in advance, of the profits.”⁸ In 1916, the United States *Bureau of Labor Statistics* came up with a report about the practice of profit sharing in the U.S. According to the report, the commonality of all the plans is “the understanding among all concerned that the shares in the profit or the bonuses paid to the employees are separate and distinct from the employees’ regular earnings, subject to change and withdrawal by the employer without notice, and with the qualifications for participation fixed at his discretion.”⁹ In 1920, the United Kingdom *Ministry of Labor* produced their study about the practice of profit sharing in the U.K. The study defines profit sharing as “an agreement between an employer and his employees whereby the latter receive, in addition to their wages or salaries, a share, fixed beforehand, in the profits of the undertaking.”¹⁰ Another source of a definition is the *Council of Profit Sharing Industries* formed in 1947 in the U.S. According to the council, profit sharing is “any procedure under which an employer pays to all employees, in addition to good rates of regular pay, special current or deferred sums, based not only upon individual or group performance, but on the prosperity of the business as a whole.”¹¹

From these various definitions, some features can be extracted that are relevant in my discussion. First, obviously what must be shared is the profit of the business. If it so happens that an employee is also a shareholder, then the profit that he/she receives can be technically called a dividend and not a profit received by an employee *qua* an employee. Second, those who should share cannot be the top executives and management only. It must include almost all (if not all) employees who have met certain criteria of eligibility such as years of service in the company. Third, the profit to be shared must be fixed in advance. Fourth, profit sharing is not a substitute for but a supplement to just wage and decent working condition.¹² Fifth, profit sharing is not necessarily the same with bonuses understood simply as reward or incentive. The motive of sharing profits may not necessarily be the

⁸ As quoted in Borris Emmet and United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Profit Sharing in the United States: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics* 208 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, June 1916), 8, note 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰ “Report on Profit Sharing and Co-Partnership in the United Kingdom” (United Kingdom Ministry of Labour, 1920), ii.

¹¹ J. B. Meier, “Origins and Growth of Profit Sharing and the Council,” in Council of Profit Sharing Industries, (1951), 4. As quoted in James H. Quill, *Profit Sharing – A Means of Economic Cooperation between Labor, Management, and Government* (M.S. Thesis, Chicago: Loyola University, 1954), 6-7.

¹² “Any profit-sharing scheme must be based upon a sound foundation of wages. It represents not a substitute for but an addition to wages, and cannot act as a palliative of low wages.” Oliver Sheldon, *The Philosophy of Management*, ed. by Oliver Sheldon, vol. 4 of *The Philosophy of Management* (London: Routledge, 2003), 153.

same with the motive of giving incentives. Sixth, profit sharing is not wage increase. It implies that if there is no profit for any given period, the employee cannot expect for a share.

Ethics of Profit Sharing

Various schemes of employee profit sharing find its origin in the 19th century.¹³ The original impetus is not business productivity but social reform. In his study, James Quill finds out that “the profit sharing plans started in France and England were mostly of a social reform type rather than an incentive to increase production.”¹⁴ In his exhaustive research on financial participation, Daryl D’Art refers to this as the traditional or altruistic perspective wherein employers are generally inspired by Christian, philanthropic and paternalistic sentiments: a feeling of responsibility to act with generosity and nobility towards the less-fortunate. D’Art says further:

Frequently, altruistic practitioners justify their largesse by reference to equity and social justice, or by a claim that employees have a right to share in the profits they help create. For altruistic proponents and practitioners of financial participation, the benefit lies primarily in virtue being its own reward, though there may also be some expectation of more harmonious labour-management relations.¹⁵

As early as 1887, Giddings argues that profit sharing scheme can produce more wealth for the society as compared to the wage system. He further maintains that the demands of distributive justice and equitable distribution of wealth is served better under the system of profit sharing.¹⁶ In 1920, the British Ministry of Labour reported that profit sharing is in harmony with equity and with the essential principles underlying all legislation.¹⁷ In 1924, Oliver Sheldon who was writing on philosophy of business management opines that,

... the value of any [profit sharing] scheme is more likely to reside in the concession to the claims of justice which

¹³ Daryl D’Art, *Economic Democracy and Financial Participation: A Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 1992), 222.

¹⁴ Quill, *Profit Sharing*, 2.

¹⁵ D’Art, *Economic Democracy and Financial Participation*, 218.

¹⁶ Giddings, “The Theory of Profit-Sharing,” 367.

¹⁷ See “Report on Profit Sharing and Co-Partnership in the United Kingdom,” 3.

it represents than in the immediate results of the payment. Such psychological value may, however, be of greater importance than the more questionable economic value. If profit-sharing can materially contribute to the development of a sense of justice in industry, its value may be immeasurable.¹⁸

In 1952, Wheeler sees the wisdom of profit sharing as it is rooted in equality of opportunity, the harmonious relationship between capital and labor, and the cultivation of trust between labor and management. He maintains that it is beneficial for all stakeholders in the long run.¹⁹

From the perspective of the Catholic scholar Francis Cunningham, profit sharing is an issue of equity and thus it pertains to the area of moral obligation. He further declares that even though it is not part of the labor contract, it is a demand of equity aside from the fact that it has many benefits for the various stakeholders. Cunningham further states that profit sharing “appears to be a practical way to effect the greater distribution of wealth and the more widespread ownership so constantly called for by the popes.”²⁰ Then, in the 1963 annual convention of the *Catholic Theological Society of America*, Gerard Rooney talked about the right of workers to share in profits in terms of the distinction between natural right and acquired right. He says:

Workers do not appear to have a *natural* right to share profits after receiving a fair wage. But they do appear to have an acquired or earned right, at least by reason of the virtue of social justice, to some share of such profits. The wealth of the corporation is jointly produced by labor and management and capital. It belongs to the economic decisions proper to management to determine how much of the profits should be distributed to stockholders; how much should be used for updating and repairing equipment; how much should be plowed back for plant expansion; how much should be budgeted for rainy days; how much should be granted to executives as special bonuses of merit. But in all these calculations of management, the rights of the workers, who are mainly responsible for the accumulation of this wealth, should not be ignored. They should have some

¹⁸ Sheldon, *The Philosophy of Management*, 152.

¹⁹ W.H. Wheeler, Jr., “How I Would Introduce a Profit Sharing Plan to a Board of Directors,” in *Michigan Business Review* 3-4 (January 1952), 14-24.

²⁰ Francis Cunningham, *The Christian Life* (Oregon: WIPF and Stock, 1959), 546.

share in the profits and they should not be the last to be thought of in the disbursement of profits. In estimating equitable shares of profits, the factors of national redistribution of income, through taxation, as well as pension and welfare funds, should not be overlooked.²¹

In more recent years, scholars such as Priewe and Havighorst observe that “from a socio-political perspective, financial participation is ... expected to raise social integration and to achieve a wider distribution of the wealth generated by the enterprises which workers have helped to produce.”²² Other researchers point to positive effects such as “higher motivation and commitment, lower absenteeism and labor turnover, greater identification of workers with the interests of their firm, greater investment in firm specific human capital, reduced intra-firm conflict and labor management tension, and improvements in work organization.”²³

This brief sketch suggests that the moral impulse of EPS was already present even during its infancy days. And this moral impulse took precedence to purely business motives. Essentially, what these scholars underpin are reasons that surface from the concern for justice, fairness and the promotion of general welfare. EPS appears to be a moral obligation because it is what is most beneficial for the society in general, what justice and fairness demand, and what recognition of laborers’ rights entails.

But if this is the case, how come that it is not enshrined in the laws as an obligatory practice? This is a topic that deserves a separate attention. Still, a few words can be said. If the original impetus is inclined to social reform and concern for justice, one can suppose that the business proposition of employee profit sharing may simply be an offshoot of the predominance of managerialism which is simultaneous with the rise of the modern corporation.²⁴ I suspect further that the moral justifications can be met with counter-arguments using parallel moral reasoning. For example, a utilitarian reasoning can present a case that making EPS obligatory may not really be beneficial (or even be more harmful) for the business organization or for the

²¹ Rooney, “The Right of Workers to Share in Ownership, Management, and Profits,” 148.

²² J. Priewe and F. Havighorst, *Auf dem Weg zur Teilhabergesellschaft?* (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1999). As cited in Marija Ugarkovic, *Profit Sharing and Company Performance* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 2007), 2.

²³ Milicia Uvalic, *The Pepper Report: Promotion of Employee Participation in Profits and Enterprise Results in the Member States of the European Community* (Luxembourg: Office of the Official Publications of the European Communities, 1991), 12.

²⁴ For a sustained discussion of the managerial perspective of EPS, see D’Art, *Economic Democracy and Financial Participation*, 218-220.

society in the long run.²⁵ An appeal to laborers' rights can also be countered by the employer's appeal to his own rights to freedom and property, rights that are so sacred in a predominantly capitalistic society. Finally, justice and fairness can be invoked by both camps. If the employees can state that it is just and fair to share the profits, the employer can also state that it is just and fair not to share it simply because he takes the greatest burden when the business fails. Treating people right can work both ways.

Hence, aside from the traditional normative approach rooted in utilitarian and deontological reasoning, we must still find other theoretical groundings for a deeper appreciation of the obligatory nature of EPS. I suggest an excursion into the field of meta-ethics.

A Meta-Ethical Approach to Employee Profit Sharing

Another approach in understanding the issue at hand is through the analysis of the notions of moral obligation and moral option. In moral philosophy, this is called meta-ethics, sub-field that focuses on the analysis of moral concepts and their meanings as compared to normative ethics that is directed to the discovery of moral principles to be used to make moral judgments.²⁶ Thus, the issue is not only whether employee profit sharing is obligatory or optional in reference to some established ethical theories such as utilitarianism or deontology. Rather, the following questions can also be asked: (1) When can we say that a practice or an act is morally obligatory or simply optional? (2) What do we mean by moral obligation and moral option? (3) If an act is morally obligatory, does it totally preclude the notion of a moral option? (4) Are there instances when what is generally considered as morally optional may cross into the category of what is morally obligatory? Or, are there middle grounds?

Building upon the insights of some meta-ethicists, I hope to show that granted that employee profit sharing is not morally obligatory, to call it morally optional in all instances is simplistic and evasive of possible nuances

²⁵ For some criticisms side by side with the perceived benefits, see Noel Cahill, "Profit Sharing, Employee Share Ownership and Gainsharing: What Can They Achieve?" (Dublin: National Economic and Social Council, 2000), 9-11.

"Although quite a number of studies have empirically investigated the effects of profit sharing, the picture that emerges is anything but conclusive." Ugarkovic, *Profit Sharing and Company Performance*, 37.

See also Jack Stack, "The Problem with Profit-Sharing," in *Inc.* (1 November 2000), <<https://www.inc.com/magazine/19961101/1864.html>>, 1 August 2017.

²⁶ H.J. McCloskey, *Meta-Ethics and Normative Ethics* (Dordrecht: Springer-Science+Business Media, 1969), 1.

in moral life. For the task at hand, I do not make a strict distinction between moral duty and moral obligation.²⁷

Supererogation and EPS

A discussion of this sort requires a return to what moral philosophers call supererogation. The term is usually credited to James Urmson's "Saints and Heroes" where he suggested that aside from the traditional (but restrictive) trifecta of obligatory actions, indifferent/permitted actions and wrongful (prohibited) actions, there is a fourth category which he calls supererogatory act wherein the said act has positive moral worth but is at the same time non-obligatory. This supererogation is best manifest in the extraordinary actions of saints and heroes but can also be seen in non-spectacular situations of kindness and generosity performed by ordinary individuals.²⁸ What Urmson is pointing out here is that there are actions that go beyond the call of duty and that they are good actions albeit they are not obligatory. Subsequently, David Heyd explains that the supererogatory act has four characteristics. First, it is an act which is neither obligatory nor forbidden. Second, it is not wrong to omit the act. Third, the act is intrinsically good. And lastly, the act is meritorious because it is performed freely for another's good.²⁹ Getting into the core of Heyd's characterization of supererogation, Marcia Baron describes the supererogatory act as "beyond duty and they are morally good and praiseworthy."³⁰ For his part, Gregory Trianosky explains the supererogatory as distinct from the obligatory through the following words: "An obligatory act is an act whose performance is required and whose omission is forbidden. A supererogatory act is an act whose performance is recommended but not required and whose omission is permitted rather than forbidden."³¹

Having explained supererogation this way, one can argue right away that an employer's act of sharing the profit to his/her employees is a supererogatory act and thus, an optional or non-obligatory one. First, it is not obligatory because it is usually not part of the contractual agreement between

²⁷ For a discussion of strict distinction, see A. John Simmons, *Moral Principles and Political Obligation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 11ff. Cited in M.W. Jackson, "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty," in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 19:2 (1988), 11; 3-12.

²⁸ James O. Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," in *Essays in Moral Philosophy*, ed. by A.I. Melden (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958).

²⁹ David Heyd, *Supererogation: Its Status in Ethical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 115.

³⁰ Marcia Baron, "Kantian Ethics and Supererogation," in *The Journal of Philosophy* 84:5 (1987), 239.

³¹ Gregory Trianosky, "Supererogation, Wrongdoing, and Vice: On the Autonomy of the Ethics of Virtue," in *The Journal of Philosophy* 83:1 (1986), 26-40.

the employer and the employee. Each party to a contract is bound only by the terms and conditions of the said contract. The employee cannot oblige the employer to share profits more than what the two parties have agreed upon. Second, employee profit sharing can be deemed to be supererogatory by claiming that it is not wrong to omit the said act. The employer does not violate any right of the employee if he/she does not share the profit beyond the terms and conditions of the contract which usually include just wage and good working condition. The non-performance of the act does not render the employer as unjust or unfair. Third, one may argue that employee profit sharing is supererogatory because it is intrinsically good. It is a virtuous act—an act of charity and generosity. Thus, it can never be forbidden, and the employer may always share his/her profits depending upon some relevant considerations. Fourth, employee profit sharing is supererogatory because it is meritorious and is performed freely for the benefit of the employee. It can be said that the employer is not forced and that even in some circumstances that the business motive lies at the very heart of the act, we can still say that there are instances when the employer is freely moved by virtues such as compassion, generosity, and sense of justice.

If understood this way, the argument is settled that an employer's act of profit sharing is not obligatory even though it is highly praiseworthy. Furthermore, it can be said that the employer cannot be imputed with moral blame if he/she opts not to share the profits. To say it directly, employee profit sharing is non-obligatory because it is a supererogatory act which is optional.

Trianosky's View on Supererogation and the Implication to EPS

In a 1986 article, Gregory Trianosky argues for a nuanced view of supererogation by venturing into the realm of virtue ethics.³² He points out the curious case of people who ordinarily make excuses for not performing what is supposed to be supererogatory acts. As examples, Trianosky offers the challenge of supporting a charitable enterprise or joining a group that advances a noble cause. If they are supererogatory, then why does the challenged make excuses to the challenger? Why feel the need to explain or to offer some excuses? Why not simply brush these acts aside because after all, they are non-obligatory? Why is there a feeling of shame or discomfort when refusing to go the extra mile? Trianosky observes that "we seem often to be concerned that morally significant others not disapprove or think less well of us."³³

³² *Ibid.*, 26.

³³ *Ibid.*, 28.

To explain this puzzling case, Trianosky begins with the distinction between two types of negative moral judgments of the person: negative deontic judgment and negative aretaic judgment. Negative deontic judgement refers to the wrongness of an act performed. While negative aretaic judgement is “a judgment about the viciousness of some conative or affective state of the agent.”³⁴ He further subdivides negative aretaic judgment into a judgment about the viciousness of standing traits or dispositions and a judgment about the viciousness of occurrent motives or states.³⁵ An example of the first type is when we judge a person as bad, coward or dishonest. An example of the second type is when we judge “how inconsiderate someone was on a certain occasion or about how insensitive, dishonest or cowardly it was *of him* to do what he did.”³⁶ The first type points to a general defect in the person’s character while the second type points to a defect in the person’s motivational structure on some particular occasion.³⁷

Trianosky maintains that a negative deontic judgement cannot be imputed on a person who fails or even chooses not to perform a supererogatory act simply because in itself this non-performance is not worthy of blame. I cannot be blamed if I decide not to give my body organ to someone who needs it badly. The act of giving my body organ is a supererogatory act. However, Trianosky argues that a negative aretaic judgement is still possible for the non-performance of a supererogatory act. As a matter of fact, the omission of supererogatory act is usually vulnerable to negative aretaic judgement.³⁸ It is because as he would explain, the person can still have less-than-virtuous or even vicious motive for this non-performance. He cites a hypothetical example of a person who declines to participate in a charitable cause for a reason of complete lack of interest in helping or in pursuit of a trivial personal desire. Given these motives, Trianosky grants that a person may judge the non-performer to be insensitive, uncaring or callous. The choice not to help is permissible but the motivational structure is open to negative aretaic judgements. On this connection, Mellema observes that “sometimes people have an opportunity to be of service to others and they react with total indifference.”³⁹ For Trianosky, therefore, one’s failure to pursue a non-obligatory moral ideal is still open to a negative judgment, if not of the act itself, at the very least, of the character of the moral agent. Probably, it is a reason why we sometimes judge people as *swapang*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁸ For Gregory Mellema’s interpretation of Trianosky’s account, see Gregory Mellema, “Moral Ideals and Virtue Ethics,” in *Journal of Ethics* 14 (2010), 177; 173-180.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

(greedy) or *matigas ang puso* (hard-hearted, callous)—judgments of character even though they are not really morally obliged to perform a positive action.

Moreover, Trianosky notes the potential hypocrisy and superficiality when one fails to perform a supererogatory act. When one is too much focused on the fulfillment of his/her obligation and the pharisaic observance of the letters of the law, he/she misses the opportunity to show authentic concern for the other. Genuine human concern begins usually when one reaches the boundaries of obligatory morality. The territory of duties and obligations is a poor panorama of authentic concern for the other. “In all likelihood, real concern for others is not defined by the same boundaries that define our obligations.”⁴⁰ The challenge of genuine morality is in the performance of actions beyond duty, the one of going the extra mile, and of stretching one’s moral imagination. In situations of frequent refusal to do what is supererogatory, a negative aretaic judgment of hypocrisy and superficiality is not inappropriate.

Another important point which is related to Trianosky’s commentary on hypocrisy and supererogation is the notion of right. In a situation of supererogation, the person may quip that he/she has every right to perform or even not to perform a particular act. The said person is logically justified for making this claim. However, a deeper appreciation of the action and the claim may reveal that “the agent reveals a genuinely vicious motivation in his coldly calculated insistence on what is rightfully his.”⁴¹ The refusal to perform a supererogatory act may uncover a vicious or defective motivation “precisely because he is willing on the occasion in question to do only what morality requires him to do, and no more. If he is challenged to do any more on that occasion, he stands on his rights.”⁴²

Along this view of Trianosky, we can analyze the act or practice of EPS. It can be granted that EPS is supererogatory as discussed earlier in this paper. It can further be granted that since it is supererogatory, then it is non-obligatory or optional. It is something good and noble and therefore, it is not forbidden. But its non-performance does not impute moral blame on the employer.

However, following the line of thought of Trianosky, I will argue that even if EPS is supererogatory that escapes negative deontic judgement, the refusal to practice it may still be vulnerable to negative aretaic judgement. Take for example a hypothetical case where Mr. Tan is an employer who follows the letters of the law by giving his employees the minimum wage and a decent working condition. Let us assume further that because of a good economy combined with the best efforts of his employees, his business rakes

⁴⁰ Trianosky, “Supererogation, Wrongdoing, and Vice,” 33.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 35.

in profits that are much, much more than Mr. Tan is expecting. More so, let us assume that the profits that come in can pay not only the efforts and risks of the owner but also the provision for business expansion and diversification. The whole point of all these assumptions is that there is still enough fund that can be shared to the employees. The employees approached Mr. Tan to ask for bonuses (in this case, it is a share in the profits). If Mr. Tan does not want to share, you will not expect him to say it outright. He may sugarcoat his explanation by making some excuses or even by outright lying. Why can't Mr. Tan directly tell the employees that they don't have any right towards the said profit? He might be apprehensive that his best employees might leave him. But let us assume that Mr. Tan is so sure that he can always get new and replace the old. This time, he may be more frank and direct. But the employees are within reason to make a negative judgment if not of the act of not sharing the profit but at least a negative judgement of the motivation and character of this employer. Mr. Tan can always go back to the terms and conditions of the contract and the employees will not contest this defense. However, words such as *swapang* (greedy), *walang puso* (hard-hearted), *manhid* (insensitive), and *gahaman* (avaricious) can be labeled against the very character of Mr. Tan. Thus, the non-performance of profit sharing which is admittedly supererogatory (and therefore, optional and non-obligatory) is not completely immune from a negative aretaic judgment.

It may further be suggested that Mr. Tan's conscientious and faithful obedience to the law and to common morality is bordering on hypocrisy and superficiality. By refusing to share the fruits of the combined efforts of labor and capital fortunately situated in sound economic fundamentals, this employer operates within a philosophy of business that is fixated with profit-maximization and self-interested behavior. Mr. Tan only shows concern towards his employees not because he is really after their welfare but only because he can get something from them. There is "no real human concern in his heart."⁴³ Employees are objects to be used. They are commodities that are easily replaceable. They are means towards the end of profit-maximization. To judge that one is superficial and/or hypocrite points again not to the act itself but to the very character of the agent. And this judgement of superficiality of Mr. Tan is a by-product of his very refusal to cross the border of the obligatory in order to enter the realm of the supererogatory, that is, sharing the profits to his employees.

Finally, we can further reflect on the connection between EPS and the right of the employer not to share. When Mr. Tan is asked to explain why he chooses not to share, he can always invoke his right. "I don't have to share if I don't want to." "I am standing within my rights both legally and morally."

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 34.

"I have every right not to share because I have every right to the profits of my business." Who can contest these claims of Mr. Tan? In a society that emphasizes individual rights, who can blame him? But what is questionable about this insistence on rights is the myopic and "legalistic attitude toward morality by asserting (one's) rights."⁴⁴ Given for example the controversy of the legally-mandated minimum wage or the one-sidedness of legal contracts that employees "freely and willingly" enter,⁴⁵ Mr. Tan's unsympathetic insistence on his right to profits is myopic and legalistic. Again, the judgement is not on the action of not sharing but on the very character of an employer who is cold, calculated, rights-obsessed and law-fixated.

The Must and the Ought

Scholars of ethics call attention to "acts which are not obligatory to perform but nevertheless blameworthy to omit."⁴⁶ The examples are already growing. As early as 1973, Aurel Kolnai argues that even though one is not morally obliged to forgive, he/she has the quasi-obligation to forgive somebody who eventually has a conversion of heart. Failing to forgive in this instance is worthy of moral blame.⁴⁷ In an earlier essay, Claudia Card argues that even though one is not morally obliged to show mercy to an offender, there are some cases in which mercy seems intuitively appropriate. Card cites specific cases involving poetic justice that happens to the offender, or the offender is taken advantage of, or by the passage of time the offender has done something which is far more significant on his character as a whole than does his offense.⁴⁸ In the context of friendship, Neera Badhwar believes that even if one has no moral obligation to do certain things such as forgiveness and generosity, a friend ought to be forgiving and generous in the name of authentic friendship.⁴⁹ Then, John Whelan stresses the difference between "what I am morally required to do from what I morally ought to do even

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁵ "It is the employer who has the power to dictate contractual terms unless they have been fixed by collective bargaining. Individuals, except when they are highly sought after, have little scope to vary the terms of the contract imposed upon them by employers." Michael Armstrong and Helen Murlis, *Reward Management: A Handbook of Remuneration and Strategy and Practice* (London: Kogan Page, 2007), 54.

⁴⁶ Gregory Mellema, "Business Ethics and Doing What One Ought to Do," in *Journal of Business Ethics* 13 (1994), 149; 149-153.

⁴⁷ Aurel Kolnai, "Forgiveness," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 74:1 (1974), 91-106.

⁴⁸ Claudia Card, "On Mercy," in *The Philosophical Review* 81:2 (1972), 187-207; 200ff.

⁴⁹ Neera K. Badhwar, "Friendship, Justice and Supererogation," in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 22:2 (1985), 123-131.

though I am not required to do it.”⁵⁰ Among other examples, he concludes that charitable giving in specific circumstances qualifies as a moral ought. He says: “What do we owe the poor? If the question means what are we obligated to give to private charities which benefit the poor, then the answer is nothing: no one and no government may demand that we contribute to charity. But if it means what ought we to do about hunger and poverty in addition to paying taxes, then the answer is that most of us ought to give to charities which are trying to eliminate it.”⁵¹ Finally, Gregory Mellema pursues this line of argument and applies it in specific cases in the business and professional setting. One such example is that of a business owner who ought to pay a contractor who erroneously repaired the former’s driveway. The error is on the contractor because the business owner did not hire him. But because the business owner has the intention to repair it after all, then he ought to pay (even though he is not required to pay) a certain amount to the contractor.⁵²

The main point of this group of moral theorists is that there are actions that one ought to perform even if these actions are not morally obligatory. In other words, these thinkers accept the difference between the *must* and the *ought*. Between the obligatory and the optional, there is such thing as a quasi-obligatory.⁵³ It can be granted that the *must* is stronger than the *ought*. If there is an imputation of moral blame in the performance or non-performance of what is obligatory, blameworthiness is also labeled in the performance or non-performance of the quasi-obligatory. But in the case of the latter, it is granted that the degree of blameworthiness is lesser but not zero.⁵⁴ And the violation of a *must* deserves an explanation, an apology or a compensation. However, the violation of the *ought* is relegated to persuasion and criticism.⁵⁵

In the context of my topic at hand, can we now say that there are instances when an employer ought to share (even though he is not required to share) his profits to his employees? For me, the answer is in the affirmative. I can at least think of two instances. First, consider the hypothetical case of Mr. Santos, an owner of a start-up business, who gathers his employees and tells them that they must do their best for the sake of the business and that the success of the business also means the success of everyone involved in it. Indeed, after 5 years the business is dramatically successful. Even if there is no written contract or there is no direct promise, the employees have the right

⁵⁰ John Whelan, “Famine and Charity,” in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 29:1 (1991), 149-166.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵² Gregory Mellema, “Business Ethics and Doing What One Ought to Do,” 150.

⁵³ Gregory Mellema, “Quasi-Obligation and the Failure to Be Virtuous,” in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 24:2 (1993), 176-185.

⁵⁴ Gregory Mellema, *The Expectations of Morality* (New York: Rodopi, 2004), 6-7.

⁵⁵ Whelan, “Famine and Charity,” 152.

to expect a share in the profit (in any form).⁵⁶ Notice, that because of the absence of a written contract coupled with a vague and unsure promise, Mr. Santos is not legally and morally obliged to share. But the employees' expectation flowing from a weak or vague promise is not inappropriate. It can be granted that the degree of blameworthiness on the part of Mr. Santos is not that strong. But following Mellema's thought on the necessity of putting degrees to blameworthiness, I think it is also not zero. Furthermore, the employees cannot demand Mr. Santos to explain, apologize or compensate for telling a very general and vague statement. But these employees are justified to persuade and/or criticize this employer. It is reasonable for them to expect a share in the profit that can come in many forms or schemes since the business succeeds tremendously.

The second instance is a fictitious scenario wherein a certain business owner Mr. Smith whose business is prospering significantly since it started 20 years ago has never shared his profit even at least once. He gives to his favorite charity. He pays his taxes faithfully. He gives the minimum wage to most of his employees while he follows the prevailing rate in the industry for his middle and top managers. He creates an incentive system because he believes that it is an efficient way to maximize employee performance which will eventually turn into more profits for him alone. But he never makes any written or verbal promise to his employees that he will share his profits simply for the sake of sharing the profits. Again, Mr. Smith has no legal and moral obligation to share his profits to the employees. However, given these specific circumstances, I think Mr. Smith *ought* to share his profits in the name of charity towards his employees. Following Whelan's argument that one ought to give to charity in some specific circumstances, Mr. Smith should consider that the majority of his employees receive only the minimum wage which is way, way below the living wage. His act of charity ought to extend first to his own employees (who can be assumed to be living with a meager income) *before* or *as* it simultaneously extends to his favorite charity. The incentive system is not enough for two reasons. First, it is not an act of charity. It is established to maximize profits. It is not really for the employees. It is still for an egoistic pursuit. Second, incentive systems usually favor some and discriminate others. In an incentive system, not everyone may really benefit in the success of the business. Whelan observes further that "most of us hold people liable for blame if they do not sometimes give to charity."⁵⁷ It can follow as well that Mr. Smith can be held to be liable for blame if he does not sometimes share his profit to his employees. Again, this sharing does not refer

⁵⁶ "A great many companies which have never considered profit sharing are now giving a Christmas bonus to employees at the end of the year. This is profit sharing of a sort, of course." Wheeler, Jr., "How I Would Introduce a Profit Sharing Plan to a Board of Directors," 15.

⁵⁷ Whelan, "Famine and Charity," 164.

to the incentive system because of the motive of Mr. Smith and the potential weaknesses of an incentive system. Mr. Smith is not obliged but he ought to share.⁵⁸ He can re-calibrate both his motives for incentivizing and the incentive scheme itself to fulfill the ought-ness of charity towards his employees. The blameworthiness for not sharing is lesser than the blameworthiness for the non-performance of an obligatory act. Nevertheless, moral blame is still imputed in the omission of sharing the profit.⁵⁹

A final point can be argued by Mr. Smith that he does not establish his business to be charitable to his employees. He enters business to gain more profits. And after all, isn't it that profit-maximization (not charity) is the purpose of business?⁶⁰ To respond to this, it can be argued that Mr. Smith's subjective motive is not aligned with the objective purpose of business. Many scholars have already stressed this point. For example, Ronald Duska clarifies the confusion between motive and purpose. The purpose of business is the provision of goods and services and this purpose is independent from the plethora of motives that individual business owners can have.⁶¹ Paul Camenisch argues for the twin essentials of business: the provision of goods and services and that it is done with the intention of making a profit.⁶² For his part, Robert Solomon stresses that profit is an incentive and a means; it is not

⁵⁸ "That is, one ought to be charitable—it is wrong on moral grounds not to be—although one has no *obligation* as such to be charitable; others cannot justifiably press a claim for charity as their right." Card, "On Mercy," 196.

⁵⁹ In my electronic communication with Gregory Mellema dated August 1, 2017, he agrees that an act of EPS may be morally expected and might be blameworthy to omit.

⁶⁰ This position is also glimpsed in some scholarships. For example, the American sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen says: "The motive of business is pecuniary gain, the method is essentially purchase and sale. The aim and usual outcome is an accumulation of wealth. Men whose aim is not increase of possessions do not go into business, particularly not on an independent footing." Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of Business Enterprise* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 20.

One of the most oft-quoted text that seems to support this position is that of coming from Milton Friedman. He says that "[there] is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud." Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits," in *The New York Times Magazine* (New York: The New York Times Company, 13 September 1970).

⁶¹ "... the purpose of business is not to benefit me primarily. It is not to make a profit. If doing business rewards me with a profit, I will be inclined to participate in it, but the purpose of business—why society allows it to exist in its profit-oriented form—is to provide goods and services." Ronald Duska, *Contemporary Reflections on Business Ethics* (The Netherlands: Springer, 2007), 10.

⁶² "Business's primary function ... is the producing of goods and services to sustain and enhance human existence. Profit then, given the way business functions in the marketplace, becomes one of the necessary means by which business enables itself to continue supplying such goods and services." Paul Camenisch, "Business Ethics: On Getting to the Heart of the Matter," in *Business and Professional Ethics Journal* 1:1 (1981), 55-69.

the end of business.⁶³ While the management guru Peter Drucker quips that “profit is not the explanation, cause, or rationale of business behavior and business decisions, but the test of their validity.”⁶⁴ This clarification on the true and objective purpose of business strengthens the argument for a practice of charity that Mr. Smith ought to extend to his employees. Again, even if he is not obliged to share the fruits of the prosperity of his business, the ought-ness of charity calls him to share even if not in a regular basis.

The point of this discussion is that there are instances when employee profit sharing carries a quasi-obligatory nature. These few cases are not supererogatory in character. They are not optional even if they are not completely obligatory. They can be appropriately called quasi-supererogatory.⁶⁵ They carry the weak and light version of ought-ness and not the strong and heavy imputation of the *must* like for example when we say that Mr. Smith *must* pay the minimum wage or *must* assure a safe and healthy working condition for his employees.

Concluding Remarks

This paper attempts to provoke a debate by reviving the question: “Is employee profit sharing a moral obligation or a moral option?” Normative arguments grounded on justice, equity, rights and general welfare are necessary, but they are not sufficient to account for the ethics of employee profit sharing.

An exploration of meta-ethical approach is suggested on this paper. Using this approach, it becomes apparent that the said question is misleading after all for two reasons. First, because of its tendency to subsume into one set all practices of employee profit sharing. The ethics of EPS cannot be reduced to a blanket rejection of the obligatory or non-obligatory character of the said practice. Rather, there is a need to move from the ethic of practice into the ethic of action taking into consideration the plurality of particularities involved when judging the act of each employer. These particularities include the employer’s motives and the various circumstances that necessitate careful

⁶³ “To be sure, a business does aim to make a profit, but it does so only by supplying quality goods and services, by providing jobs, and by fitting in with the community. To single out profits rather than productivity or public service as the central aim of business activity is to ask for trouble. And profits as such are not the end or the goal of business activity: profits get distributed and reinvested. Profits are a *means* of building the business and rewarding employees, executives, and investors.” Robert Solomon, “Business and the Humanities: An Aristotelian Approach to Business Ethics,” in *Business as a Humanity* ed. by Thomas Donaldson and R. Edward Freeman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 60-61.

⁶⁴ Peter F. Drucker, *Management*, revised ed., ed. by Joseph Maciariello (HarperCollins e-books, 2008), 97.

⁶⁵ Gregory Mellema, “Quasi-supererogation,” in *Philosophical Studies* 52 (1987), 141-150.

consideration towards making an ethical judgement. This observation further confirms the reality that the business world is so complex and challenging that a reductionist and generalist moral judgment will oftentimes be rendered incomplete and impoverished.

The second reason why the question is misleading is because of its *bifurcatory* character. Combining justice and general welfare arguments with an extended analysis of the notion of moral obligation and moral option may lead one to conclude that even if employee profit sharing is rendered to be morally non-obligatory, it is an impoverishment of moral life and a myopia of moral judgment to relax and relegate this action and practice into the category of the morally optional. To put it simply, to make a categorical choice between moral obligation and moral option in the many cases of EPS would undermine the complexities and nuances of the moral life in the business world.

Admittedly, employee profit sharing is not a legal obligation in almost all societies. (The legal system of France is a curious exception as I mentioned in the earlier part of this paper.) Whether EPS is a moral obligation is not a settled issue at all. We have not yet achieved a level of universal recognition that employees must have a moral right to have a share in the profits of the business that they have helped to generate. This analysis is a contribution on this ongoing philosophical debate. It further alerts students of business ethics on how to probe the moral dimension of a business practice.

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The Problem of Schelling as a Transition Thinker

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Abstract: In the literature of German Idealism, the agreement on Schelling as an intermediate thinker between Kant and Hegel is a well-guarded scholarship. This essay will recast this agreement within the contemporary reception of Schelling, notably by Slavoj Žižek. But despite Žižek's important contribution to Schelling studies, his Hegelian reading of Schelling via psychoanalysis does little to resolve the problem of whether Schelling is a transition thinker or systematizer in his own right. In recent years, this problem is renewed by focusing on Schelling's significant leverage over his major rivals in terms of the centrality of Nature in his works. Iain Hamilton Grant's *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* is by far the most crucial undertaking in this respect, enabling recent scholarship to reexamine Schelling's naturephilosophy in light of our current ecological predicament. But a key element is absent in Grant's naturalistic treatment. This element is the aesthetic which occupies a central role in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*.

Keywords: aesthetics, *Naturphilosophie*, negative reason, positive philosophy

The Intermediate Character of Schelling

In Slavoj Žižek's description of the true legacy of F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854),¹ not only does German Idealism stand in need of urgent correction, despite Schelling himself—or because of him from being widely treated as a linear movement in Western intellectual history, which, over the course of centuries continues to exert huge influence on post-Enlightenment thinking, to a portrayal of its inner history as a shadowy spiritual double of the ideals of Enlightenment which Hegel, for instance, proposed to realize in historical consciousness.

¹ Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters* (London and New York: Verso, 2007).

Žižek's salient reading of Schelling offers a nuanced approach in understanding the issue between the two erstwhile collaborators: one cannot understand Hegel, arguably the epitome of German Idealism, without inserting Schelling into the equation. What eludes the self-mediation in Hegel, Schelling identifies as the gap or the scission that escapes self-affirmation at the same time that it makes affirmative presence possible. As Žižek remarks, "the subject can assert its self-presence only against the background of an obscure, dense, impenetrable *Grund* which withdraws-into-itself the moment it is illuminated by the light of Reason."² But alongside this contrived collaboration of Schelling and Hegel, Žižek also in effect, re-introduces the problematic of 'Schelling' as a 'transition' thinker, "located in the break between two epochs."³ As Žižek elaborates, "[one] foot still within the universe of speculative Idealism whose theme is the immanent self-deployment of the eternal Absolute; his other foot already encroaching into the post-Hegelian universe of finitude-contingency-temporality."⁴

The problematic of Schelling as an intermediate thinker has been a familiar line of inquiry and contestation in late 20th century accounts of the German Idealist tradition and its Romantic equal (but also anxious collaborators). Among them, Dieter Henrich's, Frederick Beiser's, and Manfred Frank's are household staples.⁵ But their expositions leave more questions (previously unacknowledged notwithstanding) than settle the matter for all its worth, especially in regard to the question of the transitional character of many of Schelling's interventions that traverse the idealist and romantic poles of German intellectual culture at the time. It was Hegel who initiated this problematic which generally expresses the "view that each philosophical position from Kant through [him] is like a step in a staircase that we ascend as we leave previous steps behind."⁶ This technically makes Kant, Fichte, and Schelling a necessary turning point for the completion of Kant's intellectual work in Hegel's *oeuvre*. Against this background, Henrich,

² *Ibid.*, 6.

³ Žižek identifies the *Weltarter* drafts (1811-1815) as the most representative work of Schelling that articulates this transition. See Slavoj Žižek and F.W.J. Schelling, *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World: An essay by Slavoj Žižek with the text of Schelling's Die Weltarter (second draft 1813) in English translation by Judith Norman* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); see also F.W.J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World (Fragment): From the handwritten remains, third version (c. 1815)*, trans. by Jason M. Wirth (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000).

⁴ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 7.

⁵ See Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London and England: 2002); Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. by Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 2004); and, Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*, ed. by David S. Pacini (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London and England: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶ See Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel*, 9.

for instance, proposed an interpretation of the late writings of Fichte, Schelling, and also of Hegel, where at that time, the late works were yet to be explored. More so, if one were to retrace the inspirational source of these works, “it was not yet possible to understand the basic implications of Kant’s position.”⁷ Hence, the critical elaboration of the late works at the time of Hegel would properly expose the contingency of Hegel’s own claims.

The importance of the late works, especially Schelling’s, raises critical challenge not only to Hegel’s highly influential self-appointment but also to other attempts, mostly by Hegelians to identify him as an initiator, an *agent provocateur*, so to speak, of a dangerous liaison between Nazi ideology and “anti-Enlightenment ambitions.”⁸ In his lecture on the German Romantics, Frank, for instance, rejects Lukács’s criticism of Schelling for the latter’s alleged advocacy of the conservative underpinnings of anti-rationalist thought that spread across the famous romantic interlude (in the poetically inclined writings of Goethe, Novalis, Schlegel, etc.). This negative criticism of Schelling’s apparent anti-democratic leanings, intimated by his otherwise definitive position in relation to the Enlightenment, has become, as of late, a subject of revisiting, among others, Schelling’s ‘Stuttgart Seminars,’⁹ notably by Habermas, wherein the romantic connection to authoritarian or statist ideology is rebuffed in favor of a genuine romantic Schelling who harbors a ‘concealed’ form of anarchistic ideals.¹⁰ In the ‘Stuttgart Seminars,’ Schelling favors the abolition of the state, arguing that humanity must “ensure that the state will progressively divest itself of the blind force that governs it, and to transfigure this force into intelligence.”¹¹ Inasmuch as Schelling would certainly hold a view of reality in which reason indecisively oscillates, rather than freezes to a static end—such as the State—thereby making him “a sworn enemy of all ideology,”¹² Lukács, a Hegelian Marxist, would dismiss

⁷ *Ibid.* See also, Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism*, vii.

⁸ Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert contends that this is based on a “misconception of early German Romanticism” in which Schelling immersed himself. See Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 14.

⁹ See F.W.J. Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays by Schelling*, trans. by Thomas Pfau (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 195.

¹⁰ See Jürgen Habermas, “Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling’s Idea of a Contraction of God and its Consequences for a Philosophy of History,” trans. by Nick Midgley and Judith Norman, in *The New Schelling*, ed. by Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 46.

¹¹ As quoted in Habermas, “Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism,” 46. See exact Schelling’s text in Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, 195.

¹² See Jason M. Wirth, *Conspiracy of Life: Meditations of Schelling and His Time* (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 2003), 239, n. 4. Wirth draws from Hannah Arendt the rhetorical context of this description of Schelling. See Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego and New York: Harcourt, 1976), 469. See also Tyler Tritten, *Beyond Presence: The Late F. W. Schelling’s Criticism of Metaphysics* (Boston and Berlin: William de Gruyter, 2012), 342.

Schelling as an enemy of reason that places him in unwarranted proximity with the conservative, otherwise barren romanticism of the party ideologues of the third *Reich*.¹³

In this vein, the inadvertent malice of Schelling's proverbial influence on Heidegger adds up to the historical confluence of conservative ideals and Nazi romanticism. Heidegger's relation to Schelling, nonetheless, is not an easy setup to begin with. His Nazi episode was, without a doubt, out of tune with Schelling. Meanwhile, Heidegger's famous description of Schelling as a remarkable thinker, but whose "judgment still stands under Hegel's shadow,"¹⁴ proves to be an oblique compliment which tends to ignore Schelling's true place in German Idealism. As a consequence, this blocks his reception, not least in the English-speaking world.¹⁵ As to the matter of 'receiving' Schelling according to his own terms, which I am more inclined to attach to the enduring complexity of his *Naturphilosophie*,¹⁶ the question of the real importance of Schelling, both in the internal history of German Idealism, the Romantics, as well in post-Hegelian philosophy, still remains obscured by the continuing influence of Hegel in much of critical theory today, and not least by Heidegger as the undisputed post-Husserlian figure behind contemporary phenomenological disputations.

Markus Gabriel, in his work on transcendental ontology, situates this nexus between Schelling and Heidegger within the context of transforming the "traditional conception of Being."¹⁷ Gabriel acknowledges Schelling's radical attempt, following Leibniz,¹⁸ to pursue the question of being to its never before expounded trajectory since the dawn of reason. In Heidegger's formulation, this engendered the so-called destructive retrieval of Being.¹⁹ In the background of this hermeneutical connection (Schelling and Heidegger)—though Gabriel hardly mentions this despite his parallel

¹³ Millán-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel*, 14.

¹⁴ See Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on The Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Athens, Ohio, London: Ohio University Press, 1985), 13.

¹⁵ See Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 11. See also Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism*, 465.

¹⁶ A more theoretically engaging work, such as Iain Hamilton Grant's *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, will be my principal informant along this troublesome trajectory. See Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006).

¹⁷ See Markus Gabriel, "Unprethinkable Being and Event: The Concept of Being in Late Schelling and Late Heidegger," in *Transcendental Ontology: Essays in German Idealism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), 61.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* This point is also raised by Tritten in *Beyond Presence*, 5.

¹⁹ "By taking the *question of Being as our clue*, we are to destroy the traditional concept of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the ways of Being." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1962), 44.

treatment of negative reason or negative philosophy in the same section in which he expounds on the Schelling-Heidegger nexus—is Schelling’s announcement of positive philosophy, which represents the mature phase of his thinking, forging a counterpoint to the negativity of reason. In hindsight, Žižek conceives of the crucial emergence of positive philosophy as the outcome of Schelling’s attempt to configure God as the ‘unity of freedom and necessary existence’ within a mythical narrative or theosophical chronicle, but could only become possible “at the price of splitting philosophy into ‘positive’ and ‘negative.’”²⁰ As a theosophical narrative, the unity of God and existence is conceived independently of metaphysics (both in its pre-critical, pre-inventoried frame inspired by Spinoza, and its critical cataloguing analytic informed by Kant). Žižek, here, elaborates that, “negative philosophy provides the a priori deduction of the notional necessity of what God and the universe are; however, this *What-ness* [*Was-Sein*] can never account for the fact that God and freedom are – it is the task of positive philosophy to function as a kind of ‘transcendental empiricism’, and to ‘test’ the truth of rational constructions in actual life.”²¹

In his *Munich Lectures*, Schelling aims precisely at making negative philosophy ‘happen’ in terms of promoting a kind of transcendent thinking, which he describes as a thinking that through its decision, “goes beyond the scope of the present reality.”²² Transcendent thinking is a free act in contrast to “the *a priori* operations of negative philosophy [occurring] in an unchanging network of pure thought, and thus do not ‘happen’.”²³ “To ‘test’ the truth of rational construction in actual life,”²⁴ Schelling leans, as an initial step, toward the supposedly inventoried reason of Kant, but only to the extent in which the limits of reason provide an opening into crossing the threshold of existence, whence commences the next step, away from pure thought and back into the primordial starting point, namely, the free act of existence, or simply, freedom. Here, freedom, as Schelling conceived it, is non-reflective.²⁵

²⁰ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 39.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² See Bruce Matthews, Translator’s Introduction to F.W. J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures* (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 2007), 41. The short English translation of the quoted passage above was lifted from Matthews’s translation of the German edition of the Munich Lectures. See also F.W.J Schelling, *Grundlegung der Positiven Philosophie. Münchener Vorsehung WS 1832/33 and SS 1833*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Turin: Bottega D’ Eraso, 1972).

²³ *Ibid.*, 42. See also, Schelling, *Grundlegung der Positiven Philosophie. Münchener Vorsehung*, 101.

²⁴ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 39.

²⁵ Evidently influenced by Fichte, Schelling recast the self-positing I of Fichte, originally as an act rather than as reflection, into a kind of productive intuition. Fichte says of intuition as follows: “What acting is, can only be intuited, not evolved from concepts or communicated

But also as non-reflective, it is a pure act. As Schelling emphasized in an early essay, freedom as such is “the beginning and end of all philosophy.”²⁶ Philosophy has its sole origin in a non-reflective act which presupposes, in Schelling, a kind of necessary existence that precedes philosophical reason, and which in fact “stops reason dead in its tracks, initiating a discontinuous transition through which [it] is pushed out of its predictable orbit of reflection.”²⁷ Freedom calls for the necessity of the extra-logical nature of existence, one that can be freely created “beyond the scope of the present reality”²⁸ which is rationally determined. This enables Schelling, for instance, to recast mythology in the present which is heaved out of its ‘predictable’ determination, thus forging a “thinking that goes beyond itself into decision and action,” a thinking that by all means is “transcendent.”²⁹ Mythology therefore qualifies as an ahistorical or transcendent ground of the present, that is, as a free act that founds the present.

In Gabriel, however, Schelling’s positive treatment of mythology constitutes two mutually interlocking problems for Heidegger who has already discerned in Schelling the onto-theological dilemma he could not escape. Gabriel elaborates this point as follows: “Schelling’s philosophy,” on the one hand, “seems to represent a possible escape from the tradition of onto-theological metaphysics,”³⁰ associated with pre-critical metaphysics, accused by Kant of encouraging dogmatism and skepticism, but, “remains,” on the other hand, “by Heidegger’s lights one of onto-theology’s central stations.”³¹ In the meantime, insofar as this prolific but intermittent thought production of Schelling can be recast in a Hegelian universe, one image that can be obtained here approximates that of the Egyptian Spirit entrapped in the Sphinx, “in itself a riddle,” vague and indistinct in form, “half brute, half human.”³² This riddle can be transposed to the problematic of transition that

thereby...” See J.G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, trans. by Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 36.

²⁶ Schelling, “Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy, Or On the Unconditional in Human Knowledge,” in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796)*, trans. by Fritz Marti (London: Associated University Press, 1980), 82.

²⁷ Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, 41. For reference to the German edition on which Matthews translation was based, see also Schelling, *Grundlegung der Positiven Philosophie: Münchener Vorsehung*, 101.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Gabriel, “Unprethinkable Being and Event: The Concept of Being in Late Schelling and Late Heidegger,” 61.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001), 218.

is supposed to be Schelling's place in the history of German thought.³³ In Hegel's description, the Egyptian Spirit represents a riddle of the Spirit that "feels itself compressed."³⁴ The riddle may also suggest that by introducing a problem for the spirit to resolve through time, such as releasing the compressed spirit in Nature, which at present can "utter itself only in the sensuous mode,"³⁵ the process of emancipation from the sensuous is an essential stage for the complete disclosure of what in essence is constricted therein, when finally "the Spirit has disclosed its existence."³⁶ But in Heidegger's interpretation, the problem of the Spirit, laid out in terms of the emancipation of what has been compressed in historical matter (nature and its avatars, for instance) in regard to the development of historical spirit until its culmination in Absolute *Geist*, constitutes Schelling's onto-theological dilemma. A dilemma is what "philosophy's questioning" is all about, in Heidegger's own terms, "always and in itself both onto-logical and theo-logical" such that, as he elaborates, "the more originally it is both in one, the more truly it is philosophy."³⁷

But this Heideggerian conception of philosophy as a dilemma is far from Schelling's aim as to the general trajectory of his philosophical project. For instance, as the procedure of positive philosophy requires, the present must be unconditioned of its *a priori* grounding in terms of exposing the *groundlessness* of the *a priori* conditions of reason itself. This fairly amounts to a destruction of the dilemma intrinsic to negative reason. In this vein, Schelling offers an example of the outcome of unconditioning in terms of the conception of a mythological God which can be actualized in the non-reflective, free existence of humanity, that is, in a renewed present. In Schellingian terms, God exists as that which "groundlessly exists."³⁸ Here, Schelling provides the necessary completion of Kant: "[In] God it is precisely *that*, by virtue of that which groundlessly exists, that Kant calls the abyss of human reason – and what is this other than that before which reason stands motionless, by which reason is devoured, in the face of which it is momentarily nothing and capable of nothing."³⁹ By means of unconditioning, positive philosophy can now affirm necessary existence that is God as the pre-reflective unity of freedom and understanding. It is a unity that is never theo-

³³ Hegel opposes the apparent indiscernibility of Schelling's position to "the full body of articulated cognition" that he (Hegel) developed, thereby claiming that Schelling's position more or less is a type of "cognition naively reduced to vacuity." G. W. F. Hegel, Preface to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 9.

³⁴ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 218.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

³⁷ Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 51.

³⁸ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, 205.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

logical in the sense that there is no separation between, say, existence and spirit which grounds theological discourse. However, it is also a unity inconceivable in negative reason which operates on the logical predication of subject-object distinction. Negative philosophy, in contrast, affirms existence but not as necessary; it affirms existence as a repeatable question (in Heidegger, at least, the question matures into the question of Being). In an early essay, Schelling argues: “[All] the failed attempts to answer this question share the mistake of attempting to explain conceptually what effectively precedes all concepts; they all betray the same incapacity of the spirit to tear itself away from discursive thinking and to ascend to the immediacy that exists within the spirit itself.”⁴⁰

Schelling, here, is identifying where reason becomes impotent, that is, in the magic circle of conceptual immanence that he attributes to Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, but most strongly (about the time of the *Berlin Lectures*) to Hegel, vis-à-vis his notion of transcendent thinking. Any claim as to the completion of reason’s dialectical journey in modernity is merely a mirror image of what reason cannot, in fact, accomplish, but posited as to appear that it has reached that stage. Žižek, for instance, falls into this game of appearance, so to speak, when he claims that Hegel completes the project that Kant initiated, with Schelling providing an unlikely assistance in terms of offering the only possible route to conclude the dialectical journey. According to Žižek, Schelling’s “regression from pure philosophical idealism to pre-modern theosophical problematic”⁴¹ presents a trajectory that is graspable only in Hegel’s dialectical terms, as if its intelligibility does not hold in Schelling’s own terms which appear to be lacking the necessary tool to carry out the task that ironically Schelling was the first to delineate. It is arguable that Schelling’s regressive method indeed overtakes modernity as Žižek wants us to acknowledge. But as his argument goes, it sanctions the prevailing view that the problematic of Schelling is resolved into the matter of ‘Schelling’ as a mere transitional thinker.

Overtaking Negative Reason

Granting Žižek’s formulation of Schelling’s overcoming of modernity does reflect one of the key historical movements in German Idealism, it may be assumed that the ‘modernity’ that is said to have been overtaken by Schelling is the historical onto-theologically structured spirit, already deeply invested in the polarizing mesh of pre-critical and critical

⁴⁰ See Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, 221, *n.* 89. Matthews provides the reference for the passages above from the German edition of Schelling’s works. See F.W.J. Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, First Division, Vol. 3 (Stuttgart, Cotta: 1856: 1861), 376.

⁴¹ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 8.

thoughts, even before Hegel could begin the real work of completing the Enlightenment project. Supposedly, upon completion, modernity should be able to represent the project in a renewed light, in unambiguous form, shorn of the contradictions and antinomies of reason that once hindered its progress. Hence, a modernity that is already on the verge of an epoch-making transition. The co-existence, however, of two mutually conflicting assumptions regarding the direction of modernity would, as it were, serve as a stumbling block to Schelling's reception in contemporary period, insofar as his interventions in some of the most contested areas of intellectual concern in German philosophy refuse a reductionist treatment, as Gabriel and Žižek altogether attest in their respective appraisals of Schelling.

Gabriel's approach to Schelling, on the whole, however, differs from Žižek's, especially in light of the controversial 'freedom period' about which there is not enough consensus among scholars of Schelling agreeing on what is at stake in this critical phase of his intellectual journey.⁴² On the one hand, in view of Schelling's confrontation with the metaphysics of freedom, Gabriel creates a parallel consummation of philosophical projects between Schelling and Heidegger by critically imagining a united front against traditional metaphysics through their common historical conception of being.⁴³ In both registers, the possibility of a future is established: *tautegorical*⁴⁴ for Schelling; *Ereignis* for Heidegger.⁴⁵ Gabriel elaborates: "[The] effort is aimed at making room for eschatological hope, precisely that which sets limit to philosophy – the end or aim of philosophy that philosophy itself cannot determine from

⁴² As Tritten points out, this is the focal point of Žižek's interpretation of Schelling. Tritten, *Beyond Presence*, 21.

⁴³ Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology*, 61.

⁴⁴ The notion of *tautegory* is meant in Schelling as a counter-point to the conceptual representations of myths as allegorical. As such, myths are interpreted according to their "accidental clothing" that conceals 'a prior meaning.' Tritten, *Beyond Presence*, 275. But Schelling contends that "mythology is thoroughly actual – that is, everything in it is thus to be understood as mythology expresses it, not as if something else were thought, something else said." F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. by Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 136. Suffice it to say, mythology provides an opening into the future by 'overtaking' the 'scope of the present reality' through a tautegorical seizure of the categorical pretention of modern reason. The myth conceals nothing in the sense that it is in itself transcendent to subject-object distinction; instead it expresses an identity as subject-object, which, as early as in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling describes as "a concept expressing fundamental duality in identity and vice versa" F.W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)* trans. by Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 30.

⁴⁵ Event signifies either "the *taking place* of difference [which is] the typical meaning of the expression," or, according to its commonplace meaning, refers to 'selfing' (*Verselbstung*). *Ereignis* is no less the coming-together of 'being and self'" which in Schelling can be referred to "as personality." Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology*, 77. Both *Ereignis* and tautegory therefore take place in freedom (non-reflective for Schelling), but also in and through *Dasein* (Heidegger's equivalent of the Schellingian 'personality'), altogether as projecting-towards, as future.

within itself as its end or goal – an end that cannot be transcended by philosophizing itself.”⁴⁶ On the other hand, Žižek dismantles the correlation between Schelling and Heidegger; instead, in an oblique but compelling sense, *Kantianizes* Schelling as a critical limit to Hegel—the former establishing a regulative limit to the precipitation of the Spirit in historical time. In this unusual complementariness, Žižek identifies the nexus between the two as constitutive of a “knot ... ‘at which everything is decided’.”⁴⁷ This is a stretch, as Žižek inaugurates in Schelling studies, that culminates in the clinical treatment of Schelling’s concept of the indivisible remainder, in short, the unconscious or the ‘lack’ that occasions the subversive emergence of freedom.⁴⁸ Here, the emergence of freedom is the proper Hegelian moment which formalizes by retrospective means the existence of the lack or void that Schelling introduces for the later work of subversion. Suffice it to say, there was ‘freedom’ in Schelling but unconscious; in Hegel it became a unity of conscious act in historical time in which the ‘conscious’ sublates the ‘unconscious’ and defines it (the unconscious) as immanent to the conscious work of history.

Notwithstanding his ingenious intervention in Schelling studies, Žižek’s clinical treatment, however, raises two critical concerns. On the one hand, Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie* is overlooked, if not entirely reduced to the moral and practical concerns of reason. If *Naturphilosophie*, as I will argue, consistently informs the whole stretch of Schelling’s philosophical itinerary (from Spinoza, Kant, and Fichte, to the naturalists of his time who also became preoccupied with the central concerns of German romanticism as enunciated in the scientific and poetic writings of Goethe, Novalis, and Schlegel), then the matter of positive philosophy as a result of the transition (from the supposed early naturalistic leanings) cannot be addressed simply by *first*, stipulating a transition *via* the split between the ‘positive’ and ‘negative,’ and *lastly*, signifying this split as proof of the transition. Here, Žižek’s Hegelian bias rears its ugly head. For Schelling to succeed in overtaking modernity as a result of the transition from negative to positive philosophy, the dialectical negativity of reason (exemplified by Hegel’s system) must have already completed its project in historical consciousness. This amounts to saying that negative reason has exhausted its immanent history and is now ripe for the final *Aufhebung* courtesy of the self-correcting procedure that Schelling provides to Hegel’s benefit.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁷ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 5.

⁴⁸ F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (New York: State University of New York, 2006), 29.

⁴⁹ In the Chapter on Being of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel describes sublation (often associated with the German *aufheben*) to mean that which aims to ‘preserve’ what has been

This, of course, is not consistent with Schelling, *à propos* his critique of Hegel's concept of the Idea, whose claim to finality—its real breaking off to give way to the actual complement of the Idea, that is, Nature—cannot be the result of the self-realization of consciousness any more than it is of weariness or boredom:

[As] soon as it had to make a difficult step into reality the path of the dialectical movement broke off. A second hypothesis becomes necessary, namely, the Idea – one knows not why, unless to interrupt the boredom of its merely logical existence – allows its moments to fall apart, so that through them nature could arise.⁵⁰

Insofar as negative philosophy cannot produce actual knowledge, as Schelling contends,⁵¹ dialectical reason can never complete its self-imposed task any more than it can even really begin in its own terms. This leads us to the second concern over Žižek's clinical approach, namely, the regressive procedure of overtaking modernity that he attributes to Schelling. But as Schelling himself defines the method of positive philosophy as "progressive Empiricism," any suggestion of seizure is certainly "not regressive, that is, does not proceed backwards from experience toward that which is above experience."⁵² Rather, if there is backward movement, it occurs within negative reason, albeit, prompted by positive philosophy to pursue its groundless ground. By no means does this suggest that negative philosophy has already completed its trajectory, providing the occasion for positive philosophy to perform its task; rather, because negativity can never finish its self-imposed task until it is being intervened upon by something actual that lies outside its determination, it always requires the assistance of positive reason, but also always fails consistently to employ its leverage in the right terms.

The regressive seizure of modernity that Žižek describes of Schelling is in truth assigned to Hegel. The seizure through regression is actually a description meant for negative reason (in its highest deliberation in Hegel),

previously determined through mediation, hence, as Hegel adds, becomes "open to external influences." See G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. by George Di Giovanni (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 82. Hegel summarizes the meaning of sublation in one sentence: "That which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost its immediacy but has not come to nothing for that." *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Matthews, Translator's Introduction, 59. For reference to the German edition, see Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, First Division, Vol. 10, 376.

⁵¹ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, 196.

⁵² See Matthews, Translator's Introduction, 71. For reference to the German edition, see Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, Second Division, Vol. 3, 130.

this time employing positive knowledge. But this in essence hijacks positive philosophy in order to deprive actuality of the efficacy reserved for the real experience of existence that negative reason “makes sure ... will never take place.”⁵³ Žižek actually levels this critique at Kant but never to Hegel, which of course normalizes the standard narrative that Hegel completes Kant (through Schelling). In Žižek, positive philosophy is relegated to an instrumental status, which in the end, echoes the standard narrative about Schelling’s intermediate place in German idealism.

Aesthetic Relays in Naturephilosophy

Inasmuch, however, as we agree that Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie* is more than emblematic of his place in post-Kantian philosophy, which, incidentally, Iain H. Grant, in his treatment of Schelling’s contemporaneity, has ushered in recent scholarship,⁵⁴ I argue here that revisiting Schelling’s naturephilosophy calls as much for a good aesthetic ‘relay.’ The ‘relay’ is reflective of the inner dynamics of Schelling’s intellectual itinerary as of the coherence of his system. Schelling aims to frustrate regression to negative immanence, wherever such tendency appears, which denies existence by excising intellectual intuition from sensuous science,⁵⁵ and hence, the attempt to restore intuition through aesthetics. Incidentally, Grant never raised this point as a permanent concern in Schelling, which is quite problematic, considering art complements, both in style and substance, Schelling’s aim to ground everything in natural dynamics.

Devin Zane Shaw, in his thesis on the centrality of art in Schelling’s philosophy,⁵⁶ offers a good ‘relay’ in this respect. This is, by far, the most recent work detailing the scope of Schelling’s aesthetic concern, following a much-focused exploration of the aesthetics of the young Schelling,⁵⁷ published few years back before Shaw’s dissertation. One key point, however, exposes a minor misconception of Schelling in Shaw’s argument with which he differs from Grant’s rather compelling naturalistic

⁵³ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 75.

⁵⁴ Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, 19.

⁵⁵ Schelling argues that “by denying every possible break into the objective ... there is no alternative ... other than to move to the opposite – to the all-destroying subject, which was now no longer the empirical subject of Descartes, but only the absolute subject, the transcendental I.” F.W.J. Schelling, “Kant, Fichte, and the System of Transcendental Idealism,” in *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. by Andrew Bowie (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 108.

⁵⁶ Devin Zane Shaw, *Freedom and Nature in Schelling’s Philosophy of Art* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ontario: University of Ottawa, 2009). We are using the dissertation version here. For the published book version, see David Zane Shaw, *Freedom and Nature in Schelling’s Philosophy of Art* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010).

⁵⁷ See Leonardo V. Distaso, *The Paradox of Existence: Philosophy and Aesthetics in the Young Schelling* (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2005).

interpretation, notwithstanding its absence of aesthetics. In *Freedom and Nature in Schelling's Philosophy of Art*, Shaw argues that the aesthetic leverage is consistent with the earlier "subversion of Fichte's emphasis on practical reason."⁵⁸ He will be then led to conclude that later on, "Schelling abandons the philosophy of art" in favor of "a philosophy of freedom and his interest in the relationship between freedom, revelation and theology,"⁵⁹ which, as the standard narrative goes, demonstrates a characteristic shift in Schelling, into what Shaw designates as "absolute idealism or identity-philosophy."⁶⁰ In relation to the view that aesthetics is being abandoned in favor of a philosophy of freedom, Jennifer Dobe, in her essay on Schelling's aesthetics, argues that Schelling understood freedom already as an ethical choice, which, if also understood to be pre-reflective or even extra-logical in the sense Schelling ascribes to existence, would naturally correlate with aesthetics, itself pre-cognitive.⁶¹ Thus, with this critical import of freedom in this so-called shift, Shaw in effect reemploys the misconception concerning the freedom-period, which, for instance, locates Schelling's philosophy in the break between the early or late Schelling, or, in Žižek's equation, between the 'negative' and the 'positive.'⁶² In Shaw, the turn to positive philosophy summons a relinquishing of aesthetics, thereby enhancing the standard account of the split.

Yet this period of positive philosophy (that Žižek refers to in the split between 'negative' and 'positive,' or Shaw in the shift to philosophy of freedom) is supposed to be that of the positive philosophy of mythology and religion, and not the positive philosophy of freedom.⁶³ Tyler Tritten's important discussion of these points in *Beyond Presence: The Late F.W.J. Schelling's Criticism of Metaphysics*, will allow us to see that failure to comprehend the full extent of Schelling's intellectual itinerary can lead to serious misconceptions of the freedom-period that has ensnared, for instance, both Heidegger and Žižek, and many others exploring this period, into reformulating this pass into their own subjective interpretations of modernity. Heidegger assigned the name onto-theology, while Žižek, the regressive overtaking of historical reason.

Further complicating the problem of situating positive philosophy within the freedom-period, Leonardo Distaso, in *The Paradox of Existence: Philosophy and Aesthetics in the Young Schelling*, offers a contrasting leverage of

⁵⁸ Shaw, *Freedom and Nature in Schelling's Philosophy of Art*, 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, v.

⁶¹ See Jennifer Dobe, "Beauty Reconsidered: freedom and virtue in Schelling's Aesthetics," in *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays*, ed. by Lara Ostaric (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 162.

⁶² Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 39.

⁶³ Tritten, *Beyond Presence*, 21, n. 26.

aestheticism in Schelling: If Shaw abandons art in favor of his conception of the freedom-period as the positive philosophy of freedom, religion, and mythology, Distaso “[conceives] Aesthetics as a comprehensive philosophical theory and not a mere philosophy of art.”⁶⁴ This is a more advanced speculation on the role of aesthetics in Schelling, and yet, a closer look at the programmatic execution of Distaso’s work would reveal that much space is dedicated to establishing the primacy of aesthetics in relation to identity philosophy (in Shaw, identity-philosophy is supposed to be the cause of the falling out with aesthetics).

But as Grant reports, according to Schelling, the supposed identity-philosophy (the exact description is ‘identity system’) is a “designation” that he, “the author [Schelling] himself used just once.”⁶⁵ Schelling’s own clarification, in “*On the History of Modern Philosophy* [and] the *Philosophy of Mythology*,” demonstrates that the purpose of such designation is simply “to differentiate [his philosophy] from the Fichtean, which accords nature no autonomous being.”⁶⁶ From the standpoint of Grant, the aesthetic connection to identity-philosophy will not authorize a conception of aesthetics as a ‘comprehensive philosophical theory’ (as in Distaso). Meanwhile, in regard to the critique of Fichte, which Shaw attributed to aesthetics, aesthetics cannot assume a function beyond the task assigned to it, that is, to differentiate Fichte’s intellectual intuition from the *productive intuition* that Schelling described in as early as the *System of Transcendental Idealism*.⁶⁷ Its function is to differentiate reflection and discursive thinking from that of expressing the nexus of thought (mind or consciousness) and nature from the standpoint of nature itself, that is to say, as productively imagined in thought. In this light, one can think with Schelling that the aesthetic function is to express the *becoming visible of Nature as Mind*, and the *becoming invisible of Mind as Nature*.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Distaso, *Paradox of Existence*, xiii.

⁶⁵ See Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, 4. See also, Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, 371.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ There are a number of precursors (which appeared in journals) to Shaw’s line of inquiry here in terms of establishing the connection of Schelling’s aesthetics announced in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* to the supposed function of identity philosophy as a challenge to Fichte’s subjective idealism. These are: Antoon Braeckman, “From the Work of Art to Absolute Reason: Schelling’s Journey Toward Absolute Idealism,” in *The Review of Metaphysics* 57 (March 2004), 551-569; James Dodd, “Philosophy and Art in Schelling’s *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*,” in *The Review of Metaphysics* 52: 1(1998), 51-85; and Richard L. Velkley, “Realizing Nature in the Self: Schelling on Art and Intellectual Intuition in the System of Transcendental Idealism,” in *Figuring the Self, Subject, Absolute and Others in German Philosophy*, ed. by David E. Klemm and Günter Zöllner (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 149-168. These works draw heavily from Dieter Jähnig, *Schelling. Die Kunst in der Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Pfüllingen: Neske, 1965); see Braeckman, “From the Work of Art to Absolute Reason: Schelling’s Journey Toward Absolute Idealism,” 553.

⁶⁸ Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, 41-42.

Already, the *identity* that this expression establishes is arrived through aesthetics, but not on account of so-called identity philosophy that, again, as Grant recounts, Schelling admitted was merely “a discovery of [his] youth.”⁶⁹ This is not to say that identity itself is relinquished, as Grant clarifies, but rather marshalled in service of *Naturphilosophie* ‘extended to the absolute.’ Grant elaborates his position on this matter as follows:

Schelling defines the ‘Positive Philosophy’ that grounds both these projects [by which he means the *Philosophy of Mythology* and the *Philosophy of Revelation*] as an ‘empiricism with regard to matter, only an aprioristic empiricism’ ... One definition of naturephilosophy therefore runs as follows: ‘naturephilosophy is a naturalistic ‘empiricism extended to the absolute’.⁷⁰

Grant, however, neglects the fact that in principle positive philosophy must be experienced aesthetically. Schelling himself insists that this type of philosophy is “directed immediately inwards, so as to reflect it in intellectual intuition,” thus, the sense of which, apprehended in this intuitive production, reveals a precise structure, namely, aesthetic, which informs one of the chief declarations of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* that indeed aesthetics is “the true organon of philosophy.”⁷¹ But Grant did not neglect aesthetics through an elaborate contraption to render it meaningless any more than the choice to sideline this important component is structurally directed by the aim of his project, not without a good sense of setting the order of priorities. Grant’s aim is to dismantle the structures (overlaid by Kant’s critical revolution, continuing up to Hegel) upon “the aesthetic and phenomenal access” to understanding “first nature.”⁷² Kant himself was at pains to affirm nature beyond conceptual analogies. He was aware of the problem itself, and thus in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* proposed that the universality of moral ends ought to rest on a “composite idea of nature.”⁷³

This move constitutes Kant’s definitive resolution to the antinomy of freedom and necessity. Without the postulate of dynamic interaction, such relation, as Wesley Philipps in “The Future of Speculation” observes, would lead to ‘infinite insolubility’ of subject or cosmos, each irreducible to the

⁶⁹ Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 5; bracket emphasis mine.

⁷¹ Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 14.

⁷² Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, 70.

⁷³ See Wesley Philipps, “The Future of Speculation?” in *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 8:1 (2010), 294.

other; in the end, “subject and cosmos alike implode into nothingness.”⁷⁴ In this light, the dynamic relation between practical reason (or freedom) and nature would have decisively resolved the antinomies of reason. However, Kant’s solution merely obtains a concept of nature that remains cyclical, thus, refractory to organic progress, not unlike the mechanistic view of reality.⁷⁵ In other words, as Philipps astutely remarks, “the generations cannot learn from their ancestors, nor pass on their moral goodness, since morality is the sole concern of individual, rational cognition.”⁷⁶ Without a historical task that goes beyond the ‘scope of the present reality,’ nothing can break the circle of immanence.⁷⁷

In Schelling, the historical task must first assume the form of a reconstruction, starting with the pre-history of consciousness, hence, the nexus between aesthetics (as pre-cognitive actuality) and nature. For his part, Grant’s approach to Schelling is to revive the problem of Kant peculiar to pre-critical metaphysics that Kant never transcended, thereby also renewing the question of the existence of nature or the unconditioned principle (of all that is – God or first cause). In this sense, Grant re-emboldens Schelling’s critique of Kant by suspending the aesthetic concern in favor of the more urgent interest in those *structures* that Kant created, blocking access to nature (the unconditioned principle of all that is), thus also, by implication, ignoring the real import of aesthetics as the very access in question.

Conclusion

Aesthetics, therefore, is not only the experience of positive philosophy, but also a perspective, an access, which is equated with virtue. Here, virtue applies to either everyday ethical comportment or disciplinary engagement with the spirit of the time, its *Geist*. Nonetheless, the experience and perspective of positive philosophy are certain to be met with resistance from the well-entrenched discipline of thought founded on scientific and logical rationality of negative reason.

In this case, Tritten’s position is a significant clarification in terms of acknowledging Schelling’s agreement with scientific empiricism (which means the rationality behind negative reason is not entirely blocked from positive philosophy) but only if it first reckons the most important, namely “the *aesthesis* of the actuality of the world.”⁷⁸ Tritten describes this pre-cognitive actuality as primordial experience which requires “decision and

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Tritten, *Beyond Presence*, 83.

deed," as Schelling states, for it to be experienced..⁷⁹ Pre-cognitive deed is an "experience not of the possible [as in Kant] but of the actual and efficacious."⁸⁰ For it to be 'actual' as the *aesthesis* of the pre-cognitive, experience must be independent of reflective judgment.

Positive philosophy counters negativity by deciding to experience aesthetically what negative reason decides to neglect, that is, the *aesthesis* of the world. This in turn elevates aesthetics to the level of fundamental concern of freedom, Schelling's 'decision and deed,' but also to that of the ethical (which enhances the aesthetic). But inasmuch as freedom and ethics have been standardized as parts of the larger narrative of reason, normalized thereof in the perception of the public,⁸¹ the most serious ethical engagement awaits the artist in the cultural realm, and the philosopher in the horizon of educational praxis; altogether, a counter-hegemonic front against the dominance of negative reason in society, culture, and history. This complementary movement of art and philosophy is captured in more pragmatic terms in Gray Kochhar-Lindgren's work on Derrida and Schelling:

Art requires philosophy for its initial thinkability but then, drawing the reflection back into itself, it comes to replace and serve as a stand-in for philosophy. Anyone who wishes to think the Absolute must think art, and therefore it is art that remains.⁸²

Art also transforms itself when drawn back to self-reflection by realizing that its self-reflection is already in itself an experience of positive knowledge that is not based on subject-object distinction, the 'unprethinkable' for Schelling.⁸³ The experience is also already an active promotion of the actuality of the world, or the free act of giving voice to a nonrepresentational view of history, reason, nature, and reality in general, which consists of the ethical responsibility of both personality types, the philosopher and the artist.

⁷⁹ Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 75.

⁸⁰ Tritten, *Beyond Presence*, 81.

⁸¹ Similarly, as Jacques Ranciere would intensify the problem in contemporary time, this normalization of perception is "based on the distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that [determine] the manner in which something in common lends itself to participation." See Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. by Gabriel Rockhill (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 12.

⁸² See Gray Kochhar-Lindgren, *Philosophy, Art, and the Specters of Jacques Derrida* (Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2011), 34.

⁸³ Matthews describes this term as that "which points to that sphere of existence that lies beyond the immanent operations of reflexive thought. See Matthews, Translator's Introduction, 86; see also Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, 29.

It is in this light that we can now conclude with Schelling: “We are likewise convinced that reason is fully adequate to expose every possible error (in genuinely spiritual matters) and that the inquisitorial demeanor in the judgment of philosophical systems is entirely superfluous.”⁸⁴ Overall, this answers the question whether Schelling is a transition thinker or systematizer in his own right.

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⁸⁴ Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 74.

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Dancing after Philosophy

Adam Rosen-Carole

Sholtz, Janae, *The Invention of a People: Heidegger and Deleuze on Art and the Political* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 298pp.

In “Why Still Philosophy” Adorno exhorts, “Philosophy should not with foolish arrogance set about collecting information and then take a position; rather it must unrestrictedly, without recourse to some mental refuge, experience: it must do exactly what is avoided by those who refuse to forsake the maxim that every philosophy must finally produce something positive. Rimbaud’s ‘*il faut être absolument moderne*’ is neither an aesthetic program nor a program for aesthetes: it is a categorical imperative of philosophy.”¹ In *The Invention of a People: Heidegger and Deleuze on Art and the Political*² Janae Sholtz embodies, by patiently pacing out, indeed in a way dancing, the contemporary meaning of Adorno’s injunction. Giving herself over to while at once reflexively working through her paradoxical inspiration by both Heidegger and Deleuze, Sholtz performs, in the most unguarded yet formally self-conscious manner, and in a way entirely unprecedented in the literature, the unreservedness of philosophical experience. And thereby she enacts, in the most exemplary manner, the possibility of self-possession amidst the wild enthusiasms and despair of the contemporary. In the face of the most bewitching solicitations of twentieth century philosophy (Heidegger and Deleuze) and the nearly overwhelming temptation to resigned thoughtlessness or self-indulgent scholarship (whether this be “creative” or rigoristic) issuing from the unavoidable experience of the generalized and emphatic social inconsequence of philosophy, Sholtz performs the integrity of thought. Refusing every mental refuge, including scholarly supplication to a projected master, self-willed iconoclasm, easy amelioration, and fantasmatic position-taking, Sholtz’s authorship embodies, gracefully, an autonomy that is no insularity, let alone feigned self-sufficiency, but on the

¹ Theodor Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. by Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 17.

² Janae Sholtz, *The Invention of a People: Heidegger and Deleuze on Art and the Political* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

contrary, the accomplishment of bearing the passion, the urgency, and the limits of thought, palpably, within thought. Such autonomy is an elegant discomposure (dance begins and, with each significant development, begins anew with a stumble, a risk of utter collapse or recovery though the merely habitual). Autonomous (“unrestricted”) experience is materially actualized—embodied—in her authorship not as formal self-legislation or imaginative idiosyncrasy, but as independence of thought; in part, but only in part, as resistance to, by way of gliding past, hegemonic choreographies of philosophical practice, or at once more accurately and more generally, as graceful refusal to fall into step with what is. Such autonomous experience is in every way untimely. Ironically, the ecstasy of inspiration by Heidegger and Deleuze becomes the condition for a philosophical and writerly autonomy far more moving in its reservedness than are the erotic exhilarations, both scholarly and poetic, ordinarily encountered in writing on these two modern muses. In this truly extraordinary work, which, as we will come to see, is very much a work of mourning, autonomous experience—which is to say, philosophical experience—becomes possible for one long done with philosophy; one who dances, seriously, through philosophy’s aftermath or afterlife.

While overcoming, in the sense of achieving independence from, her primary sources of inspiration is in large part what is at stake in the construction of Sholtz’s authorship, to be sure *The Invention of a People* is and must be engaged in reconstructing and comparatively evaluating the mutual mediations of ontology, philosophy of art, and ethics/politics in the work of two thinkers who Sholtz takes to be the most compelling and fully realized contemporary voices addressing the question of what it would be to overcome metaphysics as transcendence and totalization: Heidegger and Deleuze. In short, her thesis is that both Heidegger and Deleuze develop their post-Nietzschian, anti-Platonic ontologies through their philosophies of art, which in turn model and according to which artworks provide the experiences requisite for their respective ethics/politics such that overcoming (Platonic) metaphysics becomes, for both, an endeavor of sustaining responsivity to the openings afforded by aesthetic experience. In this regard, Sholtz embarks on the recognizable philosophical task of comparing the parallel trajectories of two thinkers concerned with overcoming metaphysics in view of the differences of philosophical sensibility driving them to diverse, indeed partially incompatible, conclusions. And while it is clear that Sholtz favors Deleuze’s orientation to unscriptable and unforeseeable dispersive differentiation (the rhizomatic) and his affirmation of endless errancy, wandering, and aleatory innovation (the power of the false) over Heidegger’s orientation to gathering, especially gathering in and as *logos* or as the truth of a people’s historical-cultural endowment, as well as his fixation of difference

as ontological difference—Deleuze is frequently presented as “radicalizing” Heidegger—it is by no means incidental that, while her preferences are altogether evident, they are by no means prescribed. Interesting in this connection is that Sholtz’s treatments of Heidegger are far more extensive and fully developed than are her treatments of Deleuze, who she evidently favors; to this we will return. For now, allow me to note that without the slightest impulse to proselytize and establish a new Deleuzian orthodoxy (which impulse is rampant in the Deleuzian literature, as was the case in the Lacanian literature of the recent past), her impassioned preferences become altogether evident; yet because these preferences remain visibly such, that is, passionate preferences rather than polemicized programs, they remain exposed to subtle yet consistent undercurrents of challenge throughout the text which, as we will see, bear Sholtz’s thought beyond the limits of the contemporary literature on Deleuze, and perhaps beyond her explicit intentions, while bringing it into touch with the most pressing questions concerning philosophical practice in the political present. Ultimately, I will claim that the comparative brevity and underdeveloped character of Sholtz’s treatments of Deleuze are crucial indications that her Deleuzian preferences are by no means dogmatic but, quite the contrary, are being tested, challenged, and partially divested in order that her thought remain unreservedly available to experience, certain crucial features of which would be blocked by Deleuzian enthusiasm. Against the backdrop of her magisterial expositions of Heidegger, the comparatively cursory and coarse and, in this precise sense, explosively impassioned expositions of Deleuzian thematics become visible as something like a last grasp at the untenable, a disappointed idealism, or as a necessary liberty afforded by a part of her authorial persona to another part that has not yet overcome its inaugural passion and thereby impedes a higher coherence, i.e., inhibits the authorship from coming more fully into its own.

Before this can be unpacked, two remarkable features of Sholtz’s nonprescriptive yet passionate discourse must be underlined, as they clarify the significance of her authorship; and as should be clear by now, I take it that the construction of her authorship, far more than her reconstructive and comparative philosophical labors *per se*, as impressive as they are, is what makes the text so remarkable, indeed invaluable. That is, while her expositions of Heidegger and Deleuze are superb,³ they cover familiar territory, and her claim that Deleuze “radicalizes” Heidegger often seems a slight of hand given that, as Sholtz notes repeatedly, Heidegger and Deleuze are often asking far different questions despite their shared orientation to overcoming metaphysical transcendence; for Deleuze to “progress” with

³ Let there be no misunderstanding: even though Sholtz’s treatments of Heidegger are far superior to her treatments of Deleuze, the latter are still highly impressive.

respect to Heidegger, their interests and problematics would have to converge far more than they do. The construction of her authorship, however, is entirely unprecedented and deserving of the utmost thoughtful attention.

First, the palpable absence of universalizing impulses comes off not as self-restraint but feels more like serene self-sufficiency, a neo-aristocratic comfort in one's own skin. While neither confrontational nor piercing in the manner of Marina Abramović, Sholtz's authorship embodies a steady composure and integrity, or more like a resolute, full-blooded being at ease with oneself, an autonomous presence, and an absolute seriousness and attentiveness that resonates with Abramović's feminist performative practice and should be considered in its wake.⁴ Not only her manifest preference for Deleuze over Heidegger but her authorship generally exhibits, strikingly, an almost effortless reserve there where others would hardly be able to hold themselves back. Consider the following passage: "we refrain from any critical evaluation of [Heidegger and Deleuze's] respective interpretations of Nietzsche, [to which the first Part of the book is devoted!] but rather treat this moment as a productive space of convergence from which to draw insights as to why the two thinkers are committed to certain ontological positions and to explain how their philosophies concerning the function of artworks differ."⁵ Most emphatically in her discussions of Deleuze, but also nearly any line from her discussions of Heidegger could be put forward as evidence of this, Sholtz demonstrates an astonishing reserve: she says just enough to clarify the position without overindulging,⁶ which so often means projecting an argumentative infrastructure or underscoring an immediate political pertinence which is both questionable in itself and betrays anxieties amplified through the very means by which they would be assuaged. Inspired yet utterly self-possessed, Sholtz's writing remains patient and discerning while

⁴ Like Abramović, Sholtz's performance achieves a formidable self-presence, enacting an uncompromising self-possession that becomes the condition for extreme self-expansion, going beyond the limit, testing "what a body can do." While the differences between Abramović and Sholtz are altogether obvious—for instance the line that leads from Abramović to Cindy Sherman has no bearing on Sholtz's performative practice, Abramović's penchant for histrionics and her interest in purification and perhaps transcendence have no echo in Sholtz, and Sholtz displays nothing of Abramović's courting of disaster for the sake of exposing, confrontationally, the social unconscious, or the extent of manifest misogyny—for both, the embodied self is very much on the line and, in large part, their accomplishment is the persistence of the embodied self under conditions hardly conducive to it. It may be, as well, that for both it could be said that the plural body is the house of being.

⁵ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 14.

⁶ "Standing still is not actually 'still.' Balancing on two legs demonstrates to the dancer's body that one moves with gravity, always. Observing the constant adjustments the body makes to keep from falling calms the whole being. It is a meditation. It is watching the reflexes at work, knowing they are subtle and dependable—not just emergency measures." Steve Paxton, "Fall After Newton," in *Dance*, ed. by André Lepecki (London: The MIT Press, 2012), 63.

never becoming rigoristic, thus authoritarian or aggressively self-assertive: there is no stampeding toward conclusions, officious reprobation of alternative readings, or marshaling of mountains of evidence in favor of an interpretation none the more convincing or secure for it.⁷ Sholtz's writing paces out positions rather than arguing or polemicizing. Though her expositions are forceful, radiating a contained passionate intensity, she remarkably manages to suspend language as command. Her elevated but never rapturous rhetoric dignifies both topic and authorship without overclaiming.

Let this be clear: this is the book we did not know we were waiting for; a book on Heidegger and Deleuze that, finally, manages to refrain from arguing, convincing, and interpretively innovating (and so manages to divest the power-imbued fantasies of philosophical community elaborated thereby), that puts to rest all meditative stalking and enthusing, that feels no need for exegetical finesse or power brokering, and simply is—which is no small thing, but a tremendous accomplishment of powerlessness (*Gelassenheit*). This is a book—a writerly, dancerly event—that dispenses being, not advice, let alone existential guidance or political prescription, or scholarly insight: it is as it performs, an extraordinary susceptibility to being, which is to say, undiminished experience. Serenely uninterested in willful dominance, self-insistence, dramatic self-destitution, or attunement to concealedness, everything in Sholtz's authorship is on the surface, maintained, invitingly, in its reservedness (*Verhaltenheit*). In this respect, the text is a performance-event of her notion of a people-to-come.

Exemplarily, Sholtz's authorship is uninterested in power, whether this be the power of reason, of conversion-inclined polemics, or of spectacle, but rather in finding its pace and space, in clarifying impressions and testing their coherence, in allowing what comes of minor doses of inspiration when thought is dedicated to their undergoing, and thereby, in finding the essential movements of her *écriture*. Unlike the pursuits of *écriture féminine* in which the sonorous materiality, embodied, affective, and drive-based relationality, and psychic reservoirs of language subtending its hegemonic semantic surface are developed as sites of resistance and speaking and being otherwise, Sholtz's *écriture*, while as keyed to the ethical-political latencies of the unthought as are these more familiar practices, does not give itself over to the

⁷ In relation to this, Sholtz also cites Heidegger's hyperbolic admonishment that "'the officious will to refute never even approaches a thinker's path' (NIII/IV, 229)." Cf. Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 40. While I will be unable to dedicate extended attention to this, and only comment on it periodically, note that Sholtz's text progressively explicates its performative principles, leaving a trail of breadcrumbs for those who would enter into its self-consciousness. The implicit progressive (but nonteleological) self-consciousness of the performance manifests both at the level of thematic development and through such textual moments as the above. See, for example, Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 53, 57, 78–9, 85, 108, 151, 268.

discomposure of embodying the excavated repressed,⁸ e.g., performing the tension of the semiotic and the symbolic or pursuing an erratic and erotic practice of writing as a critical rejoinder to the façade of rational neutrality sustaining and sustained by such repression. For it does not presume to offer itself as a model or mimetic training ground for a progressive ethical/political future; nor does it presume that resistance to the repressive symbolic order can but take shape as its eternal ironizing or intermittent disruption.⁹ In the wake of Deleuze, Sholtz gives credence to the power of the false, to a sense of the world as teeming with transformative, truly novel, interstitial possibilities. (Her caution in this regard will be discussed later.) Implicitly in dialogue with the likes of Cixous, Clément, Irigaray, and Kristeva, but significantly differing from them in ways necessary to bring the practice of *écriture féminine* into contact with and continue it in the context of a greatly transformed affective, political, and intellectual culture, Sholtz's eminently composed discourse presumes "merely" to go its own way, to work its way through and out of its compelling sources of inspiration, that is, to "overcome" its impassioning investments, which in no way means simply leaving them behind but rather achieving the thoughtful integrity of unreserved experience that cannot be had, simply, with or without them. Her negotiations of her passions, and the way this facilitates undiminished experience, are enactments of her dancerly autonomy: each movement of her writing attains its full significance through a structuring choreography, yet feels, within itself, free. And it is precisely in virtue of its eminently self-confident composure that her writerly, dancerly performance issues an invitation to follow suit in one's own way: freedom beckons to freedom.¹⁰ But it is also through its remarkable reserve that her authorship acknowledges the social and political powerlessness of philosophical practice without indulging in despair or disavowal. One can always decline to dance. Very much unlike the style of performance art that makes audiences anxious by explicit gestures of recruitment, and equally far from Brechtian endeavors of audience politicization (proletarianization), Sholtz's performance, through its

⁸ Which is perhaps hyperbolically intensified and disarrayed on account of its repression, and perhaps further on account of its need to resist immediate occlusion or facile incorporation.

⁹ In this way, Sholtz's authorship—the *persona* or mask that affords a freedom to exceed her conscious intentions, to pursue that which her self-conception, e.g., as a Deleuzian, will not allow—takes a distance from the Deleuzian minoritarian strategies that the text explicitly, if somewhat tentatively, champions. Consider also the distance Sholtz's authorship takes, in its performance of self-possession, from the Deleuzian inclination toward the chaotic-cosmic, his "lean[ing] toward the thought of the infinite" and "maintain[ing] just enough consistency to become imperceptible." Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 68. Numerous further examples of such a performative displacement of Deleuze could be adduced.

¹⁰ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 53.

enthraling self-composure, simply and subtly extends an open invitation.¹¹ Ironically, though her claim is that for Heidegger as for Deleuze, through the experience of art, a people—a being-together-in-difference—is inaugurated or at least afforded an essential condition of possibility, her artistry—and it is indeed artistry—is far less sanguine about, or even as manifestly concerned with, its social uptake, its ontological-political “work,” than are Heidegger and Deleuze; yet it is through this emphatic self-composure that such work becomes possible. Not just in this respect but most generally, the Heideggerian and Deleuzian thematics deftly expounded by Sholtz are challenged, complicated, and indeed frequently contradicted by her authorial performance.¹² The enabling condition—and consequence—of this challenging and dynamic reworking is Sholtz’s resolute, attentive exposedness to the social-political present: a conjuncture in which ontology, art, and politics are as unlikely to save us as a god, and in which interstitial

¹¹ Though caution here would certainly be necessary, Sholtz’s practice might be usefully considered in light of Michael Fried’s art-historical notion of “absorption.” Cf. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980); *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). Of particular interest in this connection is Sholtz’s refusal, or better, evident disinterest in enigma, its displacement by reservedness and how this bears on her reconfiguration of the anti-theatrical imperative, of facingness, and of the accomplishment of presence.

The invitation extended by Sholtz’s performance, or more precisely, the manner of this invitation’s extension, suggests a limited analogy with psychoanalytic practice. Notice that an open invitation is extended there where, given the ethical/political concerns of the text, one might expect interpellation, i.e., rhetorically amplified gestures of recruitment. What Sholtz offers is not a path, a new orthopraxy or orthodoxy, but permission, namely, permission of the kind an analyst can offer: permission to pursue what inceptively but due to resistances issuing from obscure, rationalized authority, distortedly, one was pursuing already. Her work, as Heidegger says of the work of art, is the letting arrive (dawn) of what is emerging into presence. Further connections with psychoanalytic practice will be considered below.

Bearing in mind both Sholtz’s anti-theatrical accomplishment of presence (the connection with Fried) and the way she extends an open invitation through enthraling composure or “absorption” (the connection with Freud), consider that her performance is and must be a matter of self-showing, *phainesthai*, (now a connection with Heidegger) that never becomes theatrical, extravagant; that it is and must be luminous but never dazzling; and this is how it avoids obscurantist, thus repressive, enchantment, i.e., the production of manipulability (now a connection with Spinoza and Adorno). That these disparate regions of thought would so elegantly come together is nothing less than bewildering. It is also, incidentally, a terrific example of the type of unforeseeable convergence that motivates, and perhaps validates, the specific forms of extra-conceptual comprehension pursued by the Deleuzian “idea.”

¹² Sholtz, as authorial persona, is anything but Heidegger’s poet or Deleuze’s nomadic, anomalous pack animal becoming minoritarian and ultimately imperceptible. Her performative practice evinces neither the despair nor the optimism of Deleuze’s interstitial micropolitics. There is neither erratic or chaotic multiplicity of forces evident in her performance nor evidence of unregulated becomings; on the contrary, everything is measured, calibrated, confident. And very much unlike the destinal, homeland-bound address of Heidegger’s poet, Sholtz’ authorship manifestly knows not to whom it speaks: she dances, if not simply for herself, then in the dark.

possibilities facilitate the reproduction of control societies, yet in which refusing to be bullied into despair and to succumb to the enormous pressures of stupification (a-musement) is still a meaningful option. One can yet dance, with spritely seriousness.¹³

That Sholtz's impassioned authorship remains as composed as it does, unavoidably interested in its social uptake without devolving into overeagerness, is all the more remarkable given the company she keeps. *The Invention of a People* may be the first extended treatment of Deleuze that goes in for neither clamorous anarchic naiveté nor sophisticated metaphysical extravagance;¹⁴ the first extended treatment of Heidegger that avoids reactionary impulses altogether. Her writing is utterly balanced, measured, graceful: there is no stern Heideggerian condescension and none of the imperative impetuosity or ruthless affirmative demands of Deleuzians. Never acceding to rapturous heights or enigmatic meditative depths, it seeks to be artful and thereby to inspire a people to come, but knows that under foreseeable conditions of reception it is bound to be but "aesthetic:" contemplatively enjoyed rather than existentially-politically inceptive. That within itself it resists but does not refuse or deny this fate is a measure of its attunement to the present, its capacity for experience. The text knows itself to be, and conducts itself as, addressed primarily to an audience of philosophers,¹⁵ thus refrains from any audacious, conscience-assuaging,

¹³ Pichet Klunchun's account of his dance practice seems, in many respects, an apposite characterization of Sholtz's: "As a demon dancer, I know this risk and this fight well. As a demon I will always lose and upset the world—yet I keep dancing. Why? Because I also know that my dance is grounded in a tradition of discipline, patience, precision, and intense concentration, and that my dance, including its future, is open, and that I fight against what I and the world have become. So, I will continue to dance until I have changed, until the demon wins, until the demon comes out ahead, until the world transforms, dancing with great patience, precision and focus. That is what I am daring to do. That is why I have danced. That is my future perfect dance." See Pichet Klunchun, "Thoughts on the Future Perfect of My Dance as Demon," in *Dance*, 31.

¹⁴ Indeed, Sholtz downplays Deleuze's metaphysical self-indulgence as much as possible, just to the near limit of distortion.

¹⁵ The extended treatments of Heidegger interwoven with discussions of Deleuze, who has lately received eager, arguably overeager, attention within diverse fields of practice, ensure that the text remains primarily addressed to philosophers. The altogether evident waning of the Heideggerian star, thanks to the persistent, pervasive prejudice against his work and the negative attention occasioned by the recent publication of the *Black Notebooks*, makes the present moment one in which extended discussion of Heidegger is likely to repel most readers without a formation and professional interests in philosophy, not to mention even many professional philosophers. Thus, it should be noted that while the extensive treatments of Heidegger are likely to repulse fervent Deleuzians and so prohibit the diverse uptake which writings on Deleuze tend to enjoy, the concern with Deleuze is likely to repulse philosophers as much as, if not more than, the concern with Heidegger; and in this way, that is, by depriving itself of any readymade audience, Sholtz's text performatively embodies the modernist demand to "construct" its own audience, which would be, in her idiom, to "invent a people." But the difference here, which is to say, the displacement, while slight, is crucial. The modernist demand that artworks

fantasmatic calls for revolution, and thereby takes the measure of its historical moment and dares to install itself resolutely within that moment rather than project past it. Philosophers are no longer, if they ever were, a vanguard.

Exceptionally clear structures of thought become a platform for, rather than an excuse for neglecting, rhetoric, i.e., appearances, and in this

autonomously elaborate the proper conditions for their reception—i.e., through themselves cultivate taste for and induce practical responsiveness to, which in part, paradoxically, means innovating in light of, their novel and singular accomplishments—was itself a recognized criterion for high artistic achievement whose satisfaction could signal, at once, independence, strength, and belonging. To satisfy this demand was for a work, which initially could not but strike as “ugly” or otherwise obnoxious, to construct for itself a community of taste and to inspire successors, thus to stake out its place within modernism as legacy or tradition, however paradoxically such in virtue of its being a tradition continued and renewed through freedom. In short, even if its significance, stakes, and reverberations exceeded the restricted domain of the artworld, the modernist demand was addressed to and through known institutional channels. Sholtz’s aspirational invention of a people is addressed to no one. Or rather, to no one in particular, no privileged or proper audience. Not even, really, to a surrogate audience, as the artworld, following a Schillerian idea, was once thought to be a plenipotentiary or placeholder for an absent politics. The performative practice by which a people would be invented is not addressed to and through the artworld or any analog, e.g., the “world” of contemporary philosophy; it has no appropriate institutional medium, no welcoming field of reception. It would be accomplished one knows not how; and in this not knowing, specifically in not knowing how a people so invented would be more than a fleeting frame of mind or an immediately dissipating feeling of urgency and common purpose, is the critical insight that the contemporary social fragmentation into a proliferating plurality of practices does not amount to the invention of a people, though the invention of a people could not be anything other than this, just otherwise. Only because the text remains unruffled by all its unknowingness can it clearly convey, that is, convey as clearly as present reality allows, that the difference between the present disaster and a people to come is that slight adjustment of which Benjamin, and in his own way Adorno, spoke of in connection with the idea of the messianic. In other words, the success criteria for the invention of a people can be provided only by the world, not independently by thought—and the world has not offered much in this regard. Hence the necessity of Sholtz’s performative poise. Her reserve is a waiting, a waiting to witness, i.e., an availability to experience. [This aspect of Sholtz’s work connects with the best elements of Deleuze’s analysis of the crystalline regime in *Cinema 2*. See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). It is, in other words, a withstanding of temptations to despair (withdraw) and to optimistically exaggerate (act out): a courageous, exemplary accomplishment of remaining present to experience and to oneself. Only when and insofar as it becomes evident that Sholtz dances, almost ineluctably, by and for herself, thus that her performative autonomy is, however compelling and thereby inviting, conditioned by and an elaboration of the socially enforced unknowingness of what movements would inspire the invention of a people, i.e., takes shape as a reflexive engagement and a thereby refusal of reconciliation with its socially enforced solitude, is the question of the invention of the people properly posed *in its historical-political (material) rather than intrinsic opacity*. The invention of a people cannot be merely a matter of reconfiguring communities of taste (“an aesthetic program”), but nor can it be a direct political initiative, whether institutionally mediated or resolutely localistic. Tenaciously holding onto this unknowingness, thus capable of appreciatively attending all manners of practical-creative assemblage while at once refusing to ignore their limits, is how the problematic of the invention of a people is maintained on the narrow path between Scylla of enthusiasm and the Charybdis of despair.

way the text attests to its awareness that the conditions for its success at invoking a people to come are extrarational, “all too human.” But also in this way, that is, through her elevated but never overinflated rhetoric, Sholtz displays her disinterest in merely adding to the voluminous scholarship on Heidegger and Deleuze. On one level she does want to insist, against reigning scholarly sensibilities, that Heidegger and Deleuze can be productively read in conjunction. But her highly crafted rhetoric clearly suggests that much more than an academic contribution is being pursued. Were that her primary goal, the rhetoric would be but ornament. Sholtz’s language, rather, is the medium of her spritely serious performance. Against and in view of expository theses intelligently ordered, her language embodies a perpetual upsurge of transient, intense significance that such theses cannot quite contain, a minor eloquence, and therewith an inceptive and provisional performative elaboration of the forms of meaningfulness that would be incumbent to a people to come. Uplifted but never rapturous, an ebullient swirl rather than—and as tacit criticism of—a meandering verbosity or overrefined terseness, Sholtz’s language, like her authorship, embodies a measured, balanced, yet passionately stirring utopia of the ordinary. Language, thought, and experience are aligned, for a utopia of the ordinary is precisely the meaning of a people to come.

More than impressive, it is perhaps necessary that Sholtz’s authorship engages such extravagant muses in order to attain its sustained composure. What Heidegger and Deleuze afford, namely, experiences of the inordinate, the allure of excess, multiplicity, and opacity, become the condition for Sholtz’s graceful phrasing through which thought is steadied, calmed by her enclosing language. Her language is calibrated with laser precision, shaping the object of thought rather than taking flight into a rhetorical autonomy that presumes to be a powerful revolutionary force—and thereby Sholtz clearly indicates her understanding that the conditions for success at invoking a people to cannot be “merely rhetorical.” Hence, her language is never scintillating, evocative, or incantatory, though it continually edges toward profane illumination. Not exactly sober, but steadying, her language is utterly without levity, always to the near side of sublimity, yet nothing less than inspired. Graceful phrasing effects minor moments of redemption, modeling, as well as can be done at present, the deflationary utopia of the happiness of thought¹⁶—what was earlier termed autonomous experience—implicit in her authorship.

Never demure but reserved, Sholtz’s language attains a remarkable precision: most often, to say more would be overreaching, allegorical (i.e., projection, and at the limit, delusion), while to say less would be to invite

¹⁶ Theodor Adorno, “Resignation,” in *Critical Models*, 293.

allegory.¹⁷ That is, both more and less would conduce to enthusiasm, whereas Sholtz's rhetorical fine-tuning exhibits an exemplary reservedness, a refusal to answer questions that reality alone can answer, and has not yet.¹⁸ In her language as in her authorship generally, there is no erratic or chaotic multiplicity of forces, no vertiginous peering into murky, abyssal depths, no invocation of archaic or otherwise sublime metaphysical energies. Rather than taking shape as reverie or stultified mystification, experiences of the impossible facilitated by Heidegger and Deleuze become, through Sholtz's patient, precise phrasing, resources for a steadying, withstanding composure.

While her authorship embodies a confident autonomy, Sholtz resolutely refuses to say "I," let alone advocate or embody self-interest. In this way she takes her distance from philosophical and political liberalism. She writes in the first-person plural, saying "we" rather than "I." This is not an imperious "we," arrogant and threatening in its theatricalized claim to be secured against dissent, sovereignly reposed within itself. Nor is a "we" that bespeaks complacent communitarian insularity or overconfident brittleness. It is not a partisan "we," though it does occasionally emit the waft of a manifesto. Most importantly, this is not a "we" that cannot say "I," but rather a performative refusal to appropriate what may, indeed must, be left in common, thus an invitation, or at least an opening.¹⁹ Sholtz is not primarily concerned with finding *her* voice, that is, with finding the words with which to express her singular experience of the world or staking a claim within the philosophical territory she traverses, but rather with performing a resonant thinking of a people-to-come. Her authorship is very much a performance, indeed a (partially proleptic) performance of a people-to-come, which, exemplarily, remains fully aware of its powerlessness without hysterically grasping for power or aggressively cultivating the spectacle-power of its powerlessness. Rather, Sholtz lets be a people-to-come. The essential presupposition of her performance is that the main issue—realizing a people-to-come—cannot be forced; such a people is not an object of political or philosophical construction. "A people is, and must always be, to come. This

¹⁷ Or else signal dismissive condescension.

¹⁸ The immanent infelicities of the text often result from failures to sustain this reserve, to maintain this difficult poise. For instance, when Sholtz writes, clarifying the ek-static rather than authentic/recuperative character of a people-to-come, that "a people does not look inside itself to pull out something hidden that is more meaningful, greater and purposeful, but is created in responding to the outside, a perpetual becoming other—not a historical becoming, but a cosmic becoming which arrives from the future, as the outside, rather than the past," one wonders whether this thought is yet thinkable, whether we have sufficient experience to so much as *think* a world not essentially imaged as and by the spellbound present. On the other hand, Sholtz may at times overdo the priority of actuality over possibility. This will be considered below.

¹⁹ At times, Sholtz's "we" is an emphatic "I." See Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 5.

is the impossible possibility that corresponds to thinking as becoming and creation as opposed to will to truth (QP 55/54)."²⁰ A people, here, is not an object of calculation but a performing, that is, a thinking: what comes, if it comes.²¹

The second feature of Sholtz's nonprescriptive yet passionate discourse that must be underlined is that, as already indicated, she knows her Deleuzian preferences to be unlivable. While in some ways she struggles with this, resists it, her authorship manifestly stops short of a full throttle embrace of Deleuze, allowing the difficulties and dangers of Deleuze's political ontology to become evident in a way that impedes straightforward advocacy.²² In no way does Sholtz give herself over to an unqualified affirmation of the Deleuzian "vision" by which she is clearly inspired, and through her resistance she registers social-political impasses of the present that we cannot merely wish our way past. This is to say, Sholtz's withstanding of her wish to simply *be* a Deleuzian, her foregoing of immediate enthusiasm for the program she passionately pursues, functions as a psychosocial diagnostic of less tempered treatments of Deleuze.²³ That her expositions of Deleuzian concepts are energetically exploratory, elaborating a *wish* for practicable forms of ethical/political resistance and liberated forms of social life while taking their measure against the demands of present reality and attending their internal infelicities, signals that her authorship sides more with wish-analysis than with fantasmatic wish-fulfillment, yet, equally importantly, is strong enough to sustain its wishfulness, knows its value. Her withstanding is no Beckettian waiting, and as such it registers the socio-political possibilities of the present that we cannot merely wish our way into. This is one crucial way that Sholtz's authorship models, or better, embodies, the integrity of thought: undiminished experience of the present disaster, wishfulness for renewed vitality and emancipatory alliance, and the exigency of critique are manifest in their necessary interactivity.

That Sholtz is not really on board with the Deleuzian program or "vision" becomes strikingly–yet quietly–evident as she dedicates the final

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

²¹ At this point one can perhaps make out just how close to and just how far from Hirschhorn Sholtz is. The convergence and divergence of the political artistry of Sholtz and Hirschhorn would repay careful study.

²² Late in the book Sholtz describes her work as "advocating" on behalf of Deleuze. I think this is a mistake.

²³ Consider in this connection the awkward attempts at achieving rhetorical charisma so frequently encountered among Deleuze acolytes. Sholtz's emphatic reserve reveals the Deleuzian mainstream as manically struggling to stay afloat atop of the depressive undertow and manifold complicities into which those who venture into Deleuzian waters find themselves dragged. (If it seems odd to speak of a depressive Deleuzian undertow, recall that Deleuze images a world teeming with transformative, truly novel possibilities blocked, or if not, for the most part recuperated, by the as if metaphysically mandated inertial forces of "opinion," etc.)

section of the book to “find[ing] an example of art that actually contributes to the invention of a people ... and ... show[ing] how art and art practices can be a *model* for ... a people-to-come.”²⁴ One might have thought on the basis of the foregoing that art as such, or at least a great deal of modern art, by provisioning novel affects and percepts, instigates a people-to-come. That finding an example of art practice that even *models*, let alone induces [activates], a people-to-come is evidently difficult suggests that the development of a people-to-come, even the clarification of the concept, is incredibly hard-won and dependent on socio-historical variables, hardly the automatic result of aesthetic experience or its social analogs.²⁵ Actualizing a people-to-come is no “program for aesthetes.” What this concluding gesture suggests is that release into a Deleuzian multiplicity of transformative and transforming affects and percepts, a world of minoritarian becomings and unrecuperated, eventful wanderings—generally, the fundamental elements of Deleuze’s political ontology—remains for us a dim prospect, a frozen latency; ever available, and as such tantalizing, yet insistently impracticable. Facing up to this, Sholtz refuses the fantasy of explosive release endemic to the literature. What her reserve makes plain, however subtly and quietly, is that today one cannot simply *be* a Deleuzian, that (her) Deleuzian proclivities are unlivable, necessarily stunted.

With this in view, the critical significance of Sholtz’s claim, following Heidegger and Deleuze, that *art* provides a privileged, amplified perspective on and simulates the development of a people-to-come comes into focus. That the socially marginal institution of art would be the primary, even necessary medium in which a people-to-come is simulated and perchance activated²⁶

²⁴ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 265; emphasis added.

²⁵ Sholtz’s treatment of Bacon and Klee should be reconsidered in light of this concluding effort. I take it that part of the claim here, or more precisely, the ultra-reserved intimation, is that Bacon and Klee are not adequate catalysts for a people-to-come *at present*, thus that the concept of a people-to-come is fully historical. Signaling in this direction, and very much to her credit, as noted, Sholtz consistently downplays Deleuze’s metaphysical adventurism. Compare, *inter alia*, Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia UP, 2008). The role of historicization in Sholtz’s theorizing the configuration of aesthetics and politics might be amplified by comparison with Poggioli’s *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*: “the hypothesis (really only an analogy or symbol) that aesthetic radicalism and social radicalism, revolutionaries in art and revolutionaries in politics, are allied, which empirically seems valid, is theoretically and historically erroneous.” See Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 95.

²⁶ “The affects of art ... *prepare the sensibility* necessary for the critical consciousness that is nomadology” (Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 255; emphasis added); “affects ... *can* have the effect of changing the possibilities that we *then* take up and live” (*Ibid.*, 257; emphases added); “These potentials ... are selected according to situations and *ostensibly* created as an event of becoming” (*Ibid.*; emphasis added). Cf. *Ibid.* 251: “nomadology reveals a different way of being

means that Deleuzian ideas are, like art, socially inessential, anything but live possibilities. Sholtz's suppressed thesis is that, sequestered to the outermost limits of social reproduction, for the most part isolated from the structures of domination they would contest, art practices, like Deleuzian ideas, remain a repository of emancipatory interests and provocations that cannot in any obvious ways be taken up and lived, practically realized. (Or the ways they can be taken up inevitably disappoint, e.g., remain "ethical" or "artistic," which is to say, socially secluded.) They persist, and indeed exert their romantic allure, by grace of their predominant social inconsequentiality. This is not to say that they without their effects, certainly. But it is to say that, for the foreseeable future, these effects will remain scattered and wildly outmatched by the forces of domination they are up against. If "the abstract machine and its lines of flight manifest in their most potent form through works of art," then these are hardly potent.²⁷

in relation to space and others *that can be incorporated and mobilized for political activity and change*," hence is not itself immediately such (emphasis added).

²⁷ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 145. While it would be pushing things too far to say that, for now, a people-to-come (as ethical alignment) resides merely in the City of God, just how much of an hyperbole this would be is not clear. Agreement in "tendency," in Walter Benjamin's sense of the term, does not constitute a polity. Cf. Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *New Left Review* 1/62 (July-August 1970), 83-96. Indeed, what would transfigure the ethical register of a people-to-come into political constitution is very much unclear in Sholtz as much as in Deleuze, though for different reasons. (It is not even clear if Deleuze is much interested in the question, and at times Sholtz seems averse to it; see, e.g., Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 268: "a minor politics or minor art ... would not and could not operate through the molar structures of legislation or policy." Part of my worry about this repudiation is that it risks relegating a people to come to a kind of neo-monasticism. While it is a signal feature of Sholtz's accomplishment that her performative elaboration of a people to come takes shape as an active mimesis of modernity's ongoing crisis, that is, of the fetishistic displacement of eros onto the cycle of frustration and longing itself rather than any possible object of satisfaction, if this is *all* that Deleuzian endless becoming comes to, all that a people to come comes to, we should be wary. Or to put the point in more contemporary terms: if one rejects the very question of how a population becomes a people, does one not concede to the reign of biopolitics? Or to put the point in somewhat more practical terms: if a people to come is insistently and overridingly an ethos of resistance, and all the more so to the extent that it is *primarily* an inceptive preparation, anticipation, projection, and imaging, then might it be, at a certain point, just us getting in our own way? When is a safe space—e.g., artistically mediated politics—an enclosure? For a counterpoint, see Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 271. For indeterminate treatments, see *Ibid.*, 249 and 251. To be sure, Sholtz's reserve with respect to political projection is the price she pays, that perhaps must be paid, for sustained attunement to the present. A worry insists nonetheless—must this be the price paid?) What the reference to Augustine, however hyperbolic, allows us to appreciate, then, is the danger of moralism, indeed of moralism's easy but by no means inconsequential imperialism, in Deleuze, and in a different way, in Sholtz. From Cicero's notion of moral community ("Romans" everywhere united in their identification with or acceptance of the same laws/principles, which, for the most part, they have no hand in constructing) to Augustine's rendering of the City of God as authentic and true community there is not a great leap, and obviously a historical connection. At stake, in short, is the question of the de-politicization of a people-to-come: whether its constitution as, and thus its stranding as, merely ideological and abstract alignment (or

Consider now that the artists relevant to articulating and perchance stimulating a Deleuzian people-to-come are, even within the sphere of art, exceptional: “Deleuze is drawn to artists of a particular ilk, those who live, breathe, and create on the boundaries of chaotic intensity, situating themselves within the maelstrom of psychic dissonance and cultural upheaval in congress with the unknown Deleuze attributes to certain figures, chiefly artists, special insight, an ability to move beyond the theatre of representation and engage in the movement of pure immanence.”²⁸ The resources for a people-to-come are apparently quite rare. If such movement is so exceptional among artists, it can hardly be presumed to be generally practicable. Hence Sholtz’s reserve with respect to her Deleuzian preferences. Her authorship embodies a difficult knowledge.

ephemeral alliance) is historically contingent or internal to the notion itself. Which is to ask: what practical and institutional shape might a people-to-come take? What would transform a population into a people (to come)? Or is the very idea of a people—broadly, the civic republican tradition—being abjured in the idea of a people-to-come? And to the extent that it remains a matter of ideological and abstract alignment, i.e., agreement in tendency rather than co-implication in extended praxis, to what extent is a people-to-come a force of imperialism?

Perhaps in part, Sholtz’s reticence vis-à-vis the question of politics can be traced back to Heidegger’s stance of emphatic, perhaps excessive, unknowingness about what politics—as democracy—would be (post “the turn”). For Heidegger, it seems, *something*—well expressed via the elusive and globally encompassing character of “*technē*”—is impeding collective self-realization, i.e., politics. *Something* is blocked, eclipsed by an interactive complex of developments of planetary proportions. Correspondingly, at this stage of his work, political prohibition on preparation for a messianic age takes shape as a metaphysically inflected conception of *Ereignis*. For Heidegger, it seems, we know everything and nothing about what we want politically. This is registered in his work, and in Sholtz’s, in the evidence and obscurity of “a people” (also of “politics” and “event”). The notion of “a people” as absent or deferred underlines our unknowingness with respect to our primary political desires; it is not that we lack political will (or not only that), but that we lack a coherent conception of what we want politically. That is, our imaginative and conceptual deficiency is sourced in a material-institutional deficiency. Both Heidegger and Sholtz may overestimate these deficiencies insofar as they suggest that we cannot but find ourselves preparing, anticipating, but unknowingly. [Heidegger’s historicization of art as cognition in “The Origin of the Work of Art” might be relevant to this. See Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperPerennial ModernClassics, 1971), 15-86.] And in both cases, such overestimation may be motivated by a desire, understandable even if perhaps reactionary, to thwart totalization: the deficiency becomes the ground of non-closure. In other words, overemphatic unknowingness with respect to the political may signal the legacy of trauma: hyperinvestment in uncertainty functioning as a continuation of and compensation for unclaimed experience, thus finding itself in the service of disavowal and imaginative reparation.

In connection with the issue of moralism flagged above, it would be interesting to compare *The Invention of a People* with two of Kristeva’s works. See Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). See also Julia Kristeva, *Nations without Nationalism*, trans. by Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

²⁸ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 175.

This would not be reserve without struggle, without the intensity of inspiration and of indignation—following from unguarded experience of the present state of things—manifesting in occasional outbursts of untoward excess. For instance, there are moments in which Sholtz strays into glorifying deracination.²⁹ Yet, even so, she steers clear of any anarchism. Consider the following: “Deleuze ... imagines a thinking that takes flight from the earth and a concomitant rhizomatics that frustrates both the rooted *and the rootless, nomadic wanderings*,”³⁰ “the totalization of the war machine ... would amount to another kind of fascism. If the model of the war machine were extended to the entire earth, even to constitute smooth space, it would signify a totalizing and debilitating process of closure.”³¹ Unable to hold herself back entirely from fetishizing Deleuzian thought—which is understandable and perhaps not such a bad thing, a minimum of fetishism providing a necessary counterweight to pervasive pressures toward indifference and incitements to despair—Sholtz remains critically circumspect: a fetishistic minimum in no way becomes charismatic social mandate or even zealous personal commitment. Yet her criticisms of Deleuze are often subtle, too subtle, as if she were hiding them from herself—or one part of her authorial persona were having its say, pressing its complaints and warning the readership, despite the inclinations of another. The struggle to sustain the difficult knowledge that her Deleuzian preferences are unlivable, necessarily and in part rightfully inhibited, is *evidently* arduous—itself an element of the self-conscious performance even if not entirely clear as such to the empirical author.

Examples of this too subtle, almost coded criticism—and thus of this struggle—abound. In the context of Sholtz’s mention of the debate surrounding the status of the refrain in Deleuze’s writings (some hold that nearly any refrain effects a productive displacement, while others, partially on the basis of Deleuze’s manifest privileging of modernist music and painting, maintain that refrains in pop music especially tend to operate as monotonous forces of totalization—dead repetitions), her claim that “[t]he refrain which flows through Deleuze’s writing is the affirmation of a liberating dis-organization” perhaps, quite discretely, becomes a way of saying that Deleuze is given to his own, i.e., internal, pop devolution.³² Slightly more explicitly, when Sholtz writes that “Gregor’s deterioration in Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* from human thoughts and expressions to

²⁹ Or, conversely, demonizing stasis: e.g., “assemblages become fixed and concretised, their essentiality unopposed, and this is a problem.” Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 145. For an example of her occasional veering toward a very dangerous eroticization of flux, see *Ibid.*, 250–251.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 126; emphasis added.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 253.

³² *Ibid.*, 175.

incomprehensible, guttural noise is also an excellent image for the sliding scale of free indirect discourse and its power to reveal an inner seething of language, its murmuring, senseless materiality and the unformed material of expression," the undercurrent of critique (namely, of unbridled Deleuzism), indeed of warning, is unmistakable, however overshadowed by an appreciative attitude toward Deleuze's interests in anti-humanism, minoritarian literature as war machine, the asemiotic, etc.³³ While avoiding polemics and perfunctory criticism is admirable, this is understatement pushed far too hard. It is as if a sensitive nerve were being respected, or demanding that it not be impinged upon; as if criticism of a still vital yet vexing source of inspiration were being quieted, suppressed just short of occlusion, in order that its negotiation be afforded the necessary time and space of its unfolding—as with "working through."³⁴

Sometimes, however, Sholtz's proclivity for understatement makes her criticisms of Deleuze all the more forceful. After outlining the Deleuzian criteria for a people-to-come, Sholtz notes that such an endeavor, however emancipatory in intent, risks "becoming reterritorialized as a method of fascistic control. Logically, as soon as a people is defined, it can be stratified and absorbed into regimes of dominance or state apparatuses – this is always a possibility, especially so in what Deleuze refers to as our contemporary 'control societies.' Moreover, this must be the case if one remains committed to a thoroughgoing immanence. In order to address this, Deleuze links the invective of deterritorialization to a political stance which corresponds to a particular typology and movement, which productively de-centres the *polis* by countering it with *nomos* in order to open a new space of conceptualisation and concept of space."³⁵ (249-50; see also p. 253). This is not much of an "address[ing]," and Sholtz knows this. Her criticism in this regard, while certainly understated and underdeveloped, arrives with a powerful thud. Here and elsewhere Sholtz raises the biggest, most damning problems for Deleuze's project, then glides through.³⁶ There is a tacit or explicit

³³ *Ibid.*, 178.

³⁴ Another place at which one might detect an excessively subtle criticism of and distancing from contemporary Deleuzian enthusiasm is in Sholtz's discussion of Philip Corner's *Piano Activities*. While *Piano Activities* is presented as a "paradigmatic example of ... revolutionary affect," Sholtz might be taken as intimating that the 60s were the last best hope for Deleuzian artistic politics. See Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 271.

³⁵ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*. 249-250, 253.

³⁶ See *Ibid.*, 252-253: "This undoing of things raises the difficult issue of political violence as constitutive of nomadology and the dilemma of creative destruction: 'Lines of flight ... are very dangerous for societies' (MP 250/204), yet they are also instrumental in producing a milieu in which change is possible." Here too Sholtz does nothing to relieve the worry she raises. The aporia is flatly stated, all the better to remain visible as blockage. Elsewhere, rather than dropping a daunting problem in our path, Sholtz delicately lays bare the perhaps insuperable

acknowledgment of the dangers and inadequacies of Deleuze's project, but, remarkably, no fretting or maneuvering. (So too with her treatment of Heidegger and Nazism.) Sholtz makes plain a serious risk or devastating problem and then moves on, seeking neither to redeem nor to condemn,³⁷ in part because she does not *need* Deleuze. Not as idol, in any case. Her achievement of thoughtful integrity renders her needless of a master, hence uninterested in the apologetics or denunciations by which better masters are wishfully called forth. Capable of autonomous experience, no doubt in part due to Deleuze's inspiring influence, Sholtz has no need for a master to obey and/or resist. To be sure, she needs Deleuze's continual inspiration in ways already mentioned, but what she needs she has internalized. (Much of her treatment of Deleuze is a coming to terms with this.) Deleuze's "vision" is, for Sholtz, a projection of possibilities, an imaging of resistance and emancipation, an opening, not a religion; not even a regulative ideal. What this dimension of Sholtz's authorship gives to be seen is the meaning of "overcoming."³⁸

In view of her criticisms of Deleuze, one might say that Sholtz's ultimate claim, taking a distance from Deleuze, is that art is capable of preparing us, perhaps forever, or until all availability to what it portends is

problems with the Deleuzian project, gently alerting us to the roadblocks inevitably encountered by those who would pursue the Deleuzian path. Such delicacy is equally forceful in result.

³⁷ In one particularly striking instance, Sholtz raises the most difficult, challenging questions, arguably the central questions that any advocate of Deleuze's aesthetic-political ontology would have to contend with, and then simply, strikingly moves on, never in the succeeding developments engaging, let alone answering, the questions she frames, as if implying that they are flatly unanswerable (at least by us, now): "What kinds of invention does Deleuze's art imply? ... 'what justifies Deleuze's view over any other?' How can one make the claim that one perspective on invention is more adequate than another, if there is no truth to any and we take his claims of immanence seriously? Is it merely the value of inclusion that guides Deleuze's judgment that Heidegger got the wrong earth, the wrong people?" Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 243.

³⁸ Correlative to Sholtz's subtle yet highly significant criticisms of Deleuze is her consistently subtle reserve in affirming her Deleuzian preferences: "connections, flows and relations ... made through affect ... *can be* the inspiration for drawing creative intersections and new lines of development" (Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 252; emphasis added); "These potentials ... are selected according to situations and *ostensibly* created as an event of becoming" (*Ibid.*, 257; emphasis added). Because they do not overwhelm her, Sholtz's Deleuzian preferences are evidently necessary openings, a medium of inspiration supporting the capacity for appreciative attention to low-key latencies within prevailing structures of domination. Or from a slightly different angle, one could say that within her authorship Deleuze's thought functions more as counterballast than as action-guiding ethical/political system, regulative ideal, or projected practicable program. Rather taking it as a platform to make overblown claims about art's political-ontological efficacy, which would be mere self-indulgence and critical retreat, Sholtz's treatment of the Deleuze material central to her interest in a people-to-come remains resolutely reserved, focusing steadily on art's political *valence*: its capacity for positive, creative, yet insistently marginal inspiration.

swamped by the stagnation of mortified life, for a politics that we cannot but, from this side things, hope for, but which we may not want, which we may rightfully refuse, if it ever comes.³⁹ In other words, *that we do not know what we want*.

This is an extremely compacted point in her authorship. So stridently does Sholtz refuse to surrender to Deleuzian enthusiasm that, in a way despite herself, she makes evident the impossibility of an unqualified affirmation of Deleuze's ethics/politics far more forcefully than even Deleuze's most trenchant critics. Yet her impassioned expositions of Deleuze make plain that she remains very much under his sway; more than charmed, if not fully committed. One crucial characteristic of these expositions, gesturing in both directions simultaneously, is its relative coarseness. In one way, the relative coarseness of Sholtz's treatments of Deleuze suggests that the material is, for her, too live, too fresh, raw: something not yet fully worked through, the site of an impassioned encounter in whose sway she remains and whose force she seeks to extend, a captivating influence that propels the discursive expression it also overwhelms.⁴⁰ Somewhat choppy in its development of both individual concepts and conceptual movements, that is, breaking off and moving on before a concept or conceptual movement attains clarity and consolidation, Sholtz's treatment of Deleuze is imbued with the force of passionate immediacy—in part, a passion that needs to see where things are going; a passion at once to see and not to see. A gripping inspiration to which she would, if she could, give herself over, the Deleuze material is, for Sholtz, a site of investiture, indeed in some way a calling or charging, that she feels compelled to work out; though no fanatic, she is very much under Deleuze's influence. In another way, this relative coarseness of treatment suggests ambivalence: it is as though Sholtz were not quite convinced by her impressions of the extraordinary promise and value of Deleuze's thought, and so is not entirely committed to working through the material. In this connection, Sholtz's suppression of Deleuze's metaphysical interests assumes a new significance. Such coarseness perhaps betrays an anxiety from which it is, in a way, a release: as from a passion that, one senses, if granted free reign would disappoint or a commitment that one vaguely knows cannot be carried through.⁴¹ In short, the relative coarseness of Sholtz's treatments of Deleuze exhibits all the markings of unresolved attraction to

³⁹ Cf. Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). This is one reason it is important that experimenting with the idea of a people to come occurs in the safe space of art.

⁴⁰ Whether and to what extent Deleuze's thought is *intrinsically* opaque cannot be considered here.

⁴¹ Though consistent with it, this element of Sholtz's text is not fully integrated into her elegantly discomposed authorship.

one who “one knows better” than to pursue. In both ways, Sholtz makes plain that her Deleuzian preferences are far from consolidated, let alone the firm ground of ethical/political prescription.

As reserved as Sholtz’s authorship is, *The Invention of a People* is shockingly audacious—yet by no means virile or vituperative; to its great credit it avoids the aggressively masculine modalities of audacity so frequently encountered. Boldly but without a hint of self-arrogated authority or assuming a domineering tone, Sholtz concerns herself with nothing less than “reinvent[ing] philosophy,”⁴² “construct[ing] a new *logos*,”⁴³ “the essence of humanity,”⁴⁴ “re-open[ing] the question of art and the future of humanity,”⁴⁵ and voicing an ethical/political “task for humanity.”⁴⁶ (243; see also pp. 86 and 260). As astounding as the audacity of her topics is that in their pursuit her authorship maintains its remarkable reserve, never signaling a private ambitiousness or becoming overbearing. This is itself an exemplary artistic accomplishment; all the more so in that, unusually, none of this comes off as naïve. What’s more, eschewing aggressively masculine modalities of audacity in no way involves the typical masochistic excess—especially prominent in the Heidegger and Deleuze literature. Sholtz’s resolutely scholarly, indeed somewhat fastidious, treatments of her topics may seem somewhat excessive, perhaps nervous, but such an insistently scholarly attitude, like religion of old, structures ex-static inclination, forestalling super-ego imperativizing of masochistic self-dissolution or precipitous deregulation of discourse in order to be swept up in the strong winds of overpowering thought. Sholtz’s performance is inspirited but not erratic or anarchically self-exalting; there is nothing of Honey’s “I dance like the wind!” (a moment played brilliant by Sandy Denis in Mike Nichol’s film rendition of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*).

The formal endeavor and seeming paradox of the book, namely, the achievement of autonomous experience through reflective reconstruction of one’s sources of philosophical inspiration, is also the book’s most abiding thematic concern. At stake, one might say, is working through transference as a condition for experience. Further, analogous to Freudian practice, Sholtz would have us expect and prepare for, thus supports our capacity to undergo, to remain affectively and reflectively available to, the unexpected, which is to say, experience.⁴⁷ Formally/performatively and thematically, Sholtz asks how

⁴² Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 243. See also *Ibid.*, 86, 260.

⁴⁷ Sholtz’s methodological and performative privileging of the aleatory also might be considered in connection with the role of free association in psychoanalytic theory and practice. So too her understanding of the Deleuzian simulacrum, and the way this understanding takes

not to destroy the possibility of experience through neglect or inadequacy, i.e., lack of form. “As thinkers of the event, both Heidegger and Deleuze are invested in presenting the conditions under which something new arises and in presenting a form of thinking adequate to these conditions.”⁴⁸

Earlier I said that *The Invention of a People* is and must be engaged in reconstructing and comparatively evaluating the mutual mediations of ontology, philosophy of art, and ethics/politics in Heidegger and Deleuze, and now we are in a position to see why. The work of reconstruction and comparative evaluation is the medium of mourning, of overcoming, thus the condition for—the chance of—autonomous experience. Performatively, the work of divestment unfolds through a reconciling, which is to say, exceptionally attentive, well- and confidently worded, and structurally articulated, investment in the many details and overall significance of Sholtz’s two primary sources of inspiration: Heidegger and Deleuze. Her mastery of the material is how she lets go.

This is especially evident in her treatments of Heidegger.⁴⁹ Sholtz’s writing on Heidegger is perfectly satisfying, saying neither overmuch nor too little for its purposes within the overall economy of her argument and altogether clear.⁵⁰ Through this satisfying, and more importantly, confident, *satisfied* treatment, one senses that the object of Sholtz’s consummate scholarly care is long divested, that the thoughtful, circumspect return (reconstruction) is in the service of working through so as to really give up what is already affectively distant, no longer really compelling or of orientational significance. As opposed to the typical antipodes of hysterical denunciation and somewhat less hysterical retrieval of an authentic philosophical core, a calm pervades Sholtz’s writing on Heidegger as is only possible when one is no longer embroiled with an author as a vital medium of deeply engaging or mystifying problematics. Sholtz dares to be satisfied with Heidegger—to grandly, in the way of a once and for all type endeavor, work through his once and to some extent still inspiring interest until there is nothing left to say, and this becomes clear, thus until she can meet Heidegger,

shape in her authorial performance, might be thought in connection with features of the analytic setting in the service of provoking and analyzing transference. Indeed—though this point is peripheral to both Sholtz’s central purposes and my own—the simulacrum may be the pivotal framework allowing for a Deleuzian reconciliation with psychoanalysis; or for identifying the elements of caricature in Deleuze and Guattari’s animadversion to it and the anachronisms of the contemporary reassertion of their contempt for it.

⁴⁸ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 15.

⁴⁹ This is also a highly significant factor in the differences in quality of Sholtz’s respective treatments of Heidegger and Deleuze.

⁵⁰ One could certainly differ with her interpretations, but that is beside the point.

whatever his philosophical majesty, on even terms.⁵¹ The reconstruction attains its perfection, and therewith its sense of closure, on the condition that the object of interest is no longer a gateway into a field of unresolved, compelling questions and intriguing problematics, no longer a vital interest. Audaciously, what this reconstruction gives to be seen is Heidegger thought through—that Heidegger can be thought through, learned from and separated from. The treatment of Heidegger is (performs) not a rationalization of affect, i.e., an apologetic for overpowering inspiration, but a rational continuation and amplification of the affects involved in loss and mourning in the service of overcoming. Hence, the sense of holiness or of the sacral (i.e., untouchable) in Sholtz's writing on Heidegger: mourning is not to be disturbed, let alone corrected.

Of course, Sholtz's reconstructive working through of Heidegger is not only in the service of divestment and separation. Within the structuring choreography of her performance, the memory of Heidegger remains constitutive, an enabling condition for her singular engagement with Deleuze and, ultimately, her autonomous performance itself. Only by transforming the ghost of Heidegger into an ancestor can Sholtz work through Deleuze and thereby come into her own.⁵² More directly stated, Sholtz needs Heidegger, and her mourning of Heidegger, and the dark memory of Heidegger's politics, to open the Deleuzian path that she does not take but explores—i.e., experiments and seeks to come to terms with, attempts to concretize and clarify, does not so much navigate, let alone launch herself down, as intellectually map out, tracing the terrain, probing it from afar.⁵³ The consummate composure and calm that Sholtz achieves in her treatment of Heidegger becomes the productively sedentary energy and centeredness that tempers her clear preferences for Deleuze's pre-individual, impersonal,

⁵¹ In no way does Sholtz's treatment suggest that there is no more work to be done with or on Heidegger, only that whatever interest there may be is not her concern, or at least not an overriding, exigent concern.

⁵² "Those who know ghosts tell us that they long to be released from their ghost life and led to rest as ancestors. As ancestors they live forth in the present generation, while as ghosts they are compelled to haunt the present generation with their shadow life Transference is pathological insofar as the unconscious is a crowd of ghosts ... this is the beginning of the transference neurosis ... ghosts of the unconscious, imprisoned by defenses but haunting the patient in the dark of his defenses and symptoms, are allowed to taste blood, are let loose. In the daylight of analysis the ghosts of the unconscious are laid and led to rest as ancestors whose power is taken over and transformed into the newer intensity of present life, ... secondary process, and ... contemporary objects." See Hans Loewald, "The Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis," in *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 249.

⁵³ Cf. Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 259: "The encountering of artworks is experimentation."

cosmic forces and disturbances.⁵⁴ Conversely, her Deleuzian passion affords her a critical vantage on Heidegger and projects a line of flight by means of which she takes leave of him, releasing herself from embroilment with a powerful, but for her no longer productive, body of work. Within the construction of Sholtz's authorship, Heidegger and Deleuze thematize and carry out "a *polemos*, a struggle between separation and belonging together."⁵⁵

Sholtz's treatment of Deleuze, in contrast with her treatment of Heidegger, is marked by an infatuation that requires a different manner of working through. Though her engagement with Deleuze, too, is a coming to terms with limits and in the service of divestment, far more emphatically than is the case with her treatment of Heidegger, such divestment is made possible by giving Deleuze his best chance to be compelling. It is as if Sholtz is romancing Deleuze. Though clearly inspired by his work, she does not know quite what to do with him, how to live with or situate him. Deleuze projects a compelling emancipatory vision, but Sholtz cannot but worry about its practicability and violence.⁵⁶ So she does what lovers do: gives the beloved every chance while trying to remain as clear-sighted as possible.

In terms of pure aesthetic delectation, Sholtz's writing on Heidegger is so much better than her writing on Deleuze because she is not yet done with Deleuze, is still enduring his influence, thus writes in a way that suggests a mildly intoxicated disarray, an unmastered, propelling interest. About Deleuze Sholtz is undecided—and this is what her authorship gives to be seen. (She is clearly decided that Heidegger is great, but a "precursor"; therefore whatever unfinished business she might have with him is shuffled onto her relationship to Deleuze.) Because she is more than intrigued yet critically reticent—in sum, because she is ambivalent—Sholtz's discussions of Deleuze, unlike those of Heidegger, are a bit conventional and at times jargonous. Or better, the sometimes conventional and jargonistic character of her writing on Deleuze is how the unresolved—passionately animated but critically reserved—character of her relationship to Deleuze manifests itself. As much due to her passion as to her critical vigilance, Sholtz is not at all clear about what she wants to do with Deleuzian ideas, what can be done with them. Hence the occasional unclarity of phrasing.⁵⁷

None of this is intended as critique. Indeed, there is something right about the kind of writerly lapse that occurs in relation to the Deleuze material. *Who knows what to do with these ideas?* That many, especially in the artworld,

⁵⁴ In some ways, and worryingly, the dialectic of Heideggerian gathering and Deleuzian displacement resonates with Rancière's police/politics dichotomy. However, cf. Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 126.

⁵⁵ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 192-193.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, 141.

act as if they know exactly what to do with Deleuze is to the point. One measure of the remarkable accomplishment of *The Invention of a People* is that even its disappointments and frustrations are for the most part informative, worth more than a shelf of Deleuzian literature. Sholtz's writerly lapse is, even if symptomatically so, a rewarding medium of insight. Albeit perhaps too subtly, or even unconsciously, yet confluent with her authorship generally, what the conventional and jargonistic elements of Sholtz's writing on Deleuze performatively indicate is that it is not at all clear if Deleuze is to be taken seriously. The fault in the writing may reflect the fault in the object, as if obeying Aristotle's dictum to achieve only as much clarity as the subject matter admits. It may be that what stymies Sholtz's rhetoric and obstructs the development of her exegeses, causing them occasionally to collapse into conventionalism and cliché, is that there is not enough to work with, that Deleuze may be, at least to some extent, no more than faddish cliché fodder.⁵⁸ Of course this is not Sholtz's dominant attitude toward Deleuze but rather a highly guarded moment of extreme reticence: a defensively contorted expression of a stratum of worry made inadmissible by her passion. What makes it possible, however, is the unguarded availability to experience that her authorship embodies generally. This writerly lapse is perhaps not so much error as the indirect expression of an exemplary availability to experience; disarray and slipping into cliché may be, even if they are not entirely so here, elements of a performance of autonomy.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Consider that, more generally, perhaps despite herself yet consistent with her authorial performance of autonomous experience, Sholtz lets the murkiness, availability to obscurantism, and taint of magical thinking in Deleuze be seen remorselessly. Deleuzism may be bad metaphysics: if it is, giving it to be seen as such is preferable to affected airs of sophistication. To be sure, elements of Deleuze's thought are surely worth development, but not necessarily Deleuze's predominant form of treatment of these elements. In this respect, Deleuze is much like Hegel. Indeed, cherry picking from the former may feel compelling just as long as—or even in some ways *because*—cherry picking from the latter remains prevalent.

⁵⁹ While masochism is anything but the leading trait of Sholtz's authorship, that these writerly stumbles are not integrated and developed in the construction of her authorship despite their consistency with it may point to something like a success complex: a tendency to ruin one's accomplishment for fear of whatever the idea or fantasy of accomplishment is freighted with.

While straying into cliché seems, in the examples I have in mind, unintentional, knowingly engaging cliché is a condition for her work; thus judgment about these matters will be difficult. Sholtz must engage and slightly modify, i.e., augment, Deleuzian and Heideggerian clichés in order to maintain her thoughtful reserve; she offers not wholly new readings but slight adjustments, modest new paces. Her accomplishment, one might say, is to reterritorialize the refrain; cf. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), 369ff. "The painter is always involved in a process of selection, limitation, and elimination of some or all of the clichés with which she finds herself confronted, and this process is a struggle, requiring the painter to devise means to combat the relentless onslaught of clichés and take pains not to fall back into the world of re-presentation or imitation (FB, 83-4/71-2)." Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 151. In other words, a more generous reading than mine is possible.

The primary way of overcoming Deleuze, however, is through the poise, reserve, and gracefulness of Sholtz's authorship. *The Invention of a People* in no way embodies Sholtz's Deleuzian preferences. For Deleuze, "The moment of liberation/dissipation," which is "nothing less than the possibility of thought itself," "is equally a dis-organization, an involution which frees affects and speeds and plunges the ego into chaotic intensity."⁶⁰ This is clearly contradicted by Sholtz's authorial performance. Tempered and composed, Sholtz's authorship does not so much refuse as elegantly sidestep Deleuze's injunction to "'Stop thinking of yourself as an ego (*moi*) in order to live as a flow (*flux*), a set of flows in relation with other flows, outside of oneself and within oneself' (ECC, 51/68)."⁶¹ And importantly, after ventriloquizing Deleuze's call for radical self-dispossession, Sholtz adds the quiet qualification: "but equally important is what one encounters."⁶² Amidst a

However, this seems a good enough point at which to call attention to an objectionable aspect of the text/performance. If anything is objectionable in *The Invention of a People*, it is the occasional concession to inferior voices, i.e., citations of commentators whose language, juxtaposed to Sholtz's, is far too obvious and unrefined: like a dull mallet enforcing public opinion or a flimsy play gavel ceremoniously pronouncing feeble judgment, i.e. playing at Oedipal self-assertion. This is like inviting middling newspaper column reviewers onto stage amidst a compelling performance: such a self-important, unseeing, and cliché stuttering chorus has no place here. One almost wants to write this off as parody. When contemporary commentators are cited, as if their formulations were more elegant or incisive, it almost reads as mockery, especially in the case of commentators whose rhetorical modality is a gun-slinging macho "conciseness." See Theodor Adorno, "Punctuation Marks," in *The Antioch Review* 48:3 (1990), 300-305. Unfortunately, this isn't so. At best, what such citations make evident is that the various ideas Sholtz paces out so eloquently are already common sense (vulgar), thus that the significance of such pacing is its quality of movement, not any claim to conceptual or exegetical innovation or discovery. It is not unique ideas but unique treatments that matter. At worst, one might say that there is something mildly hysterical in Sholtz's citation of, let alone collaboration with, such fumbling, vagabond commentators as Lawler and Haar. Fortunately—though this hardly makes amends for the lapse in judgment—when Sholtz's "we" or "us" invokes such commentators in what is perhaps a fit of hysterical meekness, it simultaneously, through the power and acuity of her voice, pushes them away. That is, in moments of paraphrase, continuation, or summary following such citations, Sholtz's "we" becomes an amplified "I" or royal "we" speaking for and in the place of rightfully humbled inferiors. However, even this smack of Oedipal rivalry. It may be that Sholtz is given to surprise by the startling power and singularity of her voice, and when bad conscience sets in, she appeals to the flat-footed coarseness of contemporary commentators to alleviate the anxiety of her spritely serious singularity. So, I must qualify an earlier statement: Sholtz refuses *nearly* every mental refuge.

In comparison with this periodic submission to the authority of the vulgar, the occasional hitting of a false note and her somewhat fastidious, nervous manner of citation—it is as if she wants to keep fast company, or is even a bit delusional: the delusion being that this is a book for scholars who would be interested in checking translations against authoritative original language editions; Deleuzians especially, and the Heideggerians who might tolerate or seek out the company of Deleuze, are hardly that—is not so much objectionable as disappointing.

⁶⁰ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 174.

⁶¹ See *Ibid.*, 173.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 173.

storm of unsupportable enthusiasm for wild discomposure, Sholtz's authorship maintains its noninsistent yet emphatic and impacting composure. No "vibratory elements of language ... burst forth."⁶³ There is no "de-centering the authorial function ... unearthing ... senseless murmurings and incomprehensible utterances within language," nothing "wretched and stilted,"⁶⁴ no "musical warbles."⁶⁵ Rather than submitting itself to semiotic overflow, Sholtz's authorship maintains its elegant self-possession. Its fundamental principles are immeasurably distant from those of "Absurdism, Dada, Futurism, Surrealism, Theater of Cruelty and Situationism."⁶⁶ And there is no hint of expressionism—nothing punctuating through a too harmonious, placid surface.⁶⁷ However much intrigued by Deleuze's injunction that thinking "remain within intensity ... sustain the plateau wherein one experiences oneself as perpetually fragmented," Sholtz never goes in for "hyperconceptualization, layerings upon layerings of ideas forming an intensive matrix that is almost too much to bear: 'drawing together a maxim of disparate series (ultimately, all the divergent series constitutive of the cosmos)' (DR, 159/121)."⁶⁸ Of course, there are elements of erotic excess, a certain loss of control, in Sholtz's writing on Deleuze, but her authorship manages not to be overwhelmed by them. Never given to revolutionary outcry, and perhaps thereby slipping free of the depressive undertow of Deleuzian thought from out of which the compensatory extravagance of revolutionary rhetoric perhaps wrests itself, Sholtz's authorship remains qualified, reserved. E.g., "Through its multiple outlets and points of connection, literature *has the potential* to be a disruptive force that *cuts through* [rather than dislodges or undermines] the dominant (majoritarian) language, devising new and deviant uses (*experimentation*), and

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁶⁷ Just how far Sholtz is from any Deleuzian fetishism of the new, and of Deleuze's axiomatics and methodology, is shown not just by her methodological and performative commitment to analogy and eminence—though this is crucial—but even more directly by the graceful demurral by which she refuses measurement by such criteria as the following: "A philosophy's power is measured by the concepts it creates, or whose meaning it alters, concepts that impose a new set of divisions on things and actions." See Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 321. Her never austere, impassioned composure is a genuine rival to Deleuzian expressionism. Yet this is at once evidence of just how close Sholtz is to the Deleuzian sense of Spinozism that, ironically, Deleuze's optimism inhibited—performatively—in his own work: so insistent was Deleuze that thought is and must be practical that he neglected to develop, or more adequately realize, an expressive-practical authorship; for such can be done only by virtue of awareness of one's historical-political situation, which task Deleuze to a great extent rebuked, instead abstractly affirming an ideology of practice.

⁶⁸ See Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 228.

opening political spaces.”⁶⁹ While inspired by Deleuze, Sholtz holds back from any undue optimism, attending the fleeting possibilities projected by Deleuze’s ethical/political “vision.” Deleuze’s political ontology of art is never described as offering more than openings, the *possibility of the new*.⁷⁰ And even then, Sholtz underscores the aspects of Deleuze’s thought that speak to the insuperable limits of innovation. E.g., “nomadology reveals a different way of being in relation to space and others that can be incorporated and mobilized for political activity and change. It offers a way of living outside the model of the state apparatus, which preserves itself vociferously through domination and control of spaces to make social order and rule *intractably sedentary*”;⁷¹ “the possibility of thinking otherwise comes from the exteriority of the non-discursive. The path to escape is the pathic, as anterior to discursivity, *though in constant complication with encodings, identifications, territorializations*.”⁷² Deleuze is never so enthusiastically promoted as to need tempering by a great deal of explicit attention to the dubious and dangerous elements of his thought—much remarked upon anyway, and so redundant for one such as Sholtz who undertakes no commitment that would urge her to deny or diminish them. Thus, she lets all that is dubious in Deleuze’s thought appear, most often without discussion—in quiet qualifications and moments that hit with a thud but are never followed by any prolonged fretting or needling. And through her graceful refusal to fall in line with the rhetorical trends of contemporary commentators, thus through all that is explicitly eschewed, not said, she speaks volumes.⁷³ Sholtz’s silence is eloquent and powerful: there is not a single argument for any Deleuzian conviction, and this implies, among other things, that we cannot argue our way into another mode of being, that the metaphysics (as such) just doesn’t matter.

What this overcoming makes possible is the possibility of experience itself. (The performative displacement of the transcendental horizon in favor not of immanence metaphysically construed but rather social-historical presentness is an enormously important undercurrent of Sholtz’s authorial

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 137; emphasis added.

⁷⁰ Other commentators may be more fidelitous to Deleuze and Guattari’s thought, e.g., Elizabeth Grosz in *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, but this is ultimately to Sholtz’s credit; she subdues the anti-phenomenological metaphysics of the percept, affect, and sensible itself—especially the category of eternity—in order to write about the only aspect of Deleuze’s thought that might matter: its treatment of the possibility of the new. See Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 149–150.

⁷¹ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 251; emphasis added.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 259; emphasis added.

⁷³ As Adorno says, “the untruth can be recognized by its bloated nature.” See “The Jargon of Authenticity,” trans. by Rodney Livingstone in *Can One Live after Auschwitz?* ed. by Rolf Tiedmann (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 167.

performance.) Through the mediations of her authorship, Sholtz's Deleuzian passions bear her not naively beyond but resolutely into the difficulties of the present. Within the scope of Sholtz's authorship, Deleuze images not a metaphysically secure other realm of infinite becomings subtending and compensating for the stasis and depredations of the status quo, and into which we might tap or immediately plunge, but multiple, infinite resistances to domination that are all eventually, indeed quickly, overcome. Exuding within and troubling what dominates them, such resistances are unable to break the spell of domination. A people to come is not a force of redemption, a harbinger of rejuvenation or reactivation and vindication of authentic principles historically betrayed and occluded. It is not an inaugural force of epochal transition, capable of emancipatory release from a repressive, stagnant actuality. It is, in a way, but an optics, or better, a disposition of affective and reflective sensitivity (not quite a practice), through which the nonexhausted energies of the present present themselves. In this respect, Sholtz's performative elaboration of a people to come is an updating of Heideggerian "preservation." Sholtz's Deleuzian passions, then, are the medium not of naïve or desperate enthusiasm but of awareness that we are not yet, and are unlikely to soon become, sufficiently available to, sensitive to, the plane of immanence; more precisely, that to a great extent immanence is historically-practically foreclosed, hence for the most part experience-distant. Within the space of Sholtz's authorship, Deleuze conduces to the experience—the suffering—of the non-experience of immanence, of its distance from contemporary experience having become so extreme that it might be thought metaphysical. Only because it never becomes a subjective principle of her performance can historically objective despair be registered, paradoxically, through Sholtz's Deleuzian passions.⁷⁴

From another angle, as configured within Sholtz's authorship, these Deleuzian passions are precisely what invest and amplify the minor accomplishments, hence the ongoing transformative possibilities, of present practices. Impressive strides are being taken in any number of domains. As ephemeral and endangered as they may be, even understood to be inevitably absorbed and neutralized by prevailing structures of domination, resistance and initiative are not yet exhausted, and this is what Sholtz's authorship gives to be seen and appreciated.⁷⁵ Despite the prevalence, indeed near-inevitability, of the state machine and suchlike molarizing, dominating

⁷⁴ In regard to the progressive self-explication, i.e., self-consciousness, of Sholtz's performance, see Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 85: "we must be able to experience our distress."

⁷⁵ See especially *Ibid.*, 257.

structures absorbing and profiting from resistance,⁷⁶ something remains unexhausted. This is not a question of unwitting structural transformation through the dialectical recuperation of resistance but of attending an endangered but not extinguished remainder—a question of remaining present to persistent, innovative practices of resistance and emancipatory alliance that are not without consequence and that may *image* another form of being. Here Deleuze meets Adorno.⁷⁷ Rather than projecting a people as a far-off fantasy or as abstractly other to prevailing forms of domination, Sholtz, via Deleuze, keeps experience keyed to the non-exhaustion of emancipatory movements in the present, however micropolitical or interstitial they may be. Its poised—affected, moved, in a way readied, but reserved—acknowledgment of the dynamic but hardly “mobilized” present, its tacit sidestepping of cynical diminishment, precipitous celebration, and rallying polemics, is how this authorship performs the integrity of thought, which is itself the sustaining of experience. Evidently and exemplarily solicited—which is to say, both called upon and shaken up—by all manner of contemporary accomplishments, but holding to its own path of reflective inquiry, Sholtz’s authorship knows not what the next step *for philosophical practice* can be; and refusing the relief of fantasmatic actionism or anti-intellectual self-deprecation, it sustains this unknowingness as the condition for and conduit of experience, and thereby sustains the possibility of philosophical practice itself: something distinct from work within the disciplinary enclosure of philosophy.⁷⁸ Sholtz’s authorship is a sounding of present practices, an effort to take one’s bearings from and within them. By virtue of its impassioned reserve, Sholtz’s authorial performance raises the question—which is itself an “overcoming” of Deleuze—of who we are in view of Deleuze’s demands on who and/or what we must become if we are to be free.⁷⁹ Only through their mediation by her authorial performance do

⁷⁶ “[T]here is always the possibility, and in many respects the inevitability, that the war machine will be appropriated for the state apparatus, thus immobilizing its affects and rendering a method of control *tout court*.” *Ibid.*, 253.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 252. The suggestion here is that, for all their undeniable differences, the Deleuzian simulacrum (mediated by Sholtz’s authorship) and Adornoian semblance converge. Another respect in which Adorno and Sholtz’s Deleuze might be thought together is in connection with the question of immanent critique. Sholtz’s Deleuze is not quite an advocate of unlimited affirmation, and in not being so, converges with the concerns of immanent critique to remain unabashedly, non-dialectically immanent.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 170: “Deleuze insists that art only prepares or forewarns of a people-to-come, rather than providing its model. *The future of philosophy calls us to think through new affects, to think the pure being of sensation, in order that a new thinking and a new people emerge*” (emphasis added).

⁷⁹ Compare *Ibid.*, 255: “Art is ... a fundamental power of invention, which has the power to go beyond reality and hold open the question of what could be and what kind of beings *we* could be.” Sholtz does not develop or configure the question of who and how we might be,

Sholtz's Deleuzian passions conduce to the essential question: What would it be for immanence to become praxis?⁸⁰

One way to think about *The Invention of a People* is as a late rejoinder to Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985)⁸¹ on the ground of newer "new social movements." One might then say that in view of recent political experiences, Sholtz proposes the rhizome rather than the chain of equivalence, nomadicism rather than hegemony, hope rather than fear (i.e., threat construction). But of course, and importantly, Sholtz does not propose these terms as replacements for Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical apparatus, let alone seek to displace their political experiences and interests with those of more recent vintage. While Deleuzian terms *may* be more adequate to contemporary political developments, or certain among them, Sholtz never argues for or polemicizes on behalf of their categorical superiority. In fact, she does not argue for them at all, or even "propose" them if by this is understood advocacy seeking the authoritative public institution of its initiatives. Rather than indulge in a fantasy of philosophical legislation or activism, i.e., "take a position," Sholtz experiments—somewhat

but holds open, via affect, the space of this question— which, if so doing is the accomplishment that Sholtz makes it out to be, must be imperiled, on the verge of collapse. Art, e.g., Sholtz's authorship, at once throws us ahead of ourselves and brings us into critical contact with ourselves by providing an encounter with affects with which we are incommensurable, affects that cannot be presently processed, either subjectively or cognitively: these are minor—to some extent diagnostic—disturbances.

⁸⁰ Let us note, in passing, another respect in which the work of reconstruction makes possible autonomous experience. The reconstruction of Heidegger and Deleuze affords Sholtz an imaginary heritage that supports the minimal self-stabilization necessary to undergo and reflectively sustain experience—especially such difficult regions of experience as Sholtz undertakes to explore. One dimension of Sholtz's "we" is clearly a generational transmission from Heidegger to Deleuze to herself. One might think, more, that this "we" echoes with a particular imaginary frame of transmission: from grandfather (Heidegger) to father (Deleuze) to daughter (Sholtz). The plotline is familiar enough: the enormously admirable, pathbreaking but somewhat conservative grandfather bequeaths a radical son who continues the work of the prior generation, though, partially due to his defiantly idiosyncratic idiom in which of course he is unwittingly identified with the past there where he would insist most vociferously on his independence, this legacy remains largely unknown until the arrival of the dutiful/undutiful daughter who sorts out the family legacy: she corroborates the father's criticism of his father but also underscores the legacy he is reticent to admit, identifies what is incomplete and insupportable in her father's work, and on this basis makes her own contribution. Even if this construction of an imaginary heritage is defensive, it is by no means pathological. And importantly, this imaginary heritage is in part what grants Sholtz—how Sholtz grants herself—permission to be affected, exposed, even a bit wild, and in that *thinking*; for this is the family legacy. Even more, the particular history of philosophy told through the reconstructions of Heidegger and Deleuze is not only self-clarifying, and as such, self-stabilizing, it perhaps contributes to the confidence necessary to undertake the adventure of autonomous experience: if these figures and this history can be reflectively contained and articulated, anything can be.

⁸¹ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985).

adventurously—with these terms, puts them into play and tests their resonance. In consequence, if one considers *The Invention of a People* to be a late rejoinder to *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, then by virtue of its critical but cautious, thus self-critical engagement with Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist classic, it leaves us with an open question: What politics is right for us today—if there is one?⁸² As Gadamer says of our relationship to art: our intuitions cannot but be conflicted. On the one hand, we feel that autonomy-inclined experimentation is frustratingly formalist, that in view of the exigencies of the moment, art should address our moral and political concerns. On the other hand, we feel that abstract and dissonant works are authentically moving, valid, and that art's attempt at direct political intervention is never far from philistine preaching. Thus, we feel that a middle position between the extremes of autonomy and activism is unavoidable, yet find it inevitably unsatisfactory. It is not just that a middle position betrays the ideals represented by the extreme antipodes but that activist art remains aesthetic while autonomous art cannot but be politically and ideologically freighted. So again, neither path seems quite right and a middle road is none the more satisfying. Failure is endemic to art. Similarly, in a political register, one might say that hegemonic consolidation and nomadic wandering are equally compelling and equally unsatisfying, and that a middle position, while unavoidable, cannot but disappoint. That Sholtz's question—What politics is right for us today, if there is one?—is left open is how it remains in touch with the contemporary, how it manages to stay true to the reality of dissatisfaction and uncertainty.⁸³ Sholtz takes the temperature of the contemporary and does not lie: this alone is a significant accomplishment—to refuse fraud.

In its sustained exposedness to experience, its dancerly autonomy, *The Invention of a People* is the voice of the age. It is unwavering in its hopefulness but not unaffected by objective conditions of despair—modern tyrannies, unbridled capitalism and consumerism, the rampant destruction of thought, etc. Performatively holding open a taught space, ever on the cusp of collapse, Sholtz makes possible an experience of the present, and this is a rare accomplishment indeed. This is why, however cautious one must be about it, her holding onto Deleuze is so important. The hope he inspires, facilitated by the experiences of unexhausted ethical/political initiative to which his thought—when properly mediated—conduces, counters the objective despair of the present. But also, within the space of Sholtz's authorship, *Deleuze's* thought (one would never have expected this!) becomes a way of registering the destitution of the present, philosophically and

⁸² Cf. Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 260.

⁸³ Cf. In this connection the discussion of threefold responsibility, especially with respect to the tension between the second and third planks can be found in *ibid.* 259.

politically. Through Sholtz, the question Deleuze addresses, in the wake of Heidegger, is this: Is nontotalization, both generally and in particular, politically, even coherently, *thinkable*?

Remarkably, Sholtz's performance makes of philosophy a transitional object. What she offers, philosophically and politically, is "just enough of a framework to ward off chaos and enough openness to allow movements to proliferate."⁸⁴ What she offers, in other words, is her independence of thought, her exemplary capacity for experience. This is what "public philosophy" should look like, and feel like. Sholtz's accomplishment is "to be equal to the conditions of life."⁸⁵ *Elle est absolument moderne*.

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⁸⁴ Sholtz, *The Invention of a People*, 279.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*.

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Eagleton, Terry, *Materialism*¹

Jovito V. Cariño

Terry Eagleton makes a bold claim on the basis of which he lodges an updated take on *materialism*, the very title of his recent work. There seems to be, as he perceives, a widespread marginalization of the body as an interpretive text not only within the academe but in almost all domains of cultural studies. What he proposes to do in this book is to mend the waning, or in some cases, misplaced interest on the body and reinstate it in its universal stature. Apparently, Eagleton is not satisfied with the way the body is construed as a construct by some genres of intellectual discourse, or caricatured by popular culture, the mainstream as well as the social media, and hence, his attempt to recover it as a “rudimentary” entity. He traces the restoration of interest on the body to the writings of Michel Foucault in the 1960s which, per his account, reconnects political theory with the intricacies and sensibilities of the flesh.

Materialism is a well-pedigreed concept. As shown by Marx in his doctoral dissertation, Democritus and Epicurus had long propounded the idea before it even became a byword among the intellectuals and natural philosophers of the Enlightenment. For its advocates, old and new, Eagleton contends that materialism stands for the repudiation of “priestcraft and superstition.” This is not to say, however, that thinkers of the modern period are of one mind on their materialist claims. Newton and Darwin are both scientists, but they adhere to starkly different materialist tenets. The same is true for Spinoza and Engels, who both think of matter as all there is, but would argue in separate ways what makes it such. The debates, as Eagleton would have them, swing from equating materialism with humanism (Spinoza), to affirming deism thru matter (Newton), to levelling anything human to the immanence of material reality (Darwin and Engels), to recognizing human agents as correlates of his material world (Freud and Marx). A great contribution to these debates are, of course, the theories of dialectical materialism and historical materialism; and the Marxist ontology and philosophy of history, respectively espoused by Marx and Engels, albeit

¹ New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016, 192 pp.

in recent years, more and more contenders have come to challenge the canonical stature of these Marxist materialist doctrines. Among these challengers, Eagleton names *vitalism*, a strand of materialism identified with figures like Schelling, Nietzsche, and Deleuze. It is the same emergent philosophic thought that has gained traction in the writings of the likes of Žižek, and the exponents of the so-called New Materialism. However, far from yielding matter its rightful place, these conceptual innovations produce contrary results. In its wake, materialist discourse is left in utter disarray and matter itself is reduced into a sort of “materiality without substance.”

Eagleton is all for rehabilitating appreciation of material existence, but he would have none of the romantic, post-structuralist stance which denigrates humanity to elevate the material constitution of the world it inhabits. In his usual witty, yet insightful remark—an abundance of which makes his book an engaging and adventurous read—he affirms that: “Matter may be alive, but it is not alive in the sense that human beings are. It cannot despair, embezzle, murder or get married. The moon may be in some sense a living being, but it cannot prefer Schoenberg to Stravinsky.” As far as he is concerned, when it comes to matter, neither idealist humanism (which sets humanity above matter) nor mechanical materialism (which upholds matter above humanity) is our only choice. Vitalism counts itself as an alternative, but its disavowal of human agency and its notion of matter as a super fluid reality, argues Eagleton, seems to work against its cause. There is no way for vitalism to keep its materialist provenance while it pushes to the margins, “the peculiar form of materiality,” which characterizes the human person. In doing so, it forfeits its claim not only to materialism, but moreso to radicalism. By way of example, Eagleton singles out Deleuze as the best representative of this “cosmic vitalism” which considers the body as force and for which any form of constraint is deemed as negative. In taking matter as flux or a field of virtualities, resistant to any barrier or impediment, Deleuze unwittingly reproduces a kind of “Romantic-libertarian philosophy” which underwrites the same market ideology which he vehemently rejects.

Besides vitalism, other varieties of materialism include: material culturalism, which inquires into the material contexts of art (Raymond Williams); semantic materialism, which takes meaning as a function of material sign and, as in Marx, recognizes the public character of language (Ludwig Wittgenstein); somatic materialism, which takes the body as the ground and origin of thought (Jean Luc Nancy), a vessel of both ascetic and aesthetic experiences (St. Paul), or the seedbed of the unconscious (Sigmund Freud); and speculative materialism, which insists on the infinity of thought and the corollary contingency of everything, man and God included (Quentin Meillassoux).

This cacophony of paradigms simply shows, as Eagleton presents, the extent and complexity of the problem that materialism represents. To restrict materialism, therefore, to mind-body dichotomy, to phenomenology, or to quantum physics, is to look at this problem with a myopic eye. In fact, the urgent and more salient aspects of the questions that materialism poses find their best expression neither in scientific nor philosophic treatises alone; one may also have enough of it, says Eagleton, in commonplace materialism by which he means excessive regard to material goods. It is the kind of materialism that the once popular song of Madonna or the recent one of Jessie J reminds us. People who are materialistic in this sense consider matter not as the opposite of the spiritual, but the very impetus as to why they seek out the respite provided by different spiritual outlets no matter how phony. As Eagleton remarks: "People who have a surplus of material goods are likely to resort to bogus forms of spirituality as a much-needed refuge from them. A gullible belief in wood nymphs, magic crystals, Theosophy or alien spacecraft is simply the flipside of their worldliness." Moreover, there is this materialism in a broad sense which Eagleton describes as "materialist imagination." Apparently, this one refers to the mindfulness akin to a poet's eye that wonders about and admires "the flow and texture of material things." This tapestry of rival materialist theories serves as the background of Eagleton's theoretical experiment aimed at confronting materialism's contemporary conceptual predicament. His project is to devise a theory closely linked with historical materialism, but it is not exactly, as he claimed, "identical with it."

Rather than labeling or defining the project he has in mind, Eagleton tours the reader into the intricate dimensions of his exploration in a manner that evokes simultaneous insight and delight. One cannot help but be won over by his almost seamless prose through which he navigates his way from Wittgenstein to Merleau-Ponty, to Aquinas, to Marx, and to Freud, among others, to argue for the reinstatement of the perception of the body as a specific entity much to the anticipated consternation of the vitalists and various post-modern cultural theorists. Eagleton emphasizes that the human body is "matter of a highly specific kind" and such specificity is what underwrites his/her identity as a human person. Taken from Aristotle, Wittgenstein, and Aquinas, he takes the human body as ontologically united with the soul, thus making it "inherently active, creative, communicative, relational, self-expressive, self-realising, world-transforming and self-transcendent (which is to say, historical)." The soul, conventionally designated as form of the body, is a functional term which, Eagleton explains, is employed mainly to distinguish not so much soul from the body, but the human body from other materially-constituted objects like tables and rubber tires. As he states more pointedly: "You can see someone's soul just as you

can see their grief or rage. In fact, to see their grief or rage is to see their soul." It is enlightening as it is surprising how a Marxist and non-religious thinker like Eagleton could mine from Aquinas, a materialism that sits well with the worldview of the differently-minded thinkers like Marx, Wittgenstein, Merleau-Ponty, and Joyce. His discussion of the materialist aspect of Aquinas' philosophical anthropology and theology of creation endows the latter with a currency that casts him in a radically new light. To quote Eagleton: "Whatever our differences from the beasts, our own forms of reasoning are in Aquinas' view deeply embedded in our animal nature, which is one reason why he is by no means the arid rationalist that some have taken him to be."

The reiteration of the soul or the specificity of the human body is crucial for Eagleton's updating of Marx's historical materialism. As the book progresses, it becomes clearer that such updating requires a balancing act between Marx's priority of human historicity (that is, human mutability and creativity) and that which is essentially unchangeable in the human person. In referring to the latter, Eagleton, at times, would also use the terms "necessity," "objectivity," or "Nature." One may accuse him of revisionism but one definitely cannot discount the merit of his arguments taken as they are from contemporary perspectives on materialism and Marx's texts themselves. Eagleton points out: "The belief that certain aspects of humanity remain more or less constant is not among the most widely advertised features of Marx's thought. Instead, he is usually seen (not least by his disciples) as a full-blooded historicist – as one for whom all phenomena are historical all the way down, and thus both changing and changeable. This, gratifyingly, is not the case ... Marx is indeed a historicist, but not a full-blooded one."

As Eagleton argues, there is enough evidence in Marx to underscore his belief on the fundamentality of Nature over history. Case in point is Marx's characterization of the human person as a species-being which alone allows him/her to act out his historicity. What Eagleton hopes to articulate, nonetheless, is not so much a romantic valorization of Nature, but a revival of the often-neglected insight from Marx concerning the intersecting dynamics between Nature and history. The convergence between the two can assume a variety of forms. One of them is labor, another is sexual act, and yet another, is art. While we have not had a short supply of these, increasingly, Eagleton observes, they have become for us abstract experiences. By indulging in these abstract engagements (which, considerably, is the only thing that capitalism can offer), the human body is "stripped of its substance." It turns out then that the enemy of materiality is not so much spirituality, but materialism in the vulgar sense of the word, that is, in the sense of an excessive propensity to treat material goods as mere objects of consumption.

Marx's celebration of the body, his somatic materialism, is deemed by Eagleton as comparable to Nietzsche's, despite the glaring incompatibilities between the two thinkers, particularly in their views on politics and society. What prevents Eagleton from endorsing Nietzsche's brand of materialism is the latter's almost metaphysical glorification of will-to-power as the ultimate human value. As a moral and political concept, will-to-power is bound to be exclusionary and outright discriminatory, the very traits which militate against Marx's materialist humanism. A body or experience does not become greater or lesser just because it belongs to someone from a different class, race, color, or religion. Paraphrasing Wittgenstein's notion of language and its rootedness in forms of life and bodily behavior, Eagleton writes towards the end of his book: "We have a range of natural, instinctive responses to others (fear, pity, disgust, compassion and so on) which eventually enter into our moral and political language-games but which are in themselves prior to interpretation. And these responses, belonging as they do to the natural history of humanity, are universal in nature. They are part of what it means to be a human body, however much any specific body may be culturally conditioned. It is on this material foundation that the most durable forms of human solidarity can be built."

In taking the specificity of human body as a point of departure, Eagleton is able to underscore an element which, though salient in Marx's materialist thought, was nonetheless left unamplified. One is tempted to read his updated version of materialism as a reconstruction of Marx's philosophical anthropology, but that would entail a blatant disregard of Eagleton's symphonic mind and enviable writerly skills which give the philosophic theme of materialism a new lease on life.

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