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# K R I T I K E

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**THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
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## ABOUT THE COVER

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### “Les Hortillonnages”

The cover photo previews *Les Hortillonnages* or the floating gardens in Amiens, France, a glimpse into the parochial past when canals served as the arteries of the local community: trade and commerce; the establishment of relationships; and leisure through gardening, fishing, or other activities. *Les Hortillonnages* today stand in stark contrast to the ontological character of accumulation, sourced within the city. The city’s kinetic mood suddenly is dispersed in the face of such vast bareness, and the empty vessels on the river’s bank reflect the emptying of one’s life when one encounters such a place today. In the face of today’s hyper-development, what the floating gardens provide is an aberration of the kinetic promise of the accelerated car-centered society. The evanescent rustic charm of such a place is a precise reminder of a return to emptiness. Critical reflection is only possible with a certain sense of emptiness.

*KRITIKE: An Online Journal of Philosophy*  
16:1 (June 2022)

Photograph by Gian Carla D. Agbisit, 2022  
Layout and caption by Kritike Editorial Board

# About the Journal

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**KRITIKE** is the official open access (OA) journal of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Santo Tomas (UST), Manila, Philippines. It is a Filipino peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, and international journal of philosophy founded by a group of UST alumni. The journal seeks to publish articles and book reviews by local and international authors across the whole range of philosophical topics, but with special emphasis on the following subject strands:

- **Filipino Philosophy**
- **Oriental Thought and East-West Comparative Philosophy**
- **Continental European Philosophy**
- **Anglo-American Philosophy**

The journal primarily caters to works by professional philosophers and graduate students of philosophy, but welcomes contributions from other fields (literature, cultural studies, gender studies, political science, sociology, history, anthropology, economics, inter alia) with strong philosophical content.

The word “kritike” is Greek from the verb “krinein” which means to discern. Hence, kritike means the art of discerning or the art of critical analysis. Any form of philosophizing is, in one way or another, a “critique” of something. Being critical, therefore, is an attitude common to all philosophical traditions. Indeed, the meaning of philosophy is critique and to be philosophical is to be critical.

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# K R I T I K E

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Featured Article

## Deconstruction and Nothingness: Deliberation, Daoism, and Derrida on Decision

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*Paul Patton*

**Abstract:** This article traces a connection between the Daoist conception of nothingness and democratic deliberation by way of Derrida's deconstructive analysis of decision. Analysis of the aporia(s) at the heart of decision is a recurrent feature of Derrida's later work and, I argue, this highlights the function of nothingness in the act of decision. After identifying convergences between Derridean deconstruction and the *Daodejing* relating to the constitutive role of nothingness in material and immaterial things, I argue that it is only because of the nothingness between reasons and a decision that there really is "a decision." This nothingness as the heart of any decision is further compounded by the "ordeal" that Derrida describes in relation to decisions that aspire to be just or responsible to the other. Finally, I argue that Derrida's analysis of decision suggests a possible way to spell out the connection between nothingness and the ethics of difference as presented in the *Zhuangzi*. Awareness of the primary and secondary nothingness involved in decision reminds us that there is no ground for "good conscience" with regard to any decision that has been taken and that there is always more to be done.

**Keywords:** Derrida, Daoism, deconstruction, democratic deliberation

This article traces a connecting thread between the idea of nothingness and democratic deliberation by way of Derrida's deconstructive analysis of decision.<sup>1</sup> The interest of the analysis of decision in this

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Jun-Hyeok Kwak, Ellen Zhang, and other participants in the "Nothingness in Deliberation" conference, who responded to an earlier draft of this chapter, and to Lasse Thomassen for his helpful comments on a written version. I am also indebted to Pei Ting



## 2 DECONSTRUCTION AND NOTHINGNESS

context is clear since the idea of deliberative democracy rests on the claim that collective decisions can be arrived at by a process of reasoned deliberation between free and equal participants. Reasoned deliberation in turn rests on the idea that the force of argument should be the sole determinant of individual and collective views. It follows that deliberation is genuine only if participants can change their views as a result of reasoned argument. In short, the whole point of deliberative democracy turns on the possibility of decision. For Rawls, the possibility of changing one's political opinions as a result of discussion with others is the distinguishing feature of deliberation. In "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" he suggests that this understanding of deliberation is definitive for deliberative democracy: in exchanging views and debating the reasons supporting their views on public political questions, citizens "suppose that their political opinions may be revised by discussion with other citizens; and therefore these opinions are not simply a fixed outcome of their existing private or non-political interests."<sup>2</sup> Josh Cohen similarly focuses on the distinctive character of the outcome in suggesting that deliberation, "generically understood, is about weighing the reasons relevant to a decision with a view to making a decision on the basis of that weighing."<sup>3</sup>

In the third section of this paper, I relate the concept and ideal of deliberation in contemporary political philosophy to Derrida's analysis of decision. His later work, sometimes referred to as a phase of "affirmative" deconstruction, analyzes a number of ethical and political concepts, including justice, responsibility, hospitality, forgiveness, friendship, democracy, sovereignty, and decision. A common feature of these analyses is the manner in which they demonstrate the aporetic structure of the concept in question. One of the first examples of this kind of analysis occurs in "Force of Law," delivered at a symposium in 1989, where Derrida discusses a number of issues relating to the concept of law and its relation to justice. In the course of this discussion, he elaborates three "privileged sites" of deconstruction involved in the idea of a just decision: the aporia in relation to the application of principles or rules to particular cases, the aporia in relation to the moment or the event of decision, and the aporia in relation to the urgency or

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and Chen Cuiting for a wonderful reading group in which we discussed *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzhi*.

<sup>2</sup> John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," in *Political Liberalism Expanded Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 448.

<sup>3</sup> Josh Cohen, "Reflections on Deliberative Democracy," in *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*, ed. by Thomas Christiano and John Christman (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 249.

immediacy of decision.<sup>4</sup> In *The Gift of Death* he undertakes a related analysis of the aporetic character of Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son and the manner in which this was both a responsible and an irresponsible decision:

Abraham's decision is absolutely responsible because it answers for itself before the absolute other. Paradoxically it is also irresponsible because it is guided neither by reason nor by an ethics justifiable before men or before the law of some universal tribunal. Everything points to the fact that one is unable to be responsible at the same time before the other and before others, before the others of the other.<sup>5</sup>

In foregrounding the problem of being responsible before, or doing justice to, a particular other while at same time being responsible before, or doing justice to, others in general, Derrida touches on a problem that is central to the idea of deliberative democracy given a diversity of reasonable comprehensive points of view: how to do justice to the views of each individual citizen while at the same time doing justice to all. He poses this problem in relation to acts of decision. Accordingly, in the second part of this chapter, I will argue that his aporetic analysis highlights the function of nothingness in the act of decision. I begin in the first part below by identifying some points of convergence between Derridean deconstruction and the *Daodejing* in relation to the constitutive role of nothingness in material and immaterial things. The point of mentioning such parallels between Derridean and Daoist ideas is not to suggest any strict doctrinal consistency but simply to establish the existence of a zone of indiscernibility or overlap between them. The existence of this zone is further attested by the number of comparative essays that attempt to establish connections between deconstruction and Daoism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" trans. by Mary Quaintance, in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. by Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992), 22-29.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. by David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 77.

<sup>6</sup> Shepherd and Burik discuss a number of earlier articles published during the 1980s and 1990s, while also making their own contributions to this literature. See Robert J. Shepherd, "Perpetual Unease or Being at Ease? \- \- Derrida, Daoism and the 'Metaphysics of Presence,'" in *Philosophy East and West*, 57:2 (2007), 227-243; Steven Burik, *The End of Comparative Philosophy and the Task of Comparative Thinking: Heidegger, Derrida and Daoism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009); Steven Burik, "Thinking on the Edge: Heidegger, Derrida and the Daoist Gateway (MEN 𠄎)," in *Philosophy East and West*, 60:4 (2010), 499-516; Steven Burik, "Derrida and Comparative Philosophy," in *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 6:2 (2014),

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### Deconstruction and Nothingness

Derrida has long been attentive to the role of nothingness in the constitution of language. In the course of his critical analysis of Saussure's insistence on the primacy of spoken over written language in *Of Grammatology*, he draws attention to Saussure's "thesis of difference as the source of linguistic value."<sup>7</sup> According to Saussure, it is not the "phonic substance" of particular sounds that allows them to function as elements of a language but rather the systematic differences between them. Derrida cites the following remark from *A Course in General Linguistics*:

It is impossible for sound alone, a material element, to belong to language. It is only a secondary thing, substance to be put to use. All our conventional values have the characteristic of not being confused with the tangible element which supports them ... The linguistic signifier ... is not [in essence] phonic but incorporeal—constituted not by its material substance but the differences that separate its sound—image from all others.<sup>8</sup>

Derrida comments that Saussure's thesis that difference is the source of linguistic value contradicts the claim he makes elsewhere about the essentially phonic nature of language, since by definition "difference is never in itself a sensible plenitude."<sup>9</sup> In effect, the differences in question here are the immaterial differences of sound quality and the spatial differences between graphic marks that enable them to function as signifiers. Derrida refers to these as the "spaces" between spoken sounds or written marks, in a metaphoric sense of the term. These spaces are what constitute the sounds or marks as elements of a system of signification. They are a material instantiation of what he calls "arché-writing" or "writing in general." Metaphor notwithstanding, these immaterial differences that are constitutive

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<<https://doi.org/10.1179/1757063814Z.00000000037>>; Steven Burik, "Derrida and Asian Thought," in *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 12:1 (2020); Steven Burik, "Tracing Dao: A Comparison of Dao 道 in the Daoist Classics and Derridean 'Trace,'" in *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 12:1 (2020), 53-65, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/17570638.2020.1710032>>. See also David Chai, "The Apophatic Trace of Derrida and Zhuangzi," in *Contemporary Debates in Negative Theology and Philosophy*, ed. by Nahum Brown and J. A. Simmons (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan/Springer, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, corrected ed., trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 52.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



of all forms of signification recall the thesis of Chapter 11 of *Daodejing* regarding the nothingness in everyday objects and experience:

The thirty spokes converge at one hub, But the utility of the cart is a function of the nothingness (*wu*) inside the hub. We throw clay to shape a pot, But the utility of the clay pot is a function of the nothingness inside it. We bore out doors and windows to make a dwelling, But the utility of the dwelling is a function of the nothingness inside it. Thus, it might be something (*you*) that provides the value, [benefit] But it is nothing that provides the utility.<sup>10</sup>

Commentators differ over the precise meaning of *wu* in this passage and in the Daoist classics more generally. I do not presume to argue here for the correct interpretation, but only to draw attention to some features of nothingness that are relevant to the comparison with Derrida. The first of these is the idea of formlessness. JeeLoo Liu argues against a prevalent interpretation of the *Daodejing* as suggesting that the world emerged out of absolute nothingness and that it should be read as referring to an initial state of formlessness. She argues that the cosmology implicit in the text presupposes that “qi produces all things” and that the formless primordial state of qi is what the *Daodejing* refers to when it says in Chapter 40 that something arises out of nothing.<sup>11</sup> More generally, she argues that the conception of nothing in the *Daodejing* derives from the notion of formlessness (*wu xing*) and that, rather than claiming that things emerged from absolute nothingness, we should take it to be claiming that something formless preceded the myriad forms. She argues that the “theme of formlessness permeates the *Daodejing*’s philosophy” and that the notion of nothing (*wu*) should be understood as an initial cosmological state that is not absolute non-existence but the “‘absence’ of particularity and determination.”<sup>12</sup>

Liu’s reading accords with Ames and Hall’s translation of the key sentence in Chapter 40 as “the determinate arises from the indeterminate.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Dao De Jing “Making this Life Significant”: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 169. References are to the electronic edition.

<sup>11</sup> JeeLoo Liu, “Was There Something in Nothingness? The Debate on the Primordial State between Daoism and Neo-Confucianism,” in *Nothingness in Asian Philosophy*, ed. by Douglas L. Berger and JeeLoo Liu (New York: Routledge, 2014), 183.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>13</sup> Ames and Hall, *Dao De Jing “Making this Life Significant,”* 253.

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It also accords with their suggestion in commenting on Chapter 11 that here, as in earlier chapters, we witness a “fascination with the correlative relationship between the indeterminate and the determinate aspects of experience—between a productive emptiness and the phenomenal world that emerges from it.”<sup>14</sup> They propose a non-ontological reading of the relation between nothing and something whereby *you* and *wu* are not ontological categories but rather “the interdependent explanatory categories of ‘something’ and ‘nothing,’ of presence and absence.”<sup>15</sup>

Douglas L. Berger similarly argues for a deflationary and non-ontological reading of the role of nothingness in our everyday engagements with things by comparing the interpretations of Chapter 11 of the *Daodejing* proposed by Wang Bi (226–249 CE) and Zhong Hui (225–264 CE). Whereas Wang Bi takes nothing to be the sole source of the usefulness of things in contrast to the “something” or material that determines their benefit, Zhong Hui takes nothing and something to be interrelated in the constitution of things and both to be sources of the benefit and utility of things. Berger relates this difference to a further difference in Wang Bi’s and Zhong Hui’s respective approaches to this chapter. On one hand, Wang Bi starts from the cosmological primacy of *wu*, by which he understands nothing to be “the formless and nameless source of the material world.”<sup>16</sup> Zhong Hui, on the other hand, presents the relationship between something and nothing, or the matter and empty spaces in a thing, not as a matter of “ultimate generation” but as one of “mutual dependence in the production of both benefit and use.”<sup>17</sup> Berger argues that Zhong Hui’s relational understanding of nothing makes greater sense of Chapter 11 than Wang Bi’s more foundational approach.

More significant for the comparison with Derrida is his identification of a common feature of their account of nothingness, namely, that they share the view that our everyday experience of nothingness involves “the spaces that are built into things in ways that make them useful.”<sup>18</sup> For both, it is how spaces are built into things that makes them functional objects capable of serving a human purpose. For both, too, it is significant that the examples in Chapter 11 are “products of human intention and design, and therefore demonstrate how any virtuously plied art appropriates ‘nothingness’ very

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Douglas L. Berger, “The Relation of Nothing and Something: Two Classical Chinese Readings of *Daodejing* 11,” in *Nothingness in Asian Philosophy*, ed. by Douglas L. Berger and JeeLoo Liu (New York: Routledge, 2014), 171.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

directly and concretely into the things that are meant to fulfill human ends.”<sup>19</sup> In depicting space and spatiality as a manifestation of nothingness, they provide an influential formulation that resonates in the history of East Asian thought well beyond the Daoist tradition and that “lays the groundwork for many different ways in which we may understand ‘nothingness’ as cosmologically and even practically significant.”<sup>20</sup>

The examples discussed in Chapter 11 of the *Daodejing* concern only the relation between nothingness and the matter of the physical objects. Derrida addresses the more complex case of the nothingness involved in non-physical elements of everyday experience such as language. However, the import of his insistence on the role of differences parallels the argument of the *Daodejing*: it is only by virtue of these “nothings” that signs and language can serve their intended purposes. In a further parallel with the identification of nothingness and spatiality in the interpretations of Wang Bi and Zhong Hui, Derrida also draws attention to the “spacing” that is constitutive of the signs or marks of any system of signification. Any such system can be considered as a formal play of differences. Whether spoken or written, the basic elements of the system can only function as such because of the implicit relation to other elements. As a result, any particular element will be defined by the “traces” of other elements. This implicit relation to other signifying elements in both its spatial and temporal forms is what Derrida calls “*différence*,” defined as “the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the *spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other.”<sup>21</sup>

He elaborates on this notion of spacing in comments in “Signature Event Context” about the “force of rupture” characteristic of any written text.<sup>22</sup> This refers to the fact that a fragment of text is always intelligible when detached from the context in which it was composed. The essential iterability of signs, text, or writing means that “a written syntagma can always be detached from the chain in which it is inserted or given without causing it to lose all possibility of functioning.”<sup>23</sup> Derrida writes:

This force of rupture is tied to the spacing [*espacement*] that constitutes the written sign: spacing which separates it from other elements of the internal contextual chain (the always open possibility of its

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>21</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 27.

<sup>22</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1–23.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.



## 8 DECONSTRUCTION AND NOTHINGNESS

disengagement and graft), but also from all forms of present reference (whether past or future in the modified form of the present that is past or to come), objective or subjective. This spacing is not the simple negativity of a lacuna but rather the emergence of the mark.<sup>24</sup>

Here, as in other places, Derrida makes it clear that “spacing” is not confined to the written sign but is a feature of all language, including spoken language, and ultimately of experience as such in so far as “there is no experience consisting of *pure* presence but only chains of differential marks.”<sup>25</sup> This is an entirely abstract concept of “spacing” that encompasses both the difference between one physical mark and another and the difference between one temporal moment and those that precede or follow it. To the extent that this spacing, *différance*, or writing-in-general amounts to an indeterminate realm out of which experience and language emerge, it can be understood in a manner that parallels Liu’s interpretation of the Daoist concept of nothingness as a primordial formlessness rather than absolute nothingness.

One of the most developed attempts to draw parallels between Daoism and deconstruction is that of Steven Burik, which argues for an affinity between Derridean deconstruction and what Burik calls a non-metaphysical interpretation of Daoism by which he means an approach that does not take *Dao* to be a fundamental cosmological principle along the lines suggested by Wang Bi’s interpretation.<sup>26</sup> Following his Derridean interpretation of *Dao*, the point of drawing attention to the emptiness or the spaces in between the elements of any system of signification is to point to the open-endedness of such systems and to the permanent impossibility of closure. Burik follows the “process ontology” interpretation of *Dao* defended by Ames and Hall in his three-way comparison of Heidegger, Derrida, and Daoism in relation to their views of language, Being, and the most appropriate relationship to others and to the world. He defends both Derrida and Daoism against the charge of ethico-political quietism or conservatism; however, he does not say much about the positive import of their outlooks. In particular, he does not discuss Derrida’s later more overtly political essays or his analysis of decision. In order to say something about the role of nothing in deliberation, we need to turn to Derrida’s remarks about the aporetic character of decision.

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–10.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> See Burik, *The End of Comparative Philosophy and the Task of Comparative Thinking*.

## Derrida on Decision

In a 1993 interview, Derrida endorses the suggestion that his work includes a philosophy of decision and related concepts such as responsibility, freedom, and justice.<sup>27</sup> This philosophy is grounded in a rigorous analysis of the concept of decision, which has been described as a key to his contribution to political philosophy.<sup>28</sup> There are at least three distinct levels in Derrida's analysis of decision: first, the nature of decision as such; second, the nature of responsible or, in legal contexts, just decisions; third, what Derrida refers to as the "experience" of decision. These levels are nested in the sense that all of them involve decision as such, but only the last two involve responsible or just decision where that implies responsibility towards an other or doing justice to a particular other. These last two levels are especially relevant to the case of political deliberation, where the requirements of democratic deliberation impose constraints on the acceptable forms of relation to various others.

At the first level, a decision is different from the conclusion of a formal argument or calculation. It does not follow from the rule or reasons invoked in support of a conclusion in the way that the outcome of a calculation is determined by the rules of arithmetic and logic. Determination of this kind by the application of mathematical or logical rules produces an outcome but not something that we would recognize as the outcome of a decision. In the case of a legal decision, there can be no rule that determines the just application of the rules to the circumstances of a particular case. If there were, then the threat of regress arises. Instead, Derrida suggests, a legal decision "must also involve 'fresh judgment,' it must proceed as if without a rule or as if the rule were reinvented in the particular case."<sup>29</sup> It follows that decision is irreducible to simple rule-following and that any decision involves a rupture or break with the considerations leading up to it.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, we can say that there is a moment of nothingness at the heart of every decision, properly so-called. Moreover, by analogy with the nothing in a material object that is the condition of its utility, we can say that it is only because of

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<sup>27</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971–2001*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 215–256.

<sup>28</sup> See William W. Sokoloff, "Between Justice and Legality: Derrida on Decision," in *Political Research Quarterly*, 58:2 (2005), 341–352, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290505800213>>.

<sup>29</sup> Derrida, "Force of Law," 23.

<sup>30</sup> In the discussion of Abraham's decision in *The Gift of Death* cited earlier, Derrida writes that the "knight of faith" decides "but his absolute decision is neither guided nor controlled by knowledge. Such, in fact, is the paradoxical condition of every decision: it cannot be deduced from a form of knowledge of which it would simply be the effect, conclusion, or explicitation. It structurally breaches knowledge and is thus destined to nonmanifestation; a decision is, in the end, always secret" (Derrida, *Gift of Death*, 77).

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the nothingness or gap between reasons and a decision that it functions as a decision.

Decisions can of course be arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise inappropriate. Derrida is not concerned with such decisions but rather with decisions that are appropriate in the circumstances, with decisions that are responsible or, in the legal case, just. For this to be the case, a decision must be in some way responsive to reasons advanced on behalf of a given proposition. In the case where there are compelling reasons for and against a given course of action, the parties involved may decide to flip a coin to decide which way to go. But flipping a coin is not deciding. It is to resort to an arbitrary procedure in the place of a decision. A decision, as opposed to a mere outcome of such a procedure, cannot be a simple matter of following a rule; at the same time, however, if it is a responsible or just decision, it must stand in some relation to existing rules. Together, these requirements on responsible or just decision lead to the aporia that Derrida summarizes in relation to legal decision-making as follows:

for a decision to be just and responsible, it must, in its proper moment if there is one, be both regulated and without regulation: it must conserve the law and also destroy or suspend it enough to have to reinvent it in each case, rejustify it, at least reinvent it in the reaffirmation and the new and free confirmation of its principle.<sup>31</sup>

The second level of Derrida's analysis relies on the fact that, as an action of a certain kind, every decision is an event. As such, it displays the same peculiar temporality characteristic of events in general. This is invoked in Derrida's parenthetical comment in the passage above referring to the "proper moment if there is one" of decision. His point is precisely that there is no proper moment of decision, or rather that the moment of decision is an evanescent point that cannot be identified within the linear temporal order of experience. Joseph Hillis Miller illustrates the point by reference to the portrayal of Isabelle Archer's decision to marry in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*: "The reader sees Isabel before she has decided. The reader sees her after she has decided. James does not show her actual instants of decision."<sup>32</sup> He does not show the instant of decision because it is unrepresentable. Like the instant at which any event takes place, it cannot be pinpointed in the linear order of time but appears always as that which is about to take place

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<sup>31</sup> Derrida, "Force of Law," 23.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Hillis Miller, *For Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 94–95.



or that which has already taken place. Alex Thomson suggests that Derrida may be understood as claiming that “the ‘instant of decision’ has no ontological status. It is not of the order of being present.”<sup>33</sup> In other words, the moment of decision is of the order of being not-present. Perhaps rather than describing this as a lack of ontological status, we should say that it has the ontological status of nothingness.

The third level of Derrida’s analysis of the aporia of decision relies on the fact that a decision involves an experience undergone by the one deciding, whether this is an individual or a collective agent. Steven Gormley draws attention to this often-overlooked feature of Derrida’s analyses of decision. He notes that the experience, which Derrida always refers to as an experience of undecidability or the undecidable, relates specifically to just or responsible decisions. He argues that this experience is produced by the fact that decisions of this kind involve a relation to others as other, that is in their specificity as particular others:

for Derrida, a just decision cannot fall from a pre-existing rule or norm or be the consequence of some determinate knowledge. And the reason for this is because it is a response to the singularity of the other, a singularity that interrupts any calculating framework.<sup>34</sup>

This makes the experience of undecidability of particular importance in the context of political deliberation, which is always deliberation with particular others who have their own views on the issues at hand. Two features of Derrida’s characterization of the experience of the undecidable are noteworthy in this context: first, the fact that it is an experience that arises in response to the singularity of the other, and second, the fact that it is a certain kind of experience that he regularly characterizes as an ordeal. These two features are related. It is because the experience of the undecidable takes place in the attempt to do justice to a particular other that it is an ordeal.

It is important to note that the experience of the undecidable involves more than just the fact that any decision involves a break with the order of reasons or, in Derrida’s terms, the calculable. The rupture with knowledge or reasons that tell us how to act in a given situation is part of any just or responsible decision, but as Gormley comments “Undecidability without the ordeal gives us only half of the story.”<sup>35</sup> The other half of the story is that, in

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<sup>33</sup> Alex Thomson, *Deconstruction and Democracy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 165.

<sup>34</sup> Steven Gormley, *Deliberative Theory and Deconstruction: A Democratic Venture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 193.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

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the case of responsible or just decisions, the interval or break with reasons or calculability that is a necessary feature of any decision is bound up with the desire to do justice to a particular circumstance or a particular other.

Derrida takes justice in particular cases to be subject to two conflicting demands: on the one hand, the requirement of fairness and the idea that the law should apply in the same way to all; on the other hand, the requirement of doing justice to the other in their particularity and their specific otherness. The former is the standard requirement of justice in the light of Kantian universality. The latter requirement is drawn from Levinas, who Derrida follows in relation to the idea of an ethical obligation or responsibility for the fate of a particular Other.<sup>36</sup> Together, they form an aporia that is constitutive of the demand for justice:

How are we to reconcile the act of justice that must always concern singularity, individuals, irreplaceable groups and lives, the other or myself *as* other, in a unique situation, with rule, norm, value or the imperative of justice which necessarily have a general form, even if this generality prescribes a singular application in each case?<sup>37</sup>

For Derrida, this aporia is not a source of indecision or paralysis, but rather a wellspring for the increase or improvement of justice. In many cases, it is motivated by an experience of insufficient justice and a demand “for an increase in or supplement to justice.”<sup>38</sup> However, the same aporia that underpins the possibility of justice in a particular case also underpins its impossibility. For this reason, the responsible or just decision involves “an anxiety-ridden moment of suspense” because of the uncertainty about what is required to meet the demands of a particular case or a particular other. There can be no certainty and no grounds for “good conscience” about whether the demand for justice has been met. For this reason,

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<sup>36</sup> Miriam Bankovsky provides a helpful summary of Derrida’s debt towards and differences from Levinas, arguing that Derrida goes beyond Levinas’s insistence on the impossible and asymmetrical demand of justice on the part of the Other in arguing for the necessity of state-based justice grounded in the idea of equal treatment: “The nonnegotiable (that is, justice’s responsibility for the unique Other and for all Others as equals) must be negotiated for the sake of ethics itself. Moreover, Derrida also defends the view that there are clearly better and worse negotiations” (Miriam Bankovsky, *Perfecting Justice in Rawls, Habermas and Honneth: A Deconstructive Perspective* [London: Continuum, 2012], 11).

<sup>37</sup> Derrida, “Force of Law,” 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

The undecidable remains caught, lodged, at least as a ghost—but an essential ghost—in every decision, in every event of decision. Its ghostliness deconstructs from within any assurance of presence, any certitude or any supposed criteriology that would assure us of the justness of a decision, in truth of the very event of decision.<sup>39</sup>

The experience of the undecidable is thus not simply a matter of paralysis in the face of conflicting requirements—to be both regulated and unregulated—nor is it an oscillation or tension between different possible outcomes. It encompasses the obligation on the part of the subject to “give itself up to the impossible decision while taking account of law and rules.”<sup>40</sup> As such, it is an ordeal in the juridical sense of a trial by ordeal, a matter of the “testing out of the undecidable (*l'épreuve de l'indécidable*); only in this testing can a decision come about (*advenir*).”<sup>41</sup> None of this implies that decisions cannot be informed or that reasons cannot be given for the decision taken. On the contrary, Derrida insists that “a decision must be as lucid as possible. And yet, however lucid it is, as a decision, it must advance where it cannot see.”<sup>42</sup>

A final dimension of the aporetic character of just or responsible decision emerges in relation to what Derrida calls “the urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge.” At issue here is his concern to distinguish this aporetic structure of decision from the familiar schemas of the regulative idea, the messianic promise, or “other horizons of the same type.”<sup>43</sup> The difference is that these are, precisely, horizons that are never attained. By contrast, a just or responsible decision is required immediately. It cannot be deferred indefinitely. It does not and cannot wait. In this sense, too, a just or responsible decision interrupts. It not only breaks with the knowledge of relevant rules and facts that must inform it but also interrupts the consideration or deliberation of these. In this sense, Derrida insists, citing Kierkegaard, that “the moment of decision, as such, always remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation...The instant of decision is a madness.”<sup>44</sup> However, it remains a madness through which the individual or

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 24–25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 154.

<sup>42</sup> Derrida, *Negotiations*, 232.

<sup>43</sup> Derrida, “Force of Law,” 25.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

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collective subject of decision must pass, one that proceeds in “the night of non-knowledge and non-rule.”<sup>45</sup>

Each of these levels or dimensions of the aporia of decision involves a rupture or break, whether with rules or principles, with the ordinary linear flow of time, with the order of knowledge or certainty or with the expectation that one can in a given situation do justice both to a particular other and to third parties, the others of that other. In each case, we can say that this rupture or break is an eruption of nothingness in the order of reasons, of time, or of orientation. Like the nothingness at the center of a wheel that enables it to function as a wheel, the nothingness at the heart of any decision is what makes it a decision rather than a mere outcome, an arbitrary act, or a further stage in the smooth progress towards a given horizon. However, the nothingness at the heart of any decision is further compounded by the experience of the “ordeal” of decision that Derrida describes in relation to decisions that aspire to be just or responsible to the other. Here, it is not simply a question of the rupture with reasons or calculations but of the indeterminacy in the face of the obligation to decide and to decide responsibly, to decide in the light of an appropriate response to the condition or the circumstances of the other. If the nothingness that separates a decision from its reasons is a primary nothingness at the heart of any decision, the nothingness at the heart of the ordeal of the undecidable is a secondary nothingness that is bound up with the attempt to do justice to the other. The formlessness that Derrida ascribes here to the experience of the ordeal of decision, “the night of non-knowledge and non-rule” as he describes it, recalls Liu’s understanding of the Daoist nothing, not as the absence of being but as the absence of determinacy and particularity.

### **Deliberation, Decision, and Nothingness**

I noted at the outset that the idea of deliberation at the heart of conceptions of deliberative democracy relies on the concept of decision. Much of the discussion of deliberative democracy is concerned with the conditions under which collective deliberation can be democratic. There is nothing in the ideas of deliberation or decision that makes these intrinsically democratic: “an individual can make decisions deliberatively; a jury has a responsibility to deliberate; and a committee of oligarchs can deliberate.”<sup>46</sup> In order for collective decisions to be legitimate from a democratic point of view, they must follow a deliberative procedure that meets certain conditions. These include the requirement that parties to the deliberation must be equal, their

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Cohen, “Reflections on Deliberative Democracy,” 249.

contributions to deliberation must be reasoned, and the deliberation must be unconstrained or free in two senses: first, “the participants regard themselves as bound only by the results of their deliberation” and second, “the participants suppose that they can act from the results, taking the fact that a certain decision is arrived at through their deliberation as a sufficient reason for complying with it.”<sup>47</sup> Such a democratic deliberative procedure thus relies on the possibility of collective decisions in favor of a particular policy or course of action and individual decisions to act on the basis of such a collective decision.

For Cohen and Derrida, the act of decision is distinct from that of weighing reasons. For Derrida, as we saw in the last section, while decision requires that there be a relation to reasons, without which the result would be merely random, the relation cannot be one of determination. The irreducible gap between reasons and the content of the decision is what makes it a decision rather than a mere calculation or outcome of following a rule. In other words, for decision to be decision, it requires the nothingness that separates weighing reasons with a view to a decision from actually making a decision. This primary nothingness that is bound up with decision relates to the monological instance of decision, that is, to decisions by a single agent, whether individual or collective. The secondary nothingness that is bound up with the experience or ordeal of the undecidable is more directly related to the polylogical instance that is at issue in democratic deliberation. Whereas the primary nothingness relates to the bare fact of decision, as it were, the secondary nothingness relates to a moral or political dimension of decision, in particular to the difficulty of negotiating the aporia involved in decisions that are just, fair, or otherwise appropriate.

Derrida does not directly discuss the mechanics of collective political deliberation. He does not discuss the kinds of linguistic interaction, or the kinds of speech act, that belong to deliberation as opposed to other kinds of confrontation between different or opposing views. He does, throughout his work, challenge the existing codes that regulate academic discourse by employing a broader range of communicative acts and styles of discourse. Gormley aligns this aspect of his work with James Bohman’s recommendation to “pluralise public reason” in suggesting that Derrida seeks to develop

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<sup>47</sup> Josh Cohen, “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy,” in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, ed. by James Bohman and William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 74. First published in *The Good Polity: Normative Analysis of the State*, ed. by Alan Hamlin and Phillip Pettit (New York: Blackwell, 1989), 17–34. References are to the 1997 edition.



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a more expansive notion of argumentation, such that the other is not simply included formally, but effectively. By seeking to pluralise public reason in this way, Derridean deconstruction seeks forms of inclusion in which the other has an effective voice, such that they can raise new issues and challenge current understandings. That is to say, Derridean deconstruction seeks to do justice to the other in their otherness.<sup>48</sup>

There is, however, an important sense in which Derrida's analysis of the experience of the undecidable bears directly on the practice of democratic deliberation. This relates to the ethos of democratic deliberation and its objective. Rawls and others accept that deliberation in democratic societies involves linguistic interaction between parties with radically different, even incommensurable, comprehensive moral, political, or religious views. It is for this reason that Rawls proposes the ideal of public reason as a mechanism that enables partisans of different comprehensive views to talk to one another in a common language. The Rawlsian ideal of public reason does not guarantee agreement. The burdens of judgment in particular cases will ensure that there are always grounds for reasonable disagreement on some issues. All that the ideal of public reason demands is that citizens speak to one another in terms that they can reasonably suppose others will understand and appreciate. In this sense, the bar for what counts as democratic deliberation is set relatively low.

By contrast, Derrida's analysis of the experience of the undecidable appeals to a more demanding standard for the linguistic and other forms of interaction between citizens. This experience arises in response to the demand to do justice to, or be responsible to, the other. This involves more than simply addressing the other in terms that they can reasonably be expected to understand. It requires citizens to address the other as other, that is in the specificity of their circumstance and their demands. In the democratic context of a plurality of others with radically different points of view, this is a demand that can never be fully satisfied. Like the demand to be responsible to the other, or the demand to do justice to the other, this is an impossible demand, but one in which the "im-possibility" refers to "that experience through which the possibility of doing justice to the other is given" rather than an absolute impossibility of doing more or doing better.<sup>49</sup>

In the terms suggested above, we can think of this aporetic experience as a secondary nothingness at the heart of Derrida's more demanding ethos

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<sup>48</sup> Gormley, *Deliberative Theory and Deconstruction*, 125.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

of democratic responsibility to others. Brought about by the desire, injunction, or obligation to do justice to the other, this secondary nothingness involves the indeterminate or formless character of the experience of trying to respond to this obligation. Although he does not use the term, we can say that, for Derrida, the space of political deliberation involves a nothingness of this kind. As we have already seen, the experience of this nothingness is not entirely negative. Awareness of the unavoidable nothingness embedded in our deliberation with and relation to others is a condition of new forms of justice, hospitality, forgiveness, or indeed democracy. Unconditional justice to the other is an ideal that can never be fulfilled, but the conditional forms of justice can always be made more just, in the same way that conditional forms of hospitality or forgiveness can always be transformed with reference to the unconditional idea of hospitality or forgiveness, or that existing forms of democracy might be modified in the light of an unspecified “democracy-to-come.” The experience of attempting to negotiate this space between the conditional and unconditional, between what is and what is to come, is the experience or the ordeal of the undecidable.

The interest of Derrida’s analysis of decision for democratic deliberation is clear, as are the points of connection between that analysis and Daoist notions of nothingness. It remains to elaborate further on the connection between nothingness and democratic deliberation. Yong Huang’s argument that the *Zhuangzi* provides support for an ethics of difference, in contrast to the ethics of commonality that dominates post-Kantian traditions of moral and political philosophy, provides a convenient way to do this. By “ethics of difference” he means a form of evaluation that makes the views of the patient, the one acted upon by another, the standard of rightness and wrongness. Derrida writes:

The ethics of difference requires [of] us that, when deliberating the rightness or wrongness of our actions affecting others, the relevant standard of the right and the wrong is not our standard but the standard of those who will be affected by our actions.<sup>50</sup>

He bases this normative standpoint on the dual emphasis in the *Zhuangzi* on the differences between forms of life and on the equality of things. It is a fact that eels like to live in damp places while humans like to live in dry places, but this difference does not imply the superiority of one preference over the other. Huang refers to three stories that all show, in

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<sup>50</sup> Yong Huang, “The Ethics of Difference in the *Zhuangzi*,” in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 78:1 (March 2010), 84.

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different circumstances, the danger of neglecting the specific nature of different life forms: the story of the treatment of the Emperor Hundun by the Emperors Shu and Hu (*Zhuangzi* 7), the story of Bo Le's treatment of his horses (*Zhuangzi* 9), and the story of the Marquis of Lu's care of a lost seabird (*Zhuangzi* 18). Each story describes a situation in which an agent treats an other in ways that the agent thinks appropriate, rather than in ways that accord with the nature of the patient. By contrast, Huang points to the injunction in *Zhuangzi* 11 to "to let the world be (*zai*) so that its nature will not be disturbed."<sup>51</sup>

The primary obstacle to treating things in accordance with their own nature is what the *Zhuangzi* refers to as "the opinionated mind" (*cheng xin*):

This opinionated mind is nothing but one's tendency to regard one's own standard of right and wrong as the universal standard, to which everything should conform.<sup>52</sup>

Against this tendency, Huang argues that the *Zhuangzi* recommends getting rid of such preconceptions and treating all things in the light of their uniqueness. To achieve this is to have a mind like a bright or clean mirror that reflects things as they are, as opposed to a dusty mirror that projects onto things that do not belong to them. In the social circumstance in which different people have different opinions about what is right or wrong, Huang argues, the *Zhuangzi's* solution to endless and irresolvable disputes is that individuals should give up their pre-conceived opinions, "to brighten (*ming*) the mirror by wiping away the dust, so that the argument will be dissolved."<sup>53</sup> Huang refers to the passage on the fasting of the mind in *Zhuangzi* 4, according to which the result is

to let the mind become unoccupied with pre-conceived ideas so that the mind, just like water, can receive things as they are, without forcing any fixed shape on them.<sup>54</sup>

Huang does not elaborate on the relation of this stance to Daoist nothingness. However, Derrida's analysis of decision suggests a possible way to spell out the connection between nothingness and the ethics of difference as presented in the *Zhuangzi*. Two points of comparison can be identified

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

here. A first point is to note the proximity between the relation of different disopinionated minds and what I referred to above as the secondary nothingness involved in decision. Huang's analysis is confined to the intellectual and moral virtue required in order to treat others in accordance with their nature rather than in ways deemed appropriate by the agent. He does not consider the context of deliberation between parties possessed of different opinions; if he had, the result might have resembled Derrida's account of the indeterminate, formless space in which decisions subject to conflicting requirements must be taken. At the risk of mixing metaphors, we can ask: What would be the relation between two or more mirrors cleaned of dust or pre-conceptions that might interfere with the reflection of the other? Would this not be an infinite series of reflections in which nothing determinate appears—in other words, a kind of nothingness?

A second point of comparison emerges if we suppose that the disopinionated mind does not mean that individuals should not have opinions, but rather that these should not be regarded as fixed or unchangeable and that individuals can decide to change their minds. This approximates more closely the circumstance of deliberation envisaged by democratic theorists. It also brings the *Zhuangzi's* criticism of the opinionated mind closer to Derrida's criticism of "good conscience." For Derrida, it is precisely because the experience of decision is an ordeal, an experience of the undecidable, that there is no basis for good conscience about any decision taken. As we noted above, deliberation with others introduces a secondary nothingness in addition to the primary nothingness involved in monological decision. On this basis, we can say that the one who decides in full awareness of the nothingness at the heart of the experience of undecidability relates to their reasons in the same way that the subject of the disopinionated mind stands towards their opinions. In both cases, deliberation with others is as likely to lead to changing one's mind as it is to changing the mind of the other.

However, democratic deliberation further complicates the situation to the extent that it embodies the impossible aspiration to do justice both to the particular other and to the others of that other; to the individual, and to all the other citizens. This implies a more complex relation to the other than the simple patient-oriented ethics of difference described by Huang that makes the view of the other the standard of rights and wrongness. It is in the effort to attain the impossible ideal that the agent undergoes what Derrida calls the ordeal of undecidability. The nothingness inherent in decision and in the ordeal of the undecidable does not function as a regulative principle. For Derrida, it is rather the injunction or obligation to do justice to the other that orients the weighing of reasons in favor of a given course of action. Nevertheless, the awareness of both the primary and secondary nothingness involved serves a positive function insofar as it makes the agent aware that

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there is no ground for “good conscience” with regard to any decision that has been taken and that there is always more to be done.

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## McTaggart's A and B Series and the Time Epistemologies of St. Augustine, Nāgārjuna, and Stephen Hawking

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**Abstract:** Philosopher John M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925) argued that there are two ways of understanding time: the A and the B series. Under the “tensed” A series, events have the aspects of past, present, and future. Under the “untensed” B series, events are sequential, and time does not have an abiding reality. In this essay, I use McTaggart’s A and B series to explore the time epistemologies of St. Augustine, Nāgārjuna, and Stephen Hawking. I argue that St. Augustine’s view of time corresponds to McTaggart’s A series, Nāgārjuna’s view of time to a modified version of McTaggart’s B series, and Hawking’s view of time to a modified version of McTaggart’s A series. The crux of the difference is the epistemological anthropology of each thinker. The only one who accepts the reality of time as McTaggart espoused in his A series is St. Augustine, due to the latter’s understanding of the human person as a knowing subject striving toward timelessness in Heaven with God.

**Keywords:** human soul, *śūnyatā*, *madhyamaka*, *pratīyasamutpāda*

In 1908, philosopher John M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925) presented an argument entailing two ways of understanding time: the A and the B series.<sup>1</sup> Under the “tensed” A series, McTaggart argued, events have the property of past, present, or future, such that an event still unrealized will slide toward the now, occur, and then slide away into the already-happened.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Ellis McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” in *Mind*, 17:68 (1908), 458.

<sup>2</sup> See Ryan Nefdt, “On the Plurality of Times: Disunified Time and the A-Series,” in *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 32:3 (2013), 249-260, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2013.837654>>. On tense in McTaggart’s time philosophy, see John P. Burgess, “Logic and Time,” in *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, 44:4 (December 1979), 567. <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2273296>>; Simon Prosser,

Temporality is, therefore, a feature of time, and events change temporality—not yet, underway, finished—as time passes. Under the B series, by contrast, McTaggart argued, there is no temporality to events, only sequence. One thing happens, another thing happens, and a third thing happens, and the order of these three events does not imply coming into being or fading from view. Things happen, under the B series, not as future, present, and past, but as, simply, first, second, third, and so forth. Events are always present to observers no matter where those events or observers happen to lie along the sliding scale of sequence. McTaggart’s ultimate goal in arguing this way was to dispute the reality of A-series time, indeed to assert that time did not exist. The A series, McTaggart thought, was both ineluctable in discussions of time, and also unfounded; therefore, time was an illusion.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, perhaps, McTaggart was neither the first nor the last person to think about time. In this paper, I will very briefly consider three thinkers from three very different thought traditions and attempt to answer whether their views of time comport with McTaggart’s A series, B series, or some modified version of those. I will first consider the writings on time of St. Augustine (354–430), who represents a particular Christian view of time. I will next consider the time-philosophy, more specifically the doctrine of dependent origination, advanced by Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250), an Indian philosopher whose doctrine of *śūnyatā* (emptiness) and accommodationist position of *madhyamaka* (the middle way) exerted great influence on the Buddhist tradition, especially on Tibetan philosopher Tsongkhapa (ca. 1357–1419) and Japanese Zen philosopher Dōgen (1200–1253).<sup>4</sup> Lastly, I will consider the secular-scientific philosopher Stephen Hawking (1942–2018), whose position on Einsteinian space-time and the origin and fate of the entropic universe may stand as representative of much of current Western discourse on time.

I find that St. Augustine’s view of time corresponds neatly with McTaggart’s A series, Nāgārjuna’s view of time with a modified version of

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“A New Problem for the A-Theory of Time,” in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 50:201 (October 2000), 494–498.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Corish, “McTaggart’s Argument,” in *Philosophy*, 80:311 (January 2005), 77–99, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819105000057>>. Corish is unimpressed with McTaggart’s ideas about time and declares that McTaggart’s A-series/B-series distinction “fails from the beginning.” *Ibid.*, 77. For other critiques of McTaggart, see Louis O. Mink, “Time, McTaggart and Pickwickian Language,” in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 10:40 (July 1960), 252–263, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2216939>>; Emily Thomas, “V—Time and Subtle Pictures in the History of Philosophy,” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 120:2 (2020).

<sup>4</sup> On *śūnyatā*, see Saigusa Mitsuyoshi, *Saigusa Mitsuyoshi chosakushū dai go kan Ryūju* [Collected Works of Mitsuyoshi Saigusha, vol. 5, Nāgārjuna] (Kyoto: Hozokan, 2004), 82–98. On dependent origination (*engi*), see Ishitobi Michiko, *Budda to Ryūju no ronrigaku* [Logic of Buddha and Nāgārjuna] (Tokyo: Samgha, 2007), 233–244.

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McTaggart's B series, and Hawking's view of time with a modified version of McTaggart's A series. The differences hinge on how each thinker understands human beings as knowing subjects.<sup>5</sup> Of the three—Augustine, Nāgārjuna, and Hawking—the only one who accepts the reality of time as McTaggart espoused in his A series is St. Augustine, and this is due to the latter's understanding of the human person as a knowing subject striving toward timelessness in Heaven with God.

### McTaggart's Two (or Three) Time Series

McTaggart's distinction between the A series and the B series of time was predicated upon McTaggart's belief, apparently mystically derived, in time's unreality.<sup>6</sup> In his argument about time, McTaggart wanted to show that the flow of time is illusory by proving that "the structure of the impermanent, shifting designator within the dyadic precedes-succeeds is exactly the same for both" A-series (past-present-future) and B-series (earlier-later) interpretations of time.<sup>7</sup> While events, according to McTaggart, occur and are arrayed in a sequence, there is no "thenness" or "nowness" to events. He sees temporality as imbuing a kind of aspect to events that, in McTaggart's view (heavily influenced by both Hegel and Kant), would be incompatible with the nature of change. As Kris McDaniel writes, "McTaggart argues for [the non-existence of the A series] by attempting to demonstrate that the existence of the A-series would generate a contradiction. According to McTaggart, *being present, being past, and being future* are incompatible determinations. But everything in time must have each of them."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, for McTaggart, sequence, and not tense (temporality), is what there is to what we call "time." Time itself, however, is an illusion.

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<sup>5</sup> On the contrast between McTaggart and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz on the self, see Hilda D. Oakeley, "Time and the Self in McTaggart's System," in *Mind*, 39:154 (1930), 175-176. The "two aspects" into which McTaggart has "analysed time," and the "contradiction" between the two aspects which he "holds [...] to be final," are resolved in the human knower. See Hugh A. Reyburn, "Idealism and the Reality of Time," in *Mind*, 22:88 (1913), 500, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/MIND/XXII.10.493>>. See also James B. Reichmann, S. J., *Philosophy of the Human Person* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1985), 79.

<sup>6</sup> Kris McDaniel, "John M. E. McTaggart," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2020), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mctaggart/>>; Wouter Kusters, "Philosophy and Madness: Radical Turns in the Natural Attitude to Life," in *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology*, 23:2 (June 2016), 135, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ppp.2016.0012>>; Robert Leet Patterson, "McTaggart's Contribution to the Philosophy of Religion," in *Philosophy*, 6:23 (July 1931), 325-326, 328-329, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819100032204>>.

<sup>7</sup> Denis Corish, "Time Reconsidered," in *Philosophy*, 81:315 (January 2006), 81-82 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819106000052>>.

<sup>8</sup> McDaniel, "John M. E. McTaggart." Emphases in original.

It appears that McTaggart's "Infinite Partition doctrine" (contra Bertrand Russell) was at work in leading him to eschew any real temporality to events, as temporality would, at least temporarily, compose an event as a whole, which it seems McTaggart wished to avoid.<sup>9</sup> There was no end to how time could parse wholes into nows, and so, in part to avoid an infinite regress, McTaggart dispensed with time altogether. Specifically, on this question of the now, Russell insisted on defining "now" by referring to something immediately present, "in terms of this," by which Russell meant "the object of attention."<sup>10</sup> The now was the *this* at this precise moment, here.

The larger backdrop to this disagreement is the nature of change, which Russell thought occurred in objects in time. As Russell argues in his 1903 magnum opus *Principles of Mathematics*:

The concept of motion is logically subsequent to that of occupying a place at a time, and also to that of change. Motion is the occupation, by one entity, of a continuous series of places at a continuous series of times. Change is the difference, in respect of truth or falsehood, between a proposition concerning an entity and a time T and a proposition concerning the same entity and another time T', provided that the two propositions differ only by the fact that T occurs in the one where T' occurs in the other. Change is continuous when the propositions of the above kind form a continuous series correlated with a continuous series of moments. Change thus always involves (1) a fixed entity, (2) a three-cornered relation between this entity, another entity, and some but not all, of the moments of time. This is its bare minimum. Mere existence at some but not all moments constitutes change on this definition.<sup>11</sup>

McTaggart however, of course, argued for the unreality of time, and for the purely sequential – with no temporal fixity – nature of states or events.

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<sup>9</sup> N. M. L. Nathan, "McTaggart's Immaterialism," in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 41:165 (October 1991), 443, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2220079>>. On Russell's "critique of neo-Hegelian Idealism," particularly that of McTaggart (and Francis Herbert Bradley), see Graham Stevens, "Russell's Repsychologising of the Proposition," in *Synthese*, 151 (2006), 101.

<sup>10</sup> Bertrand Russell, "On the Experience of Time," in *The Monist*, 25:2 (April 1915). Quoted in Ernest Sosa, "The Status of Becoming: What Is Happening Now?" *The Journal of Philosophy*, 76:1 (January 1979), 31.

<sup>11</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge, 2903; Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2010), 476–477. Reference to the 2010 edition.



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On McTaggart's understanding, there could be no change as Russell described. If something was true of some object or subject somewhere along the B series, that truth does not change. Taking the unreality of time (and change) further, and in tribute to his Hegelian (some would say Kantian) proclivities, McTaggart later rendered his A series-B series dichotomy as a dialectic leading to a Hegelian synthesis which he called "C series time." Contemporary philosopher John Earman notes of the C series:

McTaggart, inspired by his admired Hegel, took the world of physical events to be arranged in an intrinsic, observer[-]independent C-series. But according to McTaggart this C-series is non-temporal, and it is by projecting a transient now onto this C-series that McTaggart thought that we create the B-series and the illusion of change.<sup>12</sup>

However, despite this later modification, McTaggart continued to maintain the unreality of time (the C series is, in fact, a product of McTaggart's ongoing denial of time's reality), and likewise held to the "infinite partition" of events without futurity, presence, or pastness.<sup>13</sup>

### St. Augustine's Philosophy of Time

In sharp contrast to McTaggart, St. Augustine of Hippo understood time to be real in that events really do change from being yet to be, in progress, and then done and in the past. As a Christian, St. Augustine saw time as God's creation. Since God created time, He therefore necessarily transcended it.<sup>14</sup> God works in history but is also outside of it, St. Augustine thought. God is known in the world through self-revelation but is in no sense

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<sup>12</sup> John Earman, "Thoroughly Modern McTaggart: Or, What McTaggart Would Have Said If He Had Read the General Theory of Relativity," in *Philosophers' Imprint*, 2:3 (2002), 21.

<sup>13</sup> See also Emiliano Boccardi, "Turning the Tables on McTaggart," in *Philosophy*, 93:3 (2018), 395-410, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819118000141>>; Matt Farr, "On A- and B-Theoretic Elements of Branching Spacetimes," in *Synthese*, 188:1 (2012), 85-116 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-011-0046-y>>. "'C-series' was McTaggart's term for a timeless, logically ordered series." Jonathan Tallant, "What Is It to 'B' a Relation?" in *Synthese*, 162:1 (2008), 118, footnote 2.

<sup>14</sup> L. Nathan Oaklander, "The 'Timelessness' of Time," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 38:2 (1977), 203. See also Liliann Manning, Daniel Cassel, and Jean-Christophe Cassel, "St. Augustine's Reflections on Memory and Time and the Current Concept of Subjective Time in Mental Time Travel," in *Behavioral Sciences*, 3:2 (2013), 235, <<https://doi.org/10.3390/bs3020232>>.

bound by this world or dependent upon it.<sup>15</sup> As a philosopher of religion, Sean Hannan writes, St. Augustine's "approach to time [...] is governed not by intensity or intension, nor even by extension, but by a dis-tension that disrupts the present from within."<sup>16</sup> According to Hannan, St. Augustine also realizes that "the present has no span" — a realization which McTaggart might call "infinite partition" — but for Augustine "such a destruction of the [present] instant suggests that our incomplete concept of the present might just be a symptom of our unwarranted projection of tense logic [...] onto time, which is not inherently broken up into tenses."<sup>17</sup> In other words, St. Augustine, like McTaggart, understands the basic non-reality of the present.<sup>18</sup> However, whereas McTaggart argues from this refragability of "the instant" to the unreality of time, St. Augustine uses time's mysterious presence-and-non-presence to meditate on the greater reality, God, Who created it.<sup>19</sup> Time is therefore real, but not absolute.<sup>20</sup>

For St. Augustine, this transcendent nature of time's Author and the Trinitarian dynamic which moves through human history are fundamentally connected with the nature of the human person, who knows God somehow through time and who also looks forward to eternity with God in Heaven, outside of time.<sup>21</sup> Wolfgang Achtner, contrasting St. Augustine with Neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (205–270), notes that "St. Augustine can be seen as the first one to understand time as a feature of consciousness, measured by the strength of the human soul or mind. He calls this measure of the soul's strength to maintain time *distentio animi*."<sup>22</sup> For St. Augustine, Achtner notes, the past in the soul becomes memory (*praesens de praeteritis memoria*), the present attention (*praesens de praesentibus contuitus*), and the future

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<sup>15</sup> Olga I. Chashchina and Zurab K. Silagadze, "Expanding Space, Quasars and St. Augustine's Fireworks," in *Universe*, 1:3 (2015), 336, <<https://doi.org/10.3390/universe1030307>>. See also Eugene R. Schlesinger, "Trinity, Incarnation and Time: A Restatement of the Doctrine of God in Conversation with Robert Jenson," in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 69:2 (2016), 189–203.

<sup>16</sup> Sean Hannan, "A New Realist Philosophy of Time and Its Augustinian or Post-Phenomenological Critique" (unpublished manuscript, February 2015), <<https://voices.uchicago.edu/philofreligions/2015/02/11/259/>>, 8.

<sup>17</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book XI, xv, 20; xi, 13; and xxi, 23. Quoted in Sean Hannan, "A New Realist Philosophy," 9.

<sup>18</sup> Richard M. Gale, "Has the Present Any Duration?" in *Nous*, 5:1 (1971), 40-41 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2214450>>.

<sup>19</sup> "What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I try to explain it to one who asks, I do not know." St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book XI, quoted in George Stuart Fullerton, "The Doctrine of Space and Time: IV. Of Time," in *The Philosophical Review*, 10:5 (September 1901), 488.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Nordlund, "The Physics of Augustine: The Matter of Time, Change and an Unchanging God," in *Religions*, 6:1 (2015), 221-244, <<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6010221>>.

<sup>21</sup> Daniele Piccioni and Patrizia Riganti, "Time, Atemporality and the Trinitarian Nature of God in Plato's Philosophical Heritage," in *Agathos*, 9:1 (2018), 7-20.

<sup>22</sup> Wolfgang Achtner, "Time, Eternity, and Trinity," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, 51:3 (2009), 269.

expectation (*praesens de futuris expectation*).<sup>23</sup> St. Augustine's soul strives in the attentive now upwards to God, continually purified in memory and buoyed by joyful hope.<sup>24</sup>

Paul Ricoeur explains this elegantly in chapter one of the first volume of his *Time and Narrative* trilogy using the language of aporias. St. Augustine accomplishes "the solution of the aporia of the being and nonbeing of time," Ricoeur writes, "through the notion of a threefold present."<sup>25</sup> Drawing on the example of a psalm known by heart and then recited from memory, St. Augustine, Ricoeur argues, expounds his "theme [of] the dialectic of expectation, memory, and attention, each considered [...] in interaction with one another."<sup>26</sup> This unfolding, this aporia of the mind moving hopefully into an unknown future (*distentio animi*), St. Augustine sets within the eternity of God.<sup>27</sup> The knower of time is ultimately the knower in time and outside of time, as the one who directs his will toward the Everlasting will be able to commune with the transcendent God Who created both the human person and the time in which he temporally, temporarily exists.<sup>28</sup>

Both Hannan and Achtner, as well as Ricoeur, cite the famous Book XI of St. Augustine's *Confessions*. There, St. Augustine discourses on the nature of time in the context of his own spiritual progress from inattention—mired in sin and chained to the eternal present of sensuality and disregard for eternity—to expectation, a turning towards God which helps clarify the past and provides direction for the present. In Book XI, St. Augustine writes that time is not merely the motion of created things—not, as "a learned man" once lectured, "that the motions of the sun, moon, and stars, were the very true times"—but that "the mind lengthens out itself" to approach to God.<sup>29</sup> The measure of time is not merely the turnings of the planetary bodies. Time is a human medium for discovering God. In St. Augustine's understanding,

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>24</sup> Catherine Rau, "Theories of Time in Ancient Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Review*, 62:4 (October 1953), 521, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2182458>>.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. By Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 12. See also Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, trans. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 12–22.

<sup>26</sup> Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 20.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–26.

<sup>28</sup> Achtner, "Time, Eternity, and Trinity," 270–271. See also Steven P. Marrone, "Review *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 50:2 (2012), 101–102, <[https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-0922.2012.01603\\_6.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-0922.2012.01603_6.x)>.

<sup>29</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, vol. II, trans. by William Watts (London: William Heineman, Ltd., 1912), 259.

time becomes a kind of workshop for the overcoming of temporality by the human soul.<sup>30</sup> He writes:

But because thy loving kindness is better than life itself, behold my life is a distraction, and thy right hand hath taken hold of me, even in my Lord the Son of Man, the Mediator betwixt thee that art but one, and us that are many, drawn many ways by many things; that by him I may apprehend him in whom I am also apprehended, [...] to forget what is behind: not distracted but attracted, stretching forth not to what shall be and pass away, but to those things which are before [...] for the garland of my heavenly calling. [...] But now are my years spent in mourning, and thou, my Comfort, O Lord, my Father, art Everlasting; but I fall into dissolution amid the changing times, whose order I am yet ignorant of.<sup>31</sup>

The present is then, for St. Augustine, very much a “now” in the A-series sense which McTaggart rejected. There is a change in creation, but it is a mystery rooted in God’s command of eternity, a tensed becoming whereby the Christian learns to turn to God and away from the passing world (the theme of St. Augustine’s *Confessions* overall).

The key here is time’s human perceiver. While St. Augustine posits an eventual eternity that would overwhelm the now—a “Comfort” in the “Everlasting” which would succor him in his present “mourning,” when he had “fall[en] into dissolution amid the changing times”—he accepts that the present, although elusive of the grasp of the mind, is nevertheless very real in that it harbors human suffering born of separation from the Creator of time itself.<sup>32</sup> From a certain standpoint, namely that of Heaven, St. Augustine might agree with McTaggart that time did not have ultimate reality. However, unlike McTaggart, St. Augustine thought that the human person was made to know in time, and that it was only by realizing the true nature of the soul within time that one was able to see clear of the A-series delimitations of temporality to timelessness over the horizon of the present.

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<sup>30</sup> For example, see Curtis M. Hutt, “Husserl: Perception and the Ideality of Time,” in *Philosophy Today*, 43:4 (Winter 1999), 371.

<sup>31</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, vol. II, 279–280.

<sup>32</sup> See also *De Trinitate*, Book V, Ch. 4: “A problem is discussed which is raised by those names that refer God to creation.” Augustine of Hippo, *De Trinitate* (New York: New City Press, 1991), 202–204.

### Nāgārjuna's Philosophy of Time

What might time seem like to one who is neither a latter-day Hegelian idealist like McTaggart nor an early Christian like St. Augustine? One good example of a non-Western view of time can be found in the work of Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna, who was concerned primarily with the nature of change and the reality or unreality of the passing world. Nāgārjuna's doctrine of *madhyamaka* (the middle way) was an attempt at a working compromise between total nihilism and enduring substance, a way of being in the world without what Nāgārjuna and other philosophers at the time called *svabhāva*, or self-sufficient existence manifested as essence. Nāgārjuna's philosophy of time is a function of his *madhyamaka* doctrine, and more specifically of the notion of dependent origination, *pratītyasamutpāda*, according to which the various phenomena, or dharmas, are connected to one another and arise and disperse only in concert with one another.<sup>33</sup> Nothing, in this view, is ultimately real, since everything is always dependent on everything else. The fundamental non-fundament of all is *śūnyatā*, emptiness.<sup>34</sup>

As a philosopher of religion, Tao Jiang writes, on Nāgārjuna's reading, "to say that something arises by depending on conditions is to say that it is empty. Because all existences are dependent on conditions, they are all empty."<sup>35</sup> A Chinese translation of Nāgārjuna's work on dependent origination puts it succinctly: "All dharmas do not move. They have no place to go to or to come from."<sup>36</sup> The epistemological consequences of this unmooring of events from any kind of temporality or even sequence are profound. Nāgārjuna's critics, during his lifetime and since, have raised many different objections to his worldview, not least that the emptiness he espouses does not seem capable of supporting even the illusion of reality that Nāgārjuna wants to maintain.<sup>37</sup> Because Nāgārjuna is virtually guaranteed to

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<sup>33</sup> Jan Christoph Westerhoff, "Nāgārjuna," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2022), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nagarjuna/>>. See also Chris Bartley, "Pratitya-samutpada," in *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, ed. by Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 2001), 434–435.

<sup>34</sup> Milton Scarborough, "In the Beginning: Hebrew God and Zen Nothingness," in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 20 (2000), 197.

<sup>35</sup> Tao Jiang, "Incommensurability of Two Conceptions of Reality Dependent Origination and Emptiness in Nāgārjuna's MMK," in *Philosophy East and West*, 64:1 (2014), 37, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2014.0004>>.

<sup>36</sup> *Shi'er men lun*, in *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, quoted in Man Li and Bart Dessein, "Aurelius Augustinus and Seng Zhao on 'Time': An Interpretation of the *Confessions* and the *Zhao Lun*," in *Philosophy East and West*, 65:1 (2015), 169, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2015.0019>>.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., William Edelglass, Review of *Emptiness Appraised: A Critical Study of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy*," in *Philosophy East and West*, 53:4 (2003), 602–605, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2003.0036>>.



need to appeal to a two-truths-ism in order to explain why the world appears to exist even if all dharmas are empty—and this is exactly what Nāgārjuna does, arguing that conventionally we act and think as though things are as they appear to be, while, at base, they are nothing at all—the disorientation which arises from Nāgārjuna’s epistemology will be most apparent in questions of time.<sup>38</sup>

Taking Nāgārjuna at his word, I see him as rejecting the reality of events and so I take his time-philosophy to be a modified form of McTaggart’s B series: there is sequence in some sense, but ultimately there is not even an “infinite partition” from which McTaggart retreats into pure sequentialism, but only emptiness, which, it would seem, could have no connection with time at all, whether real or imagined. Therefore, I understand Nāgārjuna’s view of time to be a modified version of McTaggart’s B series. Others have also noted this half-affinity between McTaggart and Nāgārjuna on the question of time. Philosopher Kristie Miller, for example, says that “in part,” Nāgārjuna’s “arguments [in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*] bear some strong similarities to those we find offered by McTaggart many centuries later.”<sup>39</sup> Because of dependent origination, Miller finds, Nāgārjuna’s views on time lend themselves to a McTaggartian interpretation. She writes:

So either the present is *in* the past because it depends on the past, in which case it is non-existent since it is not *the present*, or the present is independent of the past, in which case it is also non-existent because to be the present is to stand in some relation to the past and that relation would be absent. Thus, past, present, and future cannot be intrinsic features of time, and truths about time cannot be ultimate truths.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> David L. Gardiner, “Kūkai: Esoteric and Exoteric Teaching,” in *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. by James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011), 55–57. On two truths, see, e.g., Hideyo Ogawa, “Two Truths Theory: What Is Vyavahāra? Language as a Pointer to the Truth,” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 47:4 (2019), 613–633, <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-017-9314-6>>; and Dan Arnold, “The Sense Madhyamaka Makes as a Buddhist Position: Or, How a ‘Performativist Account of the Language of Self’ Makes Sense of ‘No-Self,’” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 47:4 (2019), 697–726, <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-019-09390-5>>

<sup>39</sup> Kristie Miller, “A Taxonomy of Views about Time in Buddhist and Western Philosophy,” in *Philosophy East and West*, 67:3 (2017), 773, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2017.0062>> (italics in the original). See also Yotsuya Kōdō, *Tsonkapa no chūgan shisō* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 2006), 14–21.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 774.

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Dependent origination, therefore, undermines any A-series attempt to classify Nāgārjuna's time epistemology.

While this argument is sound in so far as it considers the dependent-origination side of Nāgārjuna's epistemology of time, Nāgārjuna's McTaggartism stands only when we join Nāgārjuna in suspending, for the time being, the ultimate unreality of all dharmas. As Miller also shows, Nāgārjuna's *śūnyatā* theses at least complicate the affinities that his conventional-truths arguments bear with McTaggart's B-series interpretation.<sup>41</sup> Miller's chain of reasoning leads her to conclude that:

Since arguably Nāgārjuna's arguments give us reason to reject the idea that pastness, presentness, and futurity are even, conventionally speaking, features of time, it seems most charitable to think that Nāgārjuna thus interpreted is best classified as some sort of middle-way or undemanding realist.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, Nāgārjuna does not find that there is any ultimate reality to time, or to anything at all, although he does not insist that we must stop using conventional truths as a working stand-in. Because of these complications, I categorize Nāgārjuna as a modified B series-ist on the McTaggartian scheme.<sup>43</sup>

### Stephen Hawking's Philosophy of Time

Finally, let us examine the time philosophy of a modern physicist and probably the most well-known theorist of time in the modern Anglophone world: the late Stephen Hawking, who occupied Isaac Newton's chair as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. In 1988, Hawking published what would become a runaway bestseller, *A Brief History of Time*. Writing from a secularist, materialist, Big Bang perspective, Hawking propounded a theory of relativistic time, drawing not only on the space-time discoveries of Albert Einstein (1879–1955) and other quantum physicists but also on the consequences, as Hawking saw them, of the increasingly entropic nature of the universe.<sup>44</sup> However, despite Hawking's avowed atheism, his

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 775–776.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 776.

<sup>43</sup> Hara Yutaka, Ryūju ni okeru jikanron no ichi kōsatsu," [An inquiry into Nāgārjuna's theory of time] in *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, [Indology and Buddhism Research] 23:1 (1974), 158, <[https://doi.org/10.4259/ibk.69.2\\_895](https://doi.org/10.4259/ibk.69.2_895)>.

<sup>44</sup> See generally Alfred Driessen, "The Quest for Truth of Stephen Hawking," in *Scientia et Fides*, 9:1 (2021), 47–61, <<https://doi.org/10.12775/SetF.2021.002>> and Oliver L. Reiser, "The

centering of the human person in his philosophy of time puts him quite close to the Christian St. Augustine.

To put a finer point on it, the human person in Hawking's time philosophy is a kind of denatured Augustinian Christian, a psychologizing knower in a vast universe which has some God-like traits, but which is ultimately empty and void of personality. For Hawking, "time's arrow," as he put it, is a psychological artifact dependent on the second law of thermodynamics.<sup>45</sup> In an open universe, Hawking argues, the psychological arrow and the thermodynamic arrow need not align. But because they do and only because they do, there follows "the development of intelligent beings who can ask the question: why does disorder increase in the same direction of time as that in which the universe expands?"<sup>46</sup> One can sense in Hawking's empty cosmos the contours of St. Augustine's eternal God, shaping human knowing with love and not with thermodynamic laws. Despite calling into question the significance of any unified theory that does not take into account "the questions of why there should be a universe for the [theoretical] model to describe," Hawking is obliquely wondering where the knower fits into the scheme of what is known.<sup>47</sup> It is in this sense that Hawking is an anthropological temporalist. We know time because we are here to know time, a kind of neo-Augustinian argument married to insights on the expanding universe from Edwin Hubble.<sup>48</sup>

This anthropocentric cosmic tautology may also appear to rehearse Nāgārjuna's flirtations with B-series time, in which dependent origination frustrates the temporal charism on which A-series time relies. Hawking conceptually ties the time arrow to the directionality of the universe's entropy, which sets up a kind of Nāgārjunianism of interconnectedness and sequence. However, because Hawking's anthropocentric cosmology ineluctably smuggles in the human-person telos which St. Augustine articulated (although of course Hawking, as an atheist, would have denied this), I see his time-theory as a modified A series of the McTaggartian interpretation. The differences in epistemological anthropology between Hawking and Nāgārjuna make this clear. Hawking's knowing subject is not

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Problem of Time in Science and Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Review*, 35:3 (May 1926), 246–247.

<sup>45</sup> See Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: Updated and Expanded Tenth Anniversary Edition* (New York: Bantam Books, 1996), 149.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Edward Feser, *Aristotle's Revenge: The Metaphysical Foundations of Physical and Biological Science* (Neunkirchen-Seelscheid: Editiones Scholasticae, 2019), 173–174.

<sup>48</sup> See also Ernan McMullin, "Cosmic Purpose and the Contingency of Human Evolution," in *Theology Today*, 55:3 (1998), 411–413; Ron Highfield, "The Function of Divine Self-Limitation in Open Theism: Great Wall or Picket Fence?" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 45:2 (2002), 279–299.

the no-self *anatman* of the Buddhist tradition, but the individual thinker along the Western-Newtonian line. This thinker knows objective reality in a subjective way, and so Hawking's philosophy of time is, with modifications, applicable to McTaggart's A series.

In fact, Hawking's anthropocentric cosmology is even more robust than he at first allows. Later in the same chapter where he first introduces his psychological-thermodynamic idea about the arrow of time, Hawking turns to what he calls a "weak anthropic principle" to bring in a third arrow: "the cosmological arrow, the direction of time in which the universe expands rather than contracts."<sup>49</sup> Because we are around to perceive time, and because we have not fallen into any black holes (this is an important stipulation on the Hawkingensian view), it must mean that time is somehow conditioned on the existence of the human person.<sup>50</sup> Again, while Hawking would deny any generative power to the human soul, denying as he did at least the soul's immortality if not its existence, it seems plain that his temporal anthropocentrism makes humans the center of time's noticeable passing. At the end of *A Brief History of Time*, Hawking mentions St. Augustine, approvingly (if slightly tongue-in-cheek), to agree with him that "time is a property only of the universe that God created. Presumably, he knew what he intended when he set it up!"<sup>51</sup>

To be sure, though, *A Brief History of Time* was not Hawking's only foray into time philosophy. For example, Hawking's views on time were famously critiqued by American Christian philosopher William Lane Craig. Craig is especially interested in Hawking's "imaginary time," which Hawking used to explain the nature of space-time (when "the temporal dimension [was] indistinguishable from the spatial dimensions") "up to the Planck time,  $10^{-43}$  sec after the Big Bang."<sup>52</sup> One of Hawking's motivations in conjuring up this "imaginary time" business, Craig avers, is to "avert the need for a Creator."<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Quentin Smith, who shares Hawking's anti-Creatorism, adopts an eminently Nāgārjunian perspective when he writes: "The fact of the matter is that the most reasonable belief is that we came from nothing, by nothing and for nothing," and that, "We should acknowledge our foundation in nothingness and feel awe at the marvelous fact that we have a chance to participate briefly in this incredible sunburst that interrupts

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<sup>49</sup> Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 156.

<sup>50</sup> See generally Richard A. Muller, *Now: The Physics of Time* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 183–184.

<sup>51</sup> Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 183.

<sup>52</sup> William L. Craig, "Theism and the Origin of the Universe," in *Erkenntnis*, 48:1 (January 1998), 47, <<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005360931186>>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

without reason the reign of non-being.”<sup>54</sup> This is the *śūnyatā* of all dharmas translated fluently into late twentieth-century scientism, and Hawking has made similar statements elsewhere which essentially affirm Smith’s views.<sup>55</sup> And yet, Hawking maintained the sheer physicalism of the universe. He, therefore, denied only a Creator, not a creation. Moreover, Hawking places in the epistemological center of the physical universe the human knower, through whose mind flies the arrow of time. I understand him as having espoused a modified A series on the McTaggart interpretation.

## Conclusion

McTaggart’s short 1908 thesis on the nature of time as divisible into an A series and a B series has proven to be one of the seminal texts of the 20th and 21st centuries. McTaggart’s insights, Hegelian-Kantian in nature and rooted in early 20th-century debates on the nature of change and the role of the human knower in understanding the evolving universe, help categorize and further understand a wide range of other ideas, from other places and centuries, on time.

In this essay, and in the context of McTaggart’s A series/B series time schematic, I have considered the time-philosophies of St. Augustine, Nāgārjuna, and Stephen Hawking, finding that Nāgārjuna espoused a modified B-series approach to time, Hawking a modified A-series approach, and St. Augustine, with allowances for God’s ultimate mastery of time, an approach very like McTaggart’s A series. These categorizations turn on the affinity of each thinker’s respective conceptions of time with either of McTaggart’s two posited time series (A or B), but the most fundamental question is the role of the human knower within time, the epistemological anthropology which each thinker espouses as part of his time philosophy. In the end, the key to whether a thinker adopts some version of the A series or the B series is how that thinker understands the human person as a knowing

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<sup>54</sup> William L. Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 135, cited in William L. Craig, “Theism and the Origin of the Universe,” 50. For a critique of Craig’s use of the *kalam* argument which Craig deploys against Smith and other atheist materialists, see also Landon Hedrick, “Heartbreak at Hilbert’s Hotel,” in *Religious Studies*, 50:1 (2014), 27–46 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412513000140>>.

<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., “It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.” Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam, 2010), 180, cited in Wojciech P. Grygiel, “Multiverse, M-theory, and God the Creator,” in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 53:1 (March 2013), 35, note 38 <<https://doi.org/10.5840/ipq20135313>>. See also Javier Sánchez-Cañizares, “Whose Design? Physical, Philosophical and Theological Questions Regarding Hawking and Mlodinow’s Grand Design,” in *Scientia et Fides*, 2:1 (2014).

subject, and indeed as a principle of knowing by the light of the soul's striving in time toward timelessness in Heaven with God.

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## **Causal Power of the Substance of the Human Person vis-à-vis the Physicalists' Causality**

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***Aloysius Nnaemeka Ezeoba***

**Abstract:** One major problem which the substance of the human person has encountered in the course of the history of philosophy is that of explaining the sense in which it has causal power. Aristotle taught that substance has genuine causal power which made him describe substance as a unified entity and not as a bundle of properties or bundle of particles as atomists, such as Democritus, held. The naturalists, especially the physicalists, argue that causal power belongs only to the physical states and not to substance as a unifying entity. This paper uses the argument from imputability to sustain that, against physicalism, the substance of the human person has causal power because it is a unified entity possessing consciousness and free will. Thus, one's action is imputable to one's substance as a unified free conscious agent.

**Keywords:** substance, causal power, human person, imputability

### **Causal Power of the Substance of the Human Person**

**W**hat can we refer to as the substance of the human person in its definitive sense? How can one definitively pinpoint this substance in the human person? What are the defining factors of the substance of the human person as such? The more common and simpler understanding of it is the conception of the individual being as substance. Thus, when I say that Socrates is a substance it is understood easily because Socrates is a distinct individual. Aristotle has argued that substance is

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primary in every way; in definition, knowledge, and time.<sup>1</sup> For him, *separability* and *thingness* are characteristics of substance.<sup>2</sup> Further, this individual is a unified entity capable of bringing something into being.<sup>3</sup>

Aristotle himself argued that apart from substance being primary and basic, it could be spoken of in *four* ways: 1) the substance of a thing is what being is for that thing, 2) the universal of that thing, 3) the genus of a thing, and 4) what underlies a thing.<sup>4</sup> For him, what is fundamental in substance is that it is that which underlies an entity after all changes.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, what is fundamental in the substance of Socrates is that which underlies Socrates. This is the core meaning of substance, that is, the underlying thing, which is the *sub stare* (meaning, that which stands under an existing being). Therefore, the real meaning of substance in Aristotle is the underlying thing in an individual being. The substance of Socrates refers then strictly to that which underlies Socrates in spite of all changes he undergoes in life.

Trouble starts when we want to determine actually the ground of this causal power of Socrates. The question is whether this underlying thing, substance, can cause something to be, or if it is only the physical things that can do such. When, for instance, Socrates slaps Plato, we can comfortably say that it is this individual Socrates that should be held responsible for slapping Plato. In this sense, the physical individual Socrates has the causal power to bring an effect into being. He could be held responsible because not only does he have causal power, but also because he is a conscious agent with free will. The question is: Is it this physical Socrates who slapped Plato or is it something that constitutes Socrates as an individual unity which is, however, not distinct from Socrates that did it? Is there something underlying beyond the physical which one could call Socrates or is Socrates just the physical individual we see? For instance, Socrates could have slapped Plato when he was 12 years old, and when he reaches 20 years old the offense of slapping Plato is still imputable to him despite all the changes he has undergone over the past eight years. Within these eight years, he could have grown taller, developed a beard, have a deeper voice, became muscular, and so on. Can we still comfortably say that it is the same Socrates eight years ago who slapped

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. by J. L. Ackrill and Lindsay Judson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), VII, 2, 1028,8b.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 3, 1029, 30a. Separability refers to the fact that an individual is distinct from others. Thingness means that the individual is a thing or an individual being.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, in *Categories and De Interpretatione*, trans. by J. Ackrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), V, 4a21-4b19.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 3, 1028, 33b.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 1, 1028, 24a.



Plato and no longer the present Socrates who has undergone some changes? Is the substance of this physical Socrates whom we are looking at or is there something beyond what we see which is called Socrates? Is the cause of the slap something that endures over a period of time and which organizes an individual into a unified entity or is it just the physical thing we see? It is then that one begins to look beyond the physical, though not totally independent of the physical.

Aristotle argued that without the primary substance (that is, the individual being like Socrates), nothing would exist, and for substance to come into being there must be another substance already existing that generates it.<sup>6</sup> Thus, substance can only come into being through another substance. In this sense, non-substances cannot possess causal power of this sort. This was part of the reason that made Aristotle argue that substance is a unified entity and that substance is not composed of its parts.<sup>7</sup> The parts, according to him, are not substances in themselves; rather, they inhere in individual substances. He taught that substance is a unified entity, and not as a bundle of properties or bundle of particles as atomists, such as Democritus, held. According to Aristotle, it is impossible for a substance to possess substances that are present in it in actuality. So, if a substance is one thing, it cannot be composed of substances present in it. This blocks the possibility of referring to any part of the human person or the brain state as a substance. For this reason, he rejected Democritus's theory of atomism that atoms are substances.<sup>8</sup> Aristotle's position emphasizes the fact that substance is a unified entity that can bring other things into being.

Jonathan Lowe has emphasized the same point that substance is a unified entity and more importantly that only substance has genuine causal power and liability. Non-substances have no causal power to bring things into existence.<sup>9</sup> For Lowe, non-substances do not have sufficient causal power and, hence, cannot sufficiently be the cause of anything. This causal power is accompanied by liabilities to act upon something and to be acted upon. Lowe is not arguing that events, rather than substance, cannot cause anything, but that such event causation is never ontologically fundamental. For instance, when we say that a car collision caused person A to die, it is not the collision itself that caused A to die. Rather, it is the car which collided forcefully that

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 10, 1035,14b.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 10, 1035,18b.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 13, 1039,13a.

<sup>9</sup> E. J. Lowe, *Personal Agency: The Metaphysics of Mind and Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 19.

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caused A's death. Hence, events cannot ontologically be the cause of anything. Lowe understands substance in its fundamental meaning to be something more than physical. The human person, according to Lowe, is a psychological substance possessing causal powers as a free rational agent.<sup>10</sup> He is of the opinion that the causal power of the human person is different from that of other substances because the human person possesses rationality and free will with which to act or cause a thing to be and be able to accept responsibility for one's action.<sup>11</sup> However, some naturalist philosophers, like the physicalists, try to attribute the causal power to non-substances.

### Physicalists' Notion of Causality

The naturalists, especially the bundle theorists, tend to argue that substance is nothing other than the collection of properties. The implications of this line of thought are: 1) that properties are substances; 2) that outside the properties, substance does not exist; and 3) that activities of substance are nothing other than the activities of the properties of an individual. The crudest of this argument is the one held by the physicalists. For them, every physical event has a physical cause, or everything supervenes on the physical. This is to say that, for the physicalists, Aristotle's and Lowe's argument that nothing comes into existence outside the causal power of substance is invalid especially if substance is to be understood as something that stands under. Hence, physicalists reject such attribution of causal power to substance. Their argument is commonly viewed from two perspectives, namely, 1) every event has a cause and the cause itself is a physical event, and 2) mental events are caused by physical events.<sup>12</sup>

One of the contemporary proponents of physicalism, David Papineau, argues that every physical event has purely physical causes. For Papineau, mental events are not only determined by physical events, but they are also in some sense the same substance as the physical. He rejects any view

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>11</sup> Henrik Lagerlund has argued that it is only the human being that is partially the same over a long period of time because we have the intellectual soul which remains totally the same. Every other substance, according to Lagerlund, has a weaker form of identity or sameness. Cf. Henrik Lagerlund, "Aristotelian Powers, Mechanism, and Final Causes in the Late Middle Ages," in *Reconsidering Causal Power: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives*, ed. by Benjamin Hill, Henrik Lagerlund, and Stathis Psillos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 87.

<sup>12</sup> David Spurrett and David Papineau, "A Note on the Completeness of 'Physics'," in *Analysis*, 59:1 (1999), 25–29. Such a notion of causal power is endorsed by the physicalist view that physics is complete and can account fully for the entire physical action and effect.

of mental events being different from the physical, as propagated by epiphenomenalism.<sup>13</sup> Causal power, for Papineau, belongs to physical events, not to substance, especially if substance is to be identified with something more than the physical entity.<sup>14</sup> He argues further that modern dualism is a dualism of properties, not that of substance as seen in the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. The cause of physical effect, according to him, is only other physical causes so that the world is causally complete, giving no room for non-physical causes such as consciousness. For him, human behavior is fully accounted by physical antecedents in such a way that any distinct consciousness is only a causal dangler that has no relevance to the question of causality.<sup>15</sup>

John Searle in his work *Minds, Brains and Science*, while presenting what he calls the contemporary version of the mind-body problem, has argued that all mental phenomena, whether consciousness, pains, or thoughts, are caused by processes going on in the brain. For Searle, brains cause minds, minds do not cause brains; mental phenomena are features of the brain.<sup>16</sup> But one peculiar thing about Searle's version of materialism is that it does not as such deny free will or reason or consciousness; only that he regards them as features of the brain implying that they could be explained through the explanation of the brain processes.<sup>17</sup> Erik Sorem has accused Searle of advocating property dualism with his argument that mental states are just features of the brain. Property dualism argues that mental properties

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<sup>13</sup> See David Papineau, *Philosophical Naturalism* (Oxford: Blackwell 1993), 11. Epiphenomenalism states that the physical brain can cause mental events in the mind, but that the mind cannot interact with the brain at all.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>15</sup> See David Papineau and Howard Selina, *Introducing Consciousness*, ed. by Richard Appignanesi (Cambridge: Icon, 2012), 64–66. See also David Papineau, *Thinking about Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); David Papineau, *The Metaphysics of Sensory Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> See John Searle, *Minds, Brains and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> It is good to recall the caveat of Thomas Nagel that physical science cannot help us to fully understand the irreducible subjective center of consciousness which is a conspicuous part of the universe. This aspect of consciousness, for Nagel, has to do with the mental aspect that is evident to the first-person or the inner view of the conscious agent. This argument of Nagel is against the materialists who argue that it is only the physical world that is irreducibly real and that, if the mind really exists, its place must be founded in the physical world. See Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37–42.

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involving conscious experiences are fundamental properties identified by physics.<sup>18</sup>

Ricardo Restrepo has argued that the physicalist argument that physical events supervene the mental states makes all the non-physical metaphysical entities such as God, the soul, mental states, and others more or less false.<sup>19</sup> If every physical event supervenes on the physical, the idea of substance as the underlying thing, *sub stare*, would be superfluous or non-existent, and the whole concept of human *free will* or *freedom of action* derived from consciousness would be more or less an illusion as human action would be determined by only the physical component of the individual and the mental aspect will become impotent, so that the human person as unified entity or substance would be causally non-viable. Although physicalism does not necessarily deny consciousness, except when it conceives the material causation as deterministic and incapable of reason at least as its features, the problem is that the physicalists seem to turn what is normally understood as properties of the classical notion of substance into substances or quasi-substances that possess causal powers.

### Substance versus Properties

The physicalist argument that causal power is physical and complete, giving no room for non-physical causation, such as mental causation, raises questions about the nature of non-mental or non-substantial entities. As we previously saw, Aristotle's understanding of an individual entity possessing only one substance but with many predicates implies that brain processes are properties of the human substance.<sup>20</sup> This is contrary to many thoughts in the Modern era.

During the Modern period, Robert Boyle favored Democritus' notion of atomism revived by Pierre Gassendi, which Aristotle had rejected, and thought that individual things are bundles or aggregates of atoms.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, Boyle's notion of causal power could be ascribed to these bundles, not

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<sup>18</sup> See Erik Sorem, "Searle, Materialism, and the Mind-Body Problem," in *Perspectives*, 3:1 (2010).

<sup>19</sup> See Ricardo Restrepo, "Two Myths of Psychophysical Reductionism," in *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 2:2 (2012).

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 13, 1039,13a.

<sup>21</sup> He argued that what our senses perceive in bodies are great multitudes of corpuscles or cluster of corpuscles and these are principles of many sorts of natural bodies such as earth, water, salt, etc., whose particles adhere so closely to each other. See Robert Boyle, *Selected Philosophical Papers*, ed. by M. A. Stewart (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 42.

the underlying unity which Aristotle called substance. Locke and Isaac Newton more or less accepted Boyle's theory of substance as a bundle of particles. Locke made a distinction between particular substance and substance in general. The particular substances, according to him, such as man, horse, gold, and water, are *bundles* or aggregates of simple ideas, while substance in general is the *unknown support* (or substratum) of such qualities that are capable of producing simple ideas in us.<sup>22</sup> Locke ascribed this capability or power to the substance; he believes that substance, even the one he calls spiritual substance, has causal power.<sup>23</sup> Exponents of the *bundle theory*, such as David Hume, rejected the doctrine of unknown support and also denied the idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect, and described it as a mere conventional way of associating things.<sup>24</sup> Hence, he denied the notion of necessitating causal power to substance.

In contrast, the exponents of the theory of substance argue that if all the qualities of a substance are removed, there is something that remains.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II, xxiii, 2, 20. This idea of substance as a *bundle of ideas* and as an *unknown support* later became problematic due to its semblance with the idea of bare particular. Locke's unknown support comes closer to Aristotle's notion of substance as the *underlying stuff*, although it has its own problems.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxiii, 10, 5 & 18, 25 & 37, 10-15.

<sup>24</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature (1739-40)*, ed. by L.A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 233. Nicholas Malebranche, a disciple of Rene Descartes and a defender of Cartesian dualism, raised the notion of occasionalism as a response to the problem of interaction of the dual substances in Descartes. Writing on this problem as it exists today, Benjamin Hill contends that Malebranche could have reasoned that the best way to resolve that problem was to posit that only a necessary being, God, could have such a necessitating causal power, not any contingent being. (See Benjamin Hill, "The Ontological Status of Causal Powers: Substances, Modes, and Humeanism," in *Reconsidering Causal Power: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives*, ed. by Benjamin Hill, Henrik Lagerlund, and Stathis Psillos [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021], 145.) For him, the 17<sup>th</sup> century occasionalist criticism shows that we cannot just postulate causal power as explanatory device and expect that we will easily deal the attendant metaphysical issues arising therein. The core problem is not to argue whether or not causal power exists but rather to explain how it could exist. (See *Ibid.*, 146.) Hill challenged the metaphysicians to discover a naturalistic way of finding a balance, within our logical possible world, between contingency and necessary.

<sup>25</sup> The substance theorists would ask, for instance: What is an orange like outside the sum of its qualities? Or what remains when all the qualities of an orange (like color, roundness, the back cover, the liquid inside it, the seeds, and the fiber inside it) are removed? One may be tempted to answer either that "nothing remains" which is a confirmation of bundle theory, or that "something remains" which is substance thereby confirming the theory of substratum. A very recent argument on this debate was presented by Lowe. He argues that such questions about what remains after all the qualities of a substance have been removed is an erroneous question arising from what he calls *category mistake*. For him, it is a category mistake because it assumes that both the substance and its qualities belong to the same category whereas they belong to different categories. According to him, both the question and the answer should not

The problem here is which one has causal power: substance or properties? If there is no substance as the underlying stuff or that which stands under as the bundle theorists have argued, how could a crime that was committed a few years ago be attributed to the same person after some years have passed as we indicated above? This is because the properties mutate, and the clearer way of identifying the same person who committed a crime some years back is to appeal to the issue of identity. This might boil down to the question of whether identity refers to a substance or a bundle of properties. Are human beings the same over a long period of time, based on their properties or based on their substances? Though I am not going into the problem of identity in this essay, the more logical way out of this problem is that the individual will be re-identified as the same thing or person previously known.<sup>26</sup> The root of this re-identification can only be found in the substance as *sub stare* or the underlying stuff which remains after all changes, though the naturalists could

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have occurred in the first place. (See E. J. Lowe, *The Routledge Guide to Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [New York: Routledge, 2013], 90.) Thus, the problems of bundle theory and that of substratum are, for Lowe, a misunderstanding of the relationship between the substance and its qualities. Lowe's solution was to posit non-Cartesian substance dualism and to regard the human person as a psychological substance (non-Cartesian dualism is the dualism of the human person as a subject of experience and one's organized body). But such a solution raises more questions than it has answered. Could there be properly two substances in an individual entity? Is the substance of the human person rightly limited to just the psychological level? Strawson has proposed a solution in which he rejected Cartesian dualism arguing that the human person has two aspects instead of two substances and that the two aspects of the human person are the body and the mind. (See Peter F. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* [London: Routledge, 1996], 111.)

<sup>26</sup> David Wiggins, while trying to reconcile Aristotle's primary substance with Kant's idea of substance, argues that the central question is the ability for a thing to be re-identified at different times and under different attributes. In this sense, for Wiggins, identity must always go with attributes. (See David Wiggins, *Identity and Spatio-temporal Continuity* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967], 27.) This identity exists only among sortals or kinds of the same substance. (See David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 9.) He believes that the concept of the body (somatism) is too generic and must be narrowed down to a sortal concept. But Ayers, for instance, disagrees with Wiggins and argued that identity has to do with material body or the same material body, rather than kind of sorts. (See Michael Ayers, "Substance: Prolegomena to a Realist Theory of Identity," in *Journal of Philosophy*, 88:2 [1991], 78.) Furthermore, Lowe tends to differ from Wiggins's argument of sortal or Ayers's material body when he argues that identification or re-identification must take into consideration the sortal term (nominal essence) and the real essence. (See Lowe, *Routledge Guide to Locke's Essay*, 81.) Van Inwagen refers to the psychological-continuity account of personal identity across time. (See P. van Inwagen, *Ontology, Identity, and Modality: Essays in Metaphysics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 149.) For W. Norris Clarke, self-identity does not mean being unchanging; rather, it is the capacity to retain the same substance (underlying stuff) across accidental changes. (See W. Norris Clarke, "To Be Is to Be Substance-in-Relation," in *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being, God, Person* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994], 107.)



argue that without the physical properties, such underlying stuff cannot be known or identified.

Naturalists, especially the physicalists, base their argument on this, thereby ascribing causal power to the properties without which. For naturalists, the said substance as the underlying stuff cannot be known. My argument maintains that properties or non-substances of the human person cannot have causal power because they are dependent on a substance without which they cannot exist. Rather, the causal power of the human person as a free agent belongs to the human substance as an underlying thing, *sub stare*, which remains the same across a period of time and after all changes. This position is what I want to attempt to develop using the argument from imputability.

### **The Imputability Argument**

To attempt a solution to the problem of causal power between substance and its properties, I will use here an argument from imputability. The imputability argument states that the responsibility of an action is assigned or attributed to the agent of that action, or more precisely, to the substance or the human person that caused the action because it has causal power, free will, and consciousness. Actions are imputable to an agent as a unified entity who caused the action in order that the objective of the imputability may be realized. The objective is to punish the offender and deter potential offenders, and these could not be realized if the agent of the action is not understood as a unified entity beyond the mere physical states and mental or psychological spheres of existence. At the background of this imputability is the presupposition that the agent possesses rational free will. In this case, it is not just the physical state as property dualists or physicalists would argue that caused the action but the entire person. For instance, if person A slaps person B, the property dualists may, by implication, argue that either it was the hand or the brain processes that caused the slapping. In this case, the whole individual is more or less not responsible, but only part of the individual. If property dualism is true, the court of justice could condemn certain physical parts of the body, while leaving the whole human person. If the bundle theory of substance is true, then the trial of an individual who committed an offense a few years ago would be to a certain extent not meaningful because the person has undergone some physical changes to the extent that one could comfortably argue that it is no longer the same person committed the offense in the past looking at the physical properties in those

passage of years. But common sense still tells us that the trial of such a person after many years could be just and effective in deterring potential criminals. That is, it is still believed that the person condemned after many years is the same person who committed the crime many years ago, provided it is still within the legal period to try the offender. This is based on the fact that despite all those physical changes, something still remains which underlies (*sub stare*) that individual person and still makes one the same person one was when one committed the offense. People still wish to have a good name even after their death and would do everything possible during their lifetime to prevent having a bad name that might outlive them. This seems to imply that the human substance or the human person is not limited within the spheres of the physical and the psychological but endures beyond such spheres of existence. My point here is that any recognition of the property as substance or acceptance that non-substance of the human person has causal power would make the imputability of action to an individual entity difficult.

As briefly stated above, if person A slaps person B, following the argument of the physicalists, then it was the hand of A that slapped B or that it was the firing of the neurons in A's brain that moved the hand to slap B. In any of these options about A slapping B, the cause of that action of slapping has not really been attributed to A. Instead, the physicalist argument has imputed it to the parts of A. A's hand is not A in the real sense though it is part of A. The firing of the neuron in A's brain is just an activity in A which is not the whole person of A. In fact, the implication of the physicalist position is that A as an individual could be exonerated from the culpability of slapping B since the brain process that caused the slap is only a physical component of A, not A as a unified being. However, in the actual sense when it is said that A as a person slapped B, this cannot be attributed to just the hand of A, or the firing of the neuron in A's brain. While these may be included, they could not be considered as the cause, but only as conditions or dispositions for the cause of the slap where imputability applies to the cause. However, those conditions are necessary, but not sufficient, for the cause, because without the conditions the causal power would be impossible. Lowe, for instance, has argued that the causal power is to be rightly attributed to the *self* A which is a psychological substance. He rejects the physicalist position, arguing that only substance possesses causal power.<sup>27</sup> Lowe's notion that causal power belongs to substance alone is plausible, but his limitation of substance to the level of psychology poses a problem to such imputability and to substance

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<sup>27</sup> Lowe, *Personal Agency*, 19.

itself. It is reasonable to accept that substance possesses conditions or dispositions, but such dispositions are causally impotent and inculpable. These conditions are not only the physical components of substance but also the non-physical components like the desires, beliefs, spirit, and soul which the physicalists tend to describe as mental states. It is only causal power that is culpable, and this belongs not to the parts of an entity but rather to the unity of an individual. The principle of this unity is substance. This unity cannot be identified to any part, physical or non-physical, of the individual. A cause of an action is that which is legitimately culpable for the action. Additionally, Stathis Psillos has argued that power is inherent in substance. Power, for Psillos, are qualities inherent in substances. For Psillos, power qua power according to the Aristotelian-Thomistic account inheres in substance.<sup>28</sup> This means that, just like the properties which are inherent in substance, without the substance, such power will not exist. The existence of causal power is dependent on substance.

Furthermore, this substance or the subsisting unity is not to be identified with the theory of substratum.<sup>29</sup> It would be erroneous to argue that the cause of A slapping B is outside the physical identity of A as he is known as Mr. A. That is, it is not the physical Mr. A we see that slaps B but rather that it is something outside A which is unknown or unseen that is the cause of the slap. In other words, the causal power of a substance is now being attributed to the “substratum” of A which is outside the physical A we see. The implication of this line of argument is that the causal power belongs more or less to something completely different from the physical individual we see, which is sometimes identified as bare particular. This position is untenable because substance cannot be completely outside the existing individual. Therefore, while on the one hand, the substratum theory of substance is inadequate to explain the causal power of substance, the bundle theory on the other hand is itself incapable of this explanation.

The physicalist argument has not offered a sufficient answer to the problem of the causal power of the human person. If we follow the notion of property dualism, the tendency is to attribute the causal power of an action, say Mr. A slaps Mr. B, to physical properties which supervene on the mental properties, but this is still inadequate to impute the action to Mr. A. Such a position is practically untenable based on our argument from imputability.

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<sup>28</sup> Stathis Psillos, “The Inherence and Directedness of Powers,” in *Reconsidering Causal Power: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives*, ed. by Benjamin Hill, Henrik Lagerlund, and Stathis Psillos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 64–65.

<sup>29</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, xxiii, 2, 20.

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However, one can admit that the substance of the human person is that which underlies the physical person we see, and that this substance is not different from and does not exist independent of the physical thing we see. Thus, it could be admitted that both the physical and the non-physical aspects are necessary for the explanation of the causal power of substance, but each of them existing independent of the other cannot give us a proper explanation of this causal power. While I accept that there are non-physical aspects of substance, such as desires, beliefs, spirit, or soul, I reject the idea of substratum as such as an independent existent entity different from the physical individual.

To determine the causal power of the human person as the substance is to determine the substance itself. It would be better to argue that both the physical individual, for instance, the Socrates we see and his non-physical components are necessary for identifying what the substance of Socrates is which then possesses causal power. Following the notion of primary substance in Aristotle, we can agree with Lowe that causal power belongs to substance,<sup>30</sup> and that substance is more than the mere physical individual or just the non-physical components. This means that a substance includes all its properties and dispositions as *subsisting unity* of an individual. For instance, one can detach the hand or leg of Socrates, but he still remains. Socrates could also lose all his beliefs and desire, even his entire mental state, yet still remains. Again, one can “remove” the entire physical parts of Socrates, while Socrates still remains, as in the case of a dead person. Also, one cannot remove completely both the physical qualities and non-physical qualities of Socrates, and Socrates still remains. Hence, substance cannot be identified with just the physical aspects of an individual or with the non-physical aspects of the individual. Substance encapsulates the entire physical and non-physical qualities of an individual of which both the physical and the non-physical qualities are not parts or aspects of the substance, but aspects of the individual. The substance of an individual entity is the *unity* of that individual which persists over time. My argument from imputability states that things/offenses are imputed to the individual human person, like Socrates, as a unity of both the physical and the non-physical components that underlie one so that the entire being of the person becomes the cause of one’s action and takes responsibility of the action caused as a free and reasonable agent of that action.

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<sup>30</sup> Lowe, *Personal Agency*, 145. See also E. J. Lowe, *Subjects of Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58–60.

## Imputability and Free Will

The imputability argument presupposes the freedom of the human person as a conscious agent who is capable of initiating action consciously and freely while taking responsibility for that action. Lowe always speaks of substance possessing causal power and liability, as we saw earlier. Liability here refers to the ability to take responsibility for one's action. It is only a free and conscious agent that is capable of this. It is also to such agent that action could be reasonably imputed. The human person possesses consciousness and free will. For instance, W. Norris Clarke following St. Thomas Aquinas describes the human person as *dominus sui* meaning a consciously responsible master of one's action. He writes: "Thus for St. Thomas [...], a person is a being that is *dominus sui*, that is, master of itself, or *self-possessing* (in the order of knowledge by self-consciousness; in the order of will and action by self-determination or free will)."<sup>31</sup> Clarke seems to understand consciousness and free will as interwoven which are rooted in the causal power of the human person as substance. He goes further to cite the second description of a person given by Aquinas as an intellectual nature that possesses its own act of existence so that it can be the self-conscious, and a responsible source of its own action.<sup>32</sup> Clarke's concerns here are consciousness and free will of the human person which make one a responsible cause of one's own action. It is not the brain processes causing consciousness as the physicalists would argue. Invariably, Clarke and Lowe are on the same page that the human person as substance, not the physical components alone, possesses causal power and liability. Consciousness is important here because to reasonably impute an action to an individual, that individual must have performed the action consciously and freely; otherwise, it might become an act of man which ordinarily carries no responsibility because it is seen as an unconscious act or non-free act. Such actions are regarded as accidental actions of the individual from which it emanates never fully intended or willed it. By implication, the will or free will works with consciousness in causing a responsible and imputable action, or they are interwoven.

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<sup>31</sup> W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), 27–28.

<sup>32</sup> Clarke, *Person and Being*, 27. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, 29–43. Clarke also describes the human conscience as a privileged manifestation of our personhood. Cf. W. Norris Clarke, "Conscience and the Person," in *The Creative Retrieval of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Essays in Thomistic Philosophy, New and Old* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009).

Continuing with person A slapping person B, for this action to be really imputable to A, A must have consciously performed that action and must have acted freely. This seems to suggest that it might be possible for A to act consciously but not freely, but I will not go into the argument on whether consciousness and free will are compatible or not. My focus here is to state how imputability as such is applicable only to free agents as substances like the human person who acts freely as a conscious master of one's action. If the action of A slapping B had not emanated from A as a responsible master of one's action, then such an action would be difficult to be imputed to A. Such action could be described as an act of man, rather than a human action, which is not ordinarily imputable. If the occasion arises that A has to defend him-/herself from such action, A could try to exonerate him-/herself by arguing that his/her hand was moved unintentionally to B's face. Unintentional here means unwillingly. In this case, A is blaming the hand or the movement of the hand but not actually oneself. By "oneself," I mean here what I described above as the subsisting unity of the human person. In this blame against the hand, the hand here is seen not as this subsisting unity of the human person but only as a physical part. It could also be described as the physical part or property of the human person A.

Furthermore, A could admit that A slapped B but argue that A did not intend it. Probably A intended to slap C but ended up slapping B. In this case, A was conscious of slapping freely but ended up not slapping the intended target, C. So, since A's slapping of B was unintended, such action could be difficult to impute on him/her as such. A could as well argue that even though A slapped B, A's *spirit* did not accept it. This implies that A did not do it freely. A's spirit then might be said to comprise A's entire being as subsisting unity or substance of which A's hand is only a part. A's spirit is neither the hand that slapped B nor the brain process that led to the slapping. A might argue that something prompted A to slap B. The thing that prompted A might be unexplained internal or external processes but that A's spirit rejected it. In this case, the thing that prompted A is not this subsisting unity because A is referring to it not as A's being but as something that exerts influence on A's being. It might be A's brain processes or the central nervous system that physicalists would regard as the cause of such action since for them they possess causal power. But A's expression suggests that those processes are simply components of A, but not A's entire being as a subsisting unity. A's expression suggests that those processes are not causes as such but only components of causes. If A refers to them as the cause of the slap, it means that A has the intention to exonerate him-/herself by imputing the



action to components that are not really him-/herself. In fact, such analysis suggests that whenever A wants to argue that A is not the cause of an action actually performed, A tries to impute such action to a physical part or state or to mental state of A's being, or to an external cause with the conviction that such part or state or external cause refers to something outside A's being or substance as a person. Hence, A is not actually responsible for the action. So, it is a way of exonerating oneself from an action one actually performed. Therefore, an action is imputable only to an agent as a subsisting unity that possesses free will such as the human person because only such subsisting unity, not the physical states, has the causal power to responsibly initiate an action.

### Conclusion

I have tried to argue that, in the human person, it is only the substance that has causal power, not the brain processes or the central nervous system, or any physical component as physicalists argue. The substance understood as the underlying entity in Aristotle possesses causal power as a subsisting unity. The physical components such as the brain processes or the central nervous system or any physical state cannot be the cause of human action because they possess no causal power and liability. Those components cannot be held responsible for the human action, that is, the action cannot be imputed on those individual human components. If those components or states are the actual causes of the action, as the physicalists would argue, their action should be imputable to them not to the human person as a subsistent unity. Actions are imputable to the human person as substance or a subsisting unity, in Aristotelian terms, who possesses causal power and liability, and which is not composed of its parts, and the parts do not possess causal power or liability.<sup>33</sup> Thus, parts cannot be the cause of human actions as such. Therefore, the causal power of substance, especially the substance of the human person, is better understood as the power possessed only by the individual substance endowed with the exercise of reason and free will by which one initiates an action that is imputable to the person in question.

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<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 10, 1035, 18b. Also, Lowe, for instance, emphasized that parts of a substance are not components with which it is composed of. Cf. Lowe, *Personal Agency*, 167–168.

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## Is Order in International Relations Justified?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article criticizes from philosophical perspective arguments put forward by supporters of international anarchism. According to the international law sceptics conflict between equality and freedom can be resolved only within the state to a satisfactory executive level. In this approach, citizenship is defined as a warrant of rights and liberties guarded by coercive state institutions. Thus, the duties of justice apply exclusively to compatriots. Concurrently, I present how problematic this perspective can be especially if we take into consideration contemporary Russia's war on Ukraine which affects many economic and political aspects of people's lives in different parts of the globalized world. At the end of the article, I argue that the position of anarchism is overly reductive in its assumptions, as it precludes convincing explanations of many important aspects of international relations—such as the state's adherence to the principles of international law.

**Keywords:** order, anarchism, international law, power

**A**ccording to international anarchism,<sup>2</sup> international relations are characterized by a state of anarchy, and because of that, no standards of justice apply. Institutions and the international law are merely a

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<sup>1</sup> In preparing the final version of this article, I have benefited from discussions of participants of the 11<sup>th</sup> Polish Philosophical Congress (Lublin 2019) as well as from feedback given me by Prof. Agnieszka Nogal at the early version of the draft of the text.

<sup>2</sup> My understanding of "international anarchism" has nothing to do with the ideas of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century social-type (e.g., Mikhail Bakunin) or individualist (Max Stirner) anarchists. Anarchy in this context demonstrates the need to eliminate the institution and power of the state and to leave the freedom of self-organization to the people. As seen by theorists of international anarchism, however, anarchy does not refer to a self-organizing community, but a force relationship that must be reduced or eliminated precisely by the establishment of a state securing the principles of justice.

result of the forces and interests of the strongest states. The aforementioned approach is similar in form to the well-known international relations theory of political realism.<sup>3</sup> International anarchism as a philosophical position can also be derived from Thomas Hobbes's political theory, whereas Thomas Nagel can be considered a modern representative of this position in its liberal form. Such anarchistic perspective in international politics has been questioned by a cosmopolitan approach based on globalized interconnectedness.<sup>4</sup> Because in contemporary times we have heard louder and louder that globalization is reversed by the US in confronting China, and the post-Westphalian world has been transformed again into Westphalian; now is an opportunity to look closer to the problem of order in international relations.<sup>5</sup> Due to the idea of international anarchism, and especially the assumption about the impossibility and/or non-existence of international justice, I primarily refer to those elements of Hobbes' (points 1 and 2) and Nagel's (point 3) theories that wield a significant influence in this argument—specifically, the claims they made concerning the lack of sovereignty and the coercive law in international relations. These are the factors that cause justice only at the state level and not at supranational levels. After evaluating these factors, I refer to the polemics between the anarchists and their opponents concerning whether justice and the law are possible in international relations (point 4). At the end of the article, I argue that the position of anarchism is overly reductive in its assumptions and precludes convincing explanations of many important aspects of international relations—such as the state's adherence to the principles of international law. Another objective of this article is to indicate the problematic nature of this position by revealing the ambivalence existing therein (conclusion).

### State of Nature as a State of War

International anarchism, when used to describe relationships in international relations, is often based on the Hobbesian description of the state of nature. In Hobbes's theory, the state of nature is defined by the lack of a sufficiently strong political authority capable of ensuring the safety of mankind. In such a state of nature, there are no effective moral principles, i.e.,

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<sup>3</sup> See Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993) and Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Illinois: Waveland Press, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> See Rafał Wonicki, *Bezdroża sprawiedliwości. Rozważania o liberalnych teoriach sprawiedliwości ponadnarodowej* (WUW, 2017). Parts of the article are based on revised and modified paragraphs from chapter 2 of the book.

<sup>5</sup> See Richard Shapcott, *International Ethics: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press 2010) and Peter T. Leeson, *Anarchy Unbound: Why Self-Governance Works Better than You Think* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

those that would oblige entities to respect each other's rules. There are also no effective institutions that equally punish anyone for violating the law or morality, because there is no law or morality, and moral principles operate *in foro interno*. According to Hobbes, the only possibility of ensuring that these principles are enforced lies in the conclusion of an agreement to create a state and to appoint a function of punishing sovereign power.

Simultaneously, Hobbes points to two sources that cause the state of nature to be a state of permanent and potential war. The first relates to the premise of human nature (anthropological pessimism)—we are impetuous and affective, and we strive for fame or security at the expense of others' subordination. The second assumption refers to the uncertainty of the state of nature—we do not know who we can trust because there are no recognized common rules. Both sources cause individuals to reside in a constant, potentially life-threatening situation.<sup>6</sup>

Hence, the state of nature is a state of war in which people fight for survival, competing for resources. There is no room for durable cooperation or satisfaction from one's work because of the uncertainty of others' intentions and the threat of others appropriating what we have. A state of nature, as Hobbes describes it, embodies "continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."<sup>7</sup> Thus, in a state of nature there are no permanent laws and, apart from instincts and affections, no ethical principles rule, there exists "the war of all with all" (*bellum omnia contra omnes*).

This situation changes when the contract is concluded, and the state is established. This is when people renounce some of their powers, including the power to wage wars, in exchange for obedience to the sovereign. After the creation of the state, only the sovereign, for whom war can be a means of achieving the goals for which he was called—bringing peace, improving the state, and living in it—has the right to violence and war.

Therefore, moral order and political security are brought about by entering into the position of a state by entering into a social contract in which individuals establish authority and renounce involuntary acts of violence. Law and morality apply because the sovereign has the power to enforce sanctions and punishments for citizens breaking the law. People become citizens under his authority because, for the sake of protecting life, they have appropriately assigned rights. However, after the emergence of sovereign states, the state of nature as a state of war continues. The reason for this continuation lies in the fact that the states and their rulers are relative to each

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<sup>6</sup> See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Andrew Crooke, at the Green Dragon in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1651), XIII.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.



other like individuals in a state of nature. This situation in regard to states means that there is no possibility of concluding permanent international agreements, which, according to Hobbes, are merely blank words because of the lack of a guaranteed “sword” (and thus, superior authority). Keeping promises and proceeding in accordance with what one has established (e.g., treaties and international law) is rather a manifestation of prudence but does not constitute an expression of justice or morality. This occurs because the states have no obligation to act in pursuance of established rules if such actions were to undermine their interests.<sup>8</sup>

### Against International Anarchism

In order to challenge relations between states as the state of anarchy, critics of international anarchism must show that the war of each and every state is different from the state of war between sovereign states. For this purpose, one may argue that war and the willingness to fight result from the obligation to protect the lives, property, and work of the citizens. Thus, the sovereign can declare war only if those values are at risk. Then, the interest of the state, or as defined by Niccolò Machiavelli, the reason of the state, becomes the proper cause of violence and war. Simultaneously, according to critics of anarchism, even if a state of lawlessness exists between states, this is not a state of war. Sovereign states, in order to ensure the safety of their citizens, will not persist in engaging in wars among themselves, and will instead accept mutual rules in the name of mutual benefits, enabling them to cooperate. Based on the above interpretation, critics may claim that Hobbes’ theory of war is intended primarily to safeguard the existence of the state and should be understood as a defense war against assault.<sup>9</sup> In order to meet this security requirement, Hobbes needs a strong, internal guard of the internal and external sovereign powers. This power, thanks to recognized means of coercion—namely, internal, and external police—could provide citizens with a peaceful life understood primarily as a biological experience. As Hobbes writes:

The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort as that by their own industry and by the fruits of the earth they may nourish themselves and live

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* XXI.

<sup>9</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 45–50.

contentedly, is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety; and therein to submit their wills, everyone to his will, and their judgements to his judgement. This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner as if every man should say to every man: I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition; that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner. This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a Commonwealth; in Latin, *Civitas*.<sup>10</sup>

The state, although it is a purely human creation—or an artificial creation (as Hobbes calls it, a Leviathan)—constitutes at the same time the only way people can increase their chances of survival and ensure their safety, even against an external enemy. However, the states do not establish supreme power over one another, the super-sovereign. Thus, they remain in the state of nature with each other, and thus in a state of potential war. Hence, a question arises to which Hobbes does not provide an answer: whether, without an external power that secures international law by coercive means, justice can be established between states?

To counter the skepticism about the justice and law of international anarchists, we must show the wrongness of two premises in Hobbes' reasoning that international anarchists support. The first is that the state of nature is a state of war in which no state has an interest in following moral rules. The second assumes that moral principles must be validated by indicating that such conduct leads to the long-term promotion of the interests of all participants in the game. In the first case, we should consider whether international relations meet the Hobbesian criterion of the state of nature as a state of war. For this purpose, at least four conditions must be fulfilled: (a) the actors of international relations are states; (b) they are relatively equal; (c) they

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<sup>10</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 105–106.

are sovereign, which means that they can pursue their own internal policies irrespective of the internal policies of other states; and (d) due to the absence of superior authority capable of imposing uniform rules on all states, there is no reasonable expectation of mutual compliance and cooperation between states.<sup>11</sup>

I will now discuss these points in more detail. Ad (a) Recent history shows that, in the area of transnational relations, we are not dealing exclusively with states, but also with other entities that co-operate with international practices, such as the United Nations and the European Union. At least since the fall of the USSR, we can observe increased cooperation and the emergence of transnational organizations of all types. Today, states cannot be recognized as the only actors in international relations, and their policies are often influenced by the transnational interests of large corporations.<sup>12</sup> Ad (b) The second matter—i.e., the equality of forces between states—constitutes at most a legal fiction. States differ in terms of wealth, military strength, and prestige, and all of the aforementioned have an effect on their position in international relations. They certainly are not equal in their political influences and effect.<sup>13</sup> Ad (c) The third issue relates to the fact that states are capable of pursuing policies that are independent of other countries. In times of increasing globalized interdependence, security and prosperity depend largely on other players (states, international organizations, and corporations). The observed interdependence also leads to an increase in the importance of international and regional organizations that seek collaborative rules and common institutional and legal solutions to reduce and resolve conflicts. Achieving many of the goals that depend on states requires a stable environment, the recognition of common institutions, and the development of mutual practice in the long run. Thus, the use of violence is often unprofitable.<sup>14</sup> Ad (d) The fourth argument refers to an authority capable of establishing moral norms, which should influence the reduction of the importance of one's own interest. If such a situation were actually to take place, international law would either not be respected at all or should be less respected than state laws. However, violations of domestic laws (crime, fraud, etc.) are more frequent than violations of international

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<sup>11</sup> See Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 36.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Gourevitch and James Shinn, *Political Power and Corporate Control: The New Global Politics of Corporate Governance* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, "Power in International Politics," in *International Organization*, 59:1 (2005); Jeffrey Hart, "Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations," in *International Organization*, 30:2 (1976).

<sup>14</sup> See Erik Gartzke, *The Relevance of Power in International Relations* (USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, 2009), <[https://pages.ucsd.edu/~egartzke/papers/relevance\\_01222011.pdf](https://pages.ucsd.edu/~egartzke/papers/relevance_01222011.pdf)>.

laws.<sup>15</sup> In addition, they occur in countries that monopolize coercive measures. It is also worth noting that many areas of international relations are characterized by a high degree of voluntary cooperation based on such things as, for example, norms of customary law.<sup>16</sup> Naturally, there is always a risk of war. The history of recent decades, however, teaches that rivalry often takes non-violent forms based on mutual recognition of norms and the observance of common rules. Even if the states keep their moral obligations and do so for the sake of their own interest, they still accept many rules of cooperation, perceiving them as rules of righteousness. It occurs mainly because given states have common interests, and it is, therefore, reasonable to say that mutual cooperation and recognition of some principles is possible even if there is no global sovereign.<sup>17</sup>

The above arguments reveal that the analogy between international relations and the anarchy of the state of nature is unfounded. Second, Hobbes and the authors who followed his reasoning are mistaken about the possibility of morality and justice in international action. International rules are legitimate when they are in the interest of the states, but in the Hobbesian approach, the interests of the people are of greater concern (the interest of the nation/state remains relevant only if it coincides with the interests of individuals). This means that standard operating requirements may be justified in another manner than merely the rational interest of individuals' survival. For example, participation in common practice can be morally desirable even when following certain rules does not benefit the state.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, the skepticism expressed by international anarchists is problematic. One cannot logically say that there are moral norms that bind people while at the same time claiming that these norms do not affect the actions of states. Under the anarchist approach, there also exists an argument that certain features of international order (such as sovereignty) do not apply to international relations and the actions of moral judgments. States are not subject to the requirements of international justice because they represent

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<sup>15</sup> This argument seems problematic, because Beitz does not tell us why we should treat the state as individuals. It is therefore unknown why crimes committed by people should be equated with violations made by states. It is known, however, that this comparison is biased against people, because people are "n" times more numerous than states.

<sup>16</sup> See Shabtai Rosenne, *Practice and Methods of International Law* (London, Rome, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1984), 55.

<sup>17</sup> See Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, 49; Martin Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations: Sociological Concepts and Political Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 17–19; and Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> See Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, 64; Hedley Bull, "The Emergence of a Universal International Society," in *The Expansion of International Society*, ed. by Hedley Bull and A. Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 123.

separate political entities that have no overriding authority over one another. According to international anarchists, such a lack of common ground for evaluation validates moral skepticism. However, a lack of common judgment does not undermine the possibility of an evaluation in general. This occurs because, also within the state, different criteria of assessment are used by citizens, although many of them are not reflected in positive law. Yet, these criteria are still used for assessing the law.

### **Nagel's Rejection of International Justice**

In a normative discussion between cosmopolitans and communitarians, there is a strong concentration on economic redistribution on a global scope. In this debate, we can find authors such as Thomas Nagel who argue against cosmopolitans (i.e., Pogge, Moellendorf, Brook) that the lack of an international legal system possessing sovereign coercive power undermines all claims to any justice outside of the state. In his view, in international relations, anarchy and force rule, not law. Fair distribution claims apply only to institutions that oversee economic cooperation on a large scale through legal coercion. Citizens, therefore, have a mutual obligation to distribute their shares equally because they shape their economic life under the constraints of political institutions they have voluntarily agreed to follow. Co-citizens, recognizing themselves as contributors to the creation of distributed public policies, agree that they will treat their shares in the political community in an egalitarian way. Because of that at the supranational level, institutions are not entitled to legitimate the use of coercion. The aforementioned proves that justice simply does not apply at this level.<sup>19</sup> Nagel simultaneously presents two arguments indicating that global socio-economic justice would be possible only within a world state. The first generalizes Hobbes's argument concerning the state of nature. According to Nagel, if justice "can exist only under sovereign government,"<sup>20</sup> then global justice in any of the concepts of justice requires the existence of a world state. The second argument refers to the idea of egalitarian justice. Egalitarian distribution fairness "is something we owe through our shared institutions only to those with whom we stand in a strong political relation," and its requirements "apply only within the boundaries of a sovereign state, however arbitrary those boundaries may be."<sup>21</sup> The existence of a just order

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<sup>19</sup> See Laura Valentini, *Justice in a Globalized World: A Normative Framework* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 36, 141–142.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33:3 (2005), 116.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 121–122.

depends on coherent patterns of behavior and maintained institutions that wield ubiquitous influence over the way people live. Individuals, although attached to such an ideal, have no motivation to adapt if they are not sure that their behavior will be part of a reliable and effective system. Nagel claims that the only way to provide such assurances is to secure law enforcement by way of a central authority that would determine the rules of interaction and hold the monopoly on executive power. This is necessary even in a community in which most members are attached to the universal ideal of justice. By virtue of this reasoning, justice requires a sovereign state. However, due to the fact that a world state does not exist, justice cannot exist in international relations.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, one can say that, for Nagel, we are, as citizens, responsible for the legal rules of our state. This responsibility includes the right to request a justification of regulations, including those issued on our behalf. There are two points in this reasoning. First, it seems that the obligation imposed on citizens by law is a sufficient reason for limiting their freedom to claim justification. It is not, however, enough to morally prohibit non-citizens from claiming justification from other countries for their law. The critics of such an approach as cosmopolitans or global egalitarians may claim that in the age of globalization if there exists an effect of State A on State B due to a change of law or some specific action, State B has the right to demand that State A change such law or provide compensation for the damage it has caused. In other words, the scope of justice narrowed to national borders does not need to be limited by the claim that only citizens can demand justification for the introduction of certain rights.<sup>23</sup> Other people affected by this right may also demand such justification when their situation worsens. Moreover, the moral obligations that can be translated into institutionalized duties of justice are only due to legal constraints created by the state. If this is so, then any other coercion, also related to international law and institutions based on it, should generate justice obligations. *Ipsa facto*, Nagel does not present any convincing arguments in defense of the claim that the institutions of coercion, acting on behalf of those upon whom such institutions are legally forced, are a prerequisite for enforcing distribution standards. For instance, let us consider a case where only Nagel's first condition is fulfilled: market institutions inevitably create an environment in which people with different skills, contacts, ideas, and so on do not have control. These institutions, by their actions, make some people more privileged than others. In addition, these

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<sup>22</sup> See John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), xii, and Samuel Freeman, *Rawls* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> See Mathias Risse, *On Global Justice* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 33–35.



privileges significantly affect their most important interests, such as the likelihood that they will have good medical care. This tangle of market institutions serves private and collective interests using a system of incentives and disincentives. All of this is altered by the collective effort of individuals in the form of exerting pressure to correct existing legislation and establish institutions that place different incentives and disincentives in a different manner. Whether freedom and human activity can be violated and limited by institutions is not a case of hazard, because people design the institutions in which they operate. For this reason, claiming that standards of justice are impossible to establish when one can influence the shape of institutions around us is nothing more than a claim that those who do better nevertheless have no obligation to fellow citizens in extreme poverty.<sup>24</sup>

### International Law and Its Critique

As I have presented above, international anarchists claim that international law is not a “law” until it is effectively enforced and has a sanction system.<sup>25</sup> Their conclusions are often based on the assumption that the law must be coercive, and they prove legitimacy through a command theory of John Austin.<sup>26</sup> This position can also be defined as follows: in international relations, moral norms are possible, but legal ones are not.<sup>27</sup> It

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<sup>24</sup> This argument is consistent when we recognize that ethics are universal, and therefore apply to everyone in the same way. At the same time, this argument encounters two important counter-arguments. The first is political, while the second is ethical. The political counterargument shows the importance of the community’s role of securing the obligations of justice. The ethical argument in turn points to the special moral relations between citizens, giving them priority over non-citizens.

<sup>25</sup> See Jack Goldsmith and Eric Posner, *The Limits of International Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> See John Austin, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (London: John Murray, 1832).

<sup>27</sup> See Allen Buchanan called such a position “legal nihilism” [Allen Buchanan, *Justice, Legitimacy and Self-Determination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 45–52]. One of the answers to “legal nihilism” is to show that features belonging to state law, such as the creation of legal obligations, do not need to be centralized by one sovereign authority and can be enforced by international structures. The second answer is to undermine the claim that the activity of the state institution is a prerequisite for law. Enforcing the law by force, through sanctions, is generally considered a necessary, if not the most important, feature of state law. In response to “legal nihilism,” one can also show that the decentralized model of international law has been transformed into a decentralized system of international cooperation—largely due to the consent and action of states—without any body of superior authority that would have the power to legislate. The most similar form to this kind of legislative body is the UN. This institution creates international law that is “soft law” and thanks to it the state can begin negotiating agreements in their most essential aspects by engaging in declarations and other “soft law” instruments and then moving towards establishing specific rights and obligations. In particular, the term “soft law” is used in relation to international rules that are more flexible and general than those

argues that the so-called “international law” (and its activities and institutions) can only cause states to voluntarily commit themselves to compliance with the concluded agreements. Consequently, relations between states are at the very least subject to moral obligations, but not the law itself. According to this notion, without a world government possessing centralized legislative, enforcement, and judicial systems, there is no way to effectively protect legal obligations. Without such a government, there would be a natural state without law and based solely on the power politics and interests of the state, or at best, the discretionary relations dependent on the goodwill of states. From the perspective of international anarchism, international law cannot exist without a centralized legislative power, a coercive mechanism, and a system of sanctions.<sup>28</sup> In response to such an approach, critics of international anarchism may put forward counterarguments. When defending international justice, one may argue that the view of classical legal positivism as recognized in international anarchism is not an appropriate description of the law and does not provide a proper understanding of legal norms. Even Herbert Hart, also a positivist, rejects Austin’s theory of law. Hart firmly argues that the concept of law as a system of orders warranted by a “sword” distorts the role that the notions of obligation and duty play in human relations. Instead, Hart emphasizes the normative nature of law. This law is in force because governments, officials, and citizens generally recognize the validity of existing rules.<sup>29</sup> Critics of anarchism extrapolate this reasoning to international law.

Hart’s law model serves as a good explanation for the existing decentralized international law, which, at the global level, lacks a legislative body. Thanks to it, a threatened injunction system does not constitute a legal system, and focusing on sanctions leads to an inadequate understanding of legal obligations. They also consider that international law and morality exist, not just anarchy. However, such a position does not mean that there is no need for coercion in the legal system, as entities may, for example, voluntarily agree to different types of sanctions for any violation of the rights they agreed to.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, given that the internal normative nature of the law

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contained in positive national law. These rules may fail to provide for any specific legal obligation or to confer any specific rights on a particular group, nor impose any state on how it operates. Thus, “soft law” in the international legal system plays an important role because it allows states to adopt and recognize broader, flexible rules and commitments before reaching agreement on more specific rights and obligations (See Malcolm Shaw, *International Law* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 43–128).

<sup>28</sup> See Ekow Yankah, “The Force of Law. The Role of Coercion in Legal Norms,” in *The University of Richmond Law Review*, 42:5 (2008).

<sup>29</sup> See Herbert Hart, *The Concept of Law*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> See Martin Dixon, *Textbook on International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

itself is not sufficient to motivate all actors to comply with it, introducing sanctions and using them as threats may increase compliance and protect those who obey the law.

This would mean that the law's effectiveness at the national level depends largely on the application of criminal sanctions against individuals, and on voluntary recognition at the international level. The ontological difference between national and international levels makes reliance on coercion much more problematic.<sup>31</sup> It may be questioned whether sanctions and coercive measures are necessary to achieve effectiveness comparable to the effectiveness of national law. However, no matter how this theoretical dilemma is resolved, it is difficult to deny the fact that, in international law, sanctions are recorded and applied by the international community, even if they are not always effective or enforceable.

Today, it is hard to say that international law is limited only to order and is not about justice. Since the Second World War, not only states but individuals and organizations have been recognized as subjects of international law. The set of human rights and their empowerment in international law has increased their enforcement. Recently, steps taken in the direction of bringing individuals to criminal liability for violations of human rights show that there is a consensus shared by the international community regarding individuals' obligation to comply with these rights. What is more, international law increasingly addresses global regulations, limiting the way a state can behave within its territory (environmental laws or EU regulations). Due to these changes, there are more opinions that international law may be slowly transformed into a system of supranational law including not only classical problems of an international order but also issues of global justice.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

I have pointed to arguments that, in my opinion, convincingly support the approach that the contemporary position of international anarchism is burdened by internal tension, which leaves its supporters unable to confirm the initial and postulated discrimination between domestic justice and international anarchy. The example of Nagel's reasoning is paradigmatic, as the protection of human rights also emerges internationally. Thus, although international anarchists have been linking justice with the

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<sup>31</sup> See Anthony D'Amato, "Is International Law Really 'Law'?" in *Faculty Working Papers*, 103 (2010) <<http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/facultyworkingpapers/103>>.

<sup>32</sup> Jean Cohen, "Sovereignty in the Context of Globalization: A Constitutional Pluralist Perspective," in *The Philosophy of International Law*, ed. by S. Besson and J. Tasioulas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 261–280.

political legitimization of state power and institutions in a given territory, they recognize the legitimacy of international institutions securing and regulating such issues as war, humanitarian aid, trade, and so on. When we take a closer look at Nagel's reflections, we see that he recognizes that most human rights are universal and that the obligation to protect them does not depend on special institutional relationships. As he states, "Political institutions create contingent, selective moral relations, but there are also non-contingent, universal relations in which we stand to everyone, and political justice is surrounded by this larger moral context."<sup>33</sup> This moral minimum does not depend on the existence of any institution that connects us with others. It sets the boundary for others to achieve their goals freely and demands protection when the freedom to implement them is at stake. Nagel's concept in this dimension is based on the anti-realistic idea of moral action in international relations. This type of activity is not related to anarchy in the style of Hobbes, i.e., war of all against all, but rather to Locke's anarchy, expressed in the slogan "live and let live" (a decisive aspect of competitiveness and competition, not hostility).

In other words, the tension in the theory of international anarchism is based on the lack of consequence related to the inability to maintain a postulate based on accepted assumptions. If we recognize the need to safeguard some sort of moral minimum on a global scale, it is imperative to secure and enforce this minimum, which is impossible without the establishment of international institutions. If institutions such as those existing temporarily help to protect the minimum, then it is difficult to say that the duties of morality or justice do not apply in international relations. An anarchist definition of justice limited to the state alone seems to be too narrow in this situation.

Another problem constitutes the fact that morality and justice are attributed to inter-state relations, actions that are compatible with strength or self-interest, and international relations. But if, as Hobbes wants, power creates the law, and thereby justice and morality, these values even within states would not really matter. They would only be a veil for political decision-making or the interests of the majority in the state. International anarchists do not, of course, agree with this conclusion, recognizing that there is no freedom in applying force and that justice is based on a specific axiology. It, therefore, seems that, to avoid this reductionism, anarchists necessarily have to recognize the existence of a moral minimum in international relations. Then, however, we return to the above-described problem with the definition of justice and the question of why liberal-based actions and institutions, secured in a different way than within the state (not by coercion, but by

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<sup>33</sup> Nagel, "Problem of Global Justice," 131.

voluntary commitment to comply with them), are not to be called righteous and just?

In summarizing the above considerations, it can be stated that in the contemporary discourse under the normative theories of international relations, the idea of anarchy encounters several complex problems. One is the ambiguous understanding of this category itself. Anarchy can be perceived as a state of war or as the inability to guarantee the same rights as in the state as a state without any rules. All these meanings change the understanding of what is happening between states and how they can behave according to the principles they consider fair. The second problem lies in the relation of anarchy with other principles that construct contemporary theories of international relations. How can the indisputable ideals of state sovereignty and anarchy, understood as the state of war, be consistent? The answers of international anarchists seem to be non-coherent within their framework of analysis because once we recognize the role that states play in sovereignty, we must reduce anarchy by advocating for peaceful international cooperation and agreeing to abide by it. Thus, we are moving in the direction of decisions that go beyond the state of anarchy, or we recognize that anarchy is something that determines relations between states and that sovereignty of states is always threatened by war.

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## ***Phantasie* in Language Formation?: Imagination in Hegel's "Psychology"**

**Mark Antony B. Jalalum**

**Abstract:** In the "Psychology" and both the 1827–8 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* and the 1830 *Encyclopedia*, Hegel speaks of an imagination which, in all its formations (*Gestaltungen*), forms part of the spirit's dialectical unfolding from intuition (perception) to language (signification). I argue that Hegel's conception of imagination in the "Psychology" is clouded by ambiguity. This ambiguity consists, on the one hand, in his recognition of the signifying power of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* (sign-making imagination) in making objective through linguistic signs, the universal representations formed by the imagination's increasing power of reworking the materials in its possession—and, on the other hand, in his relegating of this power of imagination to *Gedächtnis* (memory), or to sign-recollecting memory. In demonstrating that an ambiguity has figured in the "Psychology," I seek to prove that Hegel conceives of an imagination which, when further developed, will yield to a species of imagination central to language-formation and thinking

**Keywords:** imagination, ambiguity, *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, memory

The concept of imagination occupies an ambiguous role in the western metaphysical tradition. Imagination is, as Plato and Aristotle will have it, a mediation between the appearance and *eidos*, between the senses and reason. Imagination is thus both essential to, but must be distinguished from, the activity of logos and reason. In being accorded such a role, it is treated as an agency to be availed of and jettisoned simultaneously. This move is propelled by the desire to ensure that imagination will not impinge upon the activity of reason. As such, against the backdrop of the western metaphysical tradition, I seek to demonstrate in this project that Hegel's conception of imagination in the "Psychology" in both the 1827–8 *Lectures on*

*the Philosophy of Spirit*<sup>1</sup> and the 1830 *Philosophy of Mind*<sup>2</sup> is also characterized in terms of a mediation between perception and signification and is thus not without an ambiguous evaluation. An ambiguity consists in it being neither perception nor signification, neither presentation nor thought. Put differently, while imagination has been distinguished from both intuition and thought, the same distinction has amounted to imagination's identity being split or torn between it being neither intuition nor thought (or language).

But why devote special attention to the section "Psychology" of the 1830 *Encyclopedia*? The short answer is that, and as attested to by Bates,<sup>3</sup> although the concept of imagination can already be apprehended in Hegel's earlier works, it is in the *Encyclopedia* that Hegel is able to provide a systematic and detailed treatment of the imagination in its various moments and to assign to it a more important role relative to the role it has assumed in Hegel's earlier texts.

I argue that an ambiguity obfuscating Hegel's account of imagination is to be seen, on the one hand, in his act of recognizing the signifying power of *Zeichen machende Phantasie*.<sup>4</sup> This signifying power functions and manifests itself in making objective through linguistic signs, the subjective or inward universal representation formed by imagination's increasing power of reworking the materials in its possession. Hence, insofar as *ZmP* engages actively in making objective or outward what is otherwise the spirit or mind's inward content, there seems to be a role for *ZmP* in the advent of language, and such, I argue, constitutes Hegel's positive valuation or legitimation of imagination. On the other hand, as Hegel's account demonstrates, the *ZmP* is left behind no sooner than Hegel has coined the notion, whereupon he assigns the production or reproduction of the sign to *Gedächtnis*, or specifically to a sign-recollecting memory. Hence, *Gedächtnis* will come to usurp *ZmP*'s function in language formation as is manifested in Hegel's articulation of the spirit's progression from *ZmP* to memory, thus, Hegel's delegitimation or negative valuation of imagination. Therefore, no sooner is imagination granted a role in language, in its advent, that it is excised from language as constituted, and operative in the to-and-fro of communicative discourse. Furthermore, I argue that the ambiguity in Hegel's

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit 1827–8*, trans. by Robert R. Williams (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Hereafter, the 1827–8 *Lectures*.

<sup>2</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. by W. Wallace and A.V. Miller, revised by Michael Inwood (1830; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Hereafter, *Encyclopedia*. References to the revised 2010 edition.

<sup>3</sup> See Jennifer Ann Bates, *Hegel's Theory of Imagination* (New York: State University of New York, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Sign-making imagination. This will be referred to hereafter as *ZmP*.

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conception of imagination is a result of it assuming a dynamically evolving mediational role in intelligence of subjective spirit's evolution from mere perception to the advent of language, or imagination in all its phases as dynamically progressing from perception to language.<sup>5</sup> Hegel, as Kearney maintains, "sublated the formative (*bildende*) and projective (*entwerfende*) powers of imagining into a more inclusive concept such as *Geist*."<sup>6</sup>

In what follows, I provide a rapid sketch of the progression of *Geist* (spirit) in the movement of *Aufheben*<sup>7</sup> from intuition (*Anschauung*) to language/thought. It must be noted that in between intuition and language or thought, there are several moments constitutive of the spirit's development which Hegel groups under the notion of *Vorstellung* or representation, namely, *Erinnerung* and imagination. It can be said further that for Hegel, imagination in all its forms or shapes, be it *Einbildungskraft* or *Phantasie*, is *Vorstellung* through and through.

### **Dynamic Imagination: Series of Genetic-Dialectical Mediations between Intuition (*Anschauung*) and Thought (*Gedächtnis*)**

Let it be said at the outset that for Hegel, imagination changes and evolves dynamically and makes modifications to the mind in its progression (*Fortschreiten*), and, thus, is not a stagnant entity as when it is deemed a faculty, as is the case for Kant with his empirical and transcendental faculties of imagination. Hence, in the shape of imagination, the spirit gradually assumes autonomy over the materials, objects, or images it has in its

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<sup>5</sup> Few important points ought to be noted here. With a view to demonstrating further the thesis I put forth in this Chapter, I avail of Jacques Derrida's invaluable commentary on Hegel's *ZmP* in "The Pit and Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology" in *Margins of Philosophy*. See Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982). As Derrida informs us, Hegel's account of *ZmP* will be fundamentally related to sign, speech, and writing. I owe as well to Mark Raftery-Skehan's Ph.D. dissertation, titled "Deconstructing Hegel's Sign-making Imagination: Derrida and the Textual Imagination," particularly Part Two, Chapter Four, where Raftery-Skehan deals with Hegel's treatment of imagination, more particularly Hegel's treatment of *ZmP* and its ambiguous role in language formation. (See Mark Raftery-Skehan, "Deconstructing Hegel's Sign-making Imagination: Derrida and the Textual Imagination" [Ph.D. Dissertation: Trinity College Dublin, 2012].) Reference to the chapters of the works of these two thinkers will therefore be made throughout the course of my demonstration.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern and Postmodern* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 137.

<sup>7</sup> *Aufheben* or *Aufhebung*. In English, this means *raising up*, *cancellation*, *negation*, *sublimation*, *supersession*, *sublation* (sublated or *aufgehoben*), and *superseding* all other developments of intelligence or history to a higher form of development with which *Geist* serves as the *telos*, that is, "knowing itself as *Geist* (Spirit, Mind)." See Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1992).

possession, an autonomy that will be made manifest in its activity of reworking and/or modifying these materials.<sup>8</sup> In this progression, imagination undergoes a series of mediations at crucial junctures that allows the spirit or mind to make vital leaps in its own development, from intuition to the interiorized image, to a network of images that can be spontaneously recollected and that will form the basis for the abstraction of universals, all the way to creating arbitrary symbols and eventually, to the linguistic signs that are the dawn of thought. A brief articulation, however, regarding the spirit's progression from intuition to thought suffices to establish here that Hegel's conception of imagination assumes the form of a series of mediations between intuition and language.

In the form of intuition, the mind senses ("feels") the immediate materials in its environment and fixes its attention on these materials. The mind then stores images in the "nocturnal pit."<sup>9</sup> As *erinnerte* (interiorized), the images are available as such to the mind, and with the mind's gradually increasing familiarity with these interiorized images, it determines them, such that the spirit can now spontaneously summon images without being triggered by the intuition in the *here* and *now*. And such is how the mind progresses from intuition to *Erinnerung* to imagination. At first, these images have all their original determinations. They are tied to the spatio-temporal moments of their original perception, the context, that is, the "when" and the "where" I originally intuited the object or objects. As such, the rose I intuited "yesterday in the garden" becomes one rose among others I have intuited.

In the shape of imagination (*Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie*), the spirit assumes three distinct yet necessarily and increasingly successive and vitally interconnected or interrelated moments. Hegel assigns the name *Reproduktive Einbildungskraft* to the simple activity of willfully summoning images without the need to trigger the image through an intuitable content. When images are freed from their local determinations—from intuition or perception—they become the images that imagination can now begin to work with as they relate to one another, which opens the possibility of the symbol and the sign. Associative imagination then—the second moment of imagination—relates these images detached from their local determinations and forms universal representations. And the moment imagination deploys meanings through the aid of intuitable content serving as symbols and signs, it is *Phantasie*, i.e.,

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<sup>8</sup> Here, Hegel deals with the subjective spirit, a phase in the development of spirit that moves from mere intuition to the advent of language. It is with the contributions that imagination, in a variety of evolving forms, to this progression that I am concerned with. Cf. §458 of the 1827–8 *Lectures* and the *Encyclopedia* where Hegel articulates the spirit's increasing willfulness in exteriorizing meaning (universal representation) through symbols and more importantly through signs. Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopedia, Zusatz* to §445.

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 187.

symbolizing and signifying.<sup>10</sup> A clear distinction ought to be drawn between these two forms of *Phantasie*. On the one hand, the symbol-making phantasy deploys or deposits meaning to an intuitable content that “corresponds to the determinate content of the universal to be imaged,”<sup>11</sup> as in the case of the “eagle symbolizing strength.” On the other hand, the *ZmP* exteriorizes meaning through an intuitable content wholly different from the signified, such as that of the “flag signifying a country.” Here, we must note that Hegel does not talk yet about linguistic signs. The “flag” (and “cockades” and “gravestones” or “tombstones”) is not a linguistic sign. But Hegel uses it because the flag and the meaning it contains, that is, “the country that it signifies” have nothing to do with each other, such that the sign-signified relation is completely arbitrary.

Hence, *ZmP* is superior to symbolizing phantasy insofar as in it, the “intelligence is completely arbitrary and displays a freer willfulness and mastery in the use of intuition than in symbolizing.”<sup>12</sup> The latter is precisely so because the symbol must bear an intrinsic relation to what it symbolizes even if they do not have a necessary connection, and thus, a “lion” can just as well symbolize “strength.” The linguistic sign, however, is freed from all such intrinsic connections.

### ***Zeichen machende Phantasie:* Language and the Objectifying Power of Geist**

*Phantasie* (phantasy) exteriorizes in the objective material intuitable elements, in the sign and in the symbol or artwork, the universal representations interiorized (*erinnerte*) within the mind as a result of imagination’s activity of abstracting the common and canceling out the differences between images. However, Hegel treats *Phantasie* as a higher and more developed form of imagination as opposed to reproductive or associative *Einbildungskraft*. Whereas *Einbildungskraft* refers to the lower form of imagination where intelligence summons, reproduces, combines, recombines, and arranges images, *Phantasie* not only reproduces, combines, recombines, arranges images, and forms universal representations, but it also *assigns meanings* to intuitable contents. Put differently, imagination is *Einbildungskraft* insofar as it is reproductive, and it is *Phantasie* insofar as it is productive.

Provided for by the universals and universal representations formed by the associative imagination, the spirit in the shape of symbol and sign-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. §458 of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* 1827-8 and of the *Encyclopaedia* 1830.

<sup>11</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 193.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.



making phantasy expresses *in concreto* the universal representations formed through imagination's labor of abstraction. As Hegel writes in §457: "Fantasy brings the inner content to the image and to intuition, and this is expressed by saying that it determines the content as *being*."<sup>13</sup> Hence, *Phantasie* is, as Hegel puts it in §455 of the *Encyclopedia*, "the midpoint in which the universal and being, one's own and being-found, the inner and the outer, are completely welded into one."<sup>14</sup> In symbolizing and signifying, the spirit or mind draws *sponte sua* from its own content, the universal representations formed by imagination's association of the interiorized (*erinnerte*) images. Universal representations are subjective inasmuch as they are interior or the inward content of the mind, and thus, have no intersubjective or objective manifestation. In the sign, being a *found* intuitable content, universal representations which have been abstracted from the network of images acquire an objective reality or existence. Hence, in *ZmP*, the spirit acquires greater freedom in spontaneously making exterior the interior content of the spirit such that "[I]t is in this *Phantasie*," as Bates has it in *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*, "and not in any level prior to it, that language and community (Spirit) are actually born."<sup>15</sup>

Hence, as Derrida affirms in *Margins of Philosophy*, *ZmP* incarnates meaning (*Bedeutung*) in the word, as in the case of the spoken word, as an objectively existing intuitable form. The spoken and the written word will come to establish a vital relation "between an inside and an outside."<sup>16</sup> In other words, the spoken and the written word will establish a relation between an inward content, a universal representation which, by the operation of the *ZmP* is deposited in an intuitable content, i.e., something objective. By this activity of signification or exteriorization, an objective existence of the universal representation or meaning in the form of speech acquires the status of being raised up (*aufgehoben*). As Derrida puts it: "speech is par excellence that which confers existence, presence (*Dasein*), upon the interior representation, making the concept (the signified) exist."<sup>17</sup> Hence, the same activity of speech, Derrida maintains, is a "promotion of presence" that is, the universal representation, the meaning or the soul is *lifted up* (*aufgehoben*) to a higher and more developed shape of existence in an objective

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<sup>13</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 193.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>15</sup> Bates, *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*, xi. See also page 36 where Bates, alluding to Hegel's *Geistesphilosophie* 1803-1804, develops further the contention she makes in the Preface regarding the imagination.

<sup>16</sup> Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 90. For an astute reading of this activity of imagination in Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, see Catherine Kellogg, "The Three Hegels: Kojève, Hyppolite, and Derrida on Hegel's Philosophy of Language," in *Hegel and Language*, ed. by Jere O'Neill Surber (New York: State University of New York Press), 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 90.

form. Thus, meaning can be present in an objective form to a speaker and to others alike. This again demonstrates that the intuition used as sign does not mean by virtue of its intrinsic intuitable content, as in the case of an image or a picture, but has, as it were, an alien soul implanted or deposited into it. In this case, as is made manifest in all cases of signification (be it symbolizing or signifying), the intuitable content of the sign is negated and raised up, that is, sublated. As Derrida writes: “the content of the sensory intuition (the signifier) must erase itself, must vanish before *Bedeutung*, before the signified ideality, all the while conserving itself and conserving *Bedeutung*.”<sup>18</sup> Hence, language is “a product of intelligence for manifesting its representations in an external medium.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, *ZmP*’s vital labor of inventing the sign assumes a pivotal role in the spirit’s transition from its subjective form to its objective shape, a transition that Derrida further describes as the “way out of itself [...] the obligatory route of a return to itself.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, in *ZmP*, the inward universal representation has now been *exteriorized* through the sign. And in the same process of signification or exteriorization, the spirit appropriates to itself the same progression it acquires in the sign. Hence the way out of itself, is simultaneously the return to itself, as Derrida puts it in *Margins*.

It must be added that as Hegel insists, it is not only that the internal or inward meaning is exteriorized and thus is made objective in the form of uttered or spoken word, but the spoken word itself as well or the sign as such, is also simultaneously made inward by virtue of that self-same signifying activity or process. Hence, as Hegel writes: “[O]nly the *articulated sound*, the *word*, is such an internal externality.”<sup>21</sup> But this, however, does not mean that the external existence of the thought or the word does not bear an inward content, rather it is precisely because it is made external that it bears with it the “stamp of the highest *inwardness*.”<sup>22</sup>

In making objective its rather subjective or inward content in the linguistic sign or more particularly, in spoken language, and rendering its meaning or universal representation communicable, the *ZmP* shows forth that it is vitally engaged in language formation. As Mark Raftery-Skehan writes in his dissertation,<sup>23</sup> “*Zeichen machende Phantasie* produces the objective linguistic sign that brings about thought in the form of the subjective

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>19</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 195. Derrida notes that Hegel, in the “Psychology,” does not venture to investigate or concentrate on language, although the latter’s presentation shows a kind of an outline (or “lineaments”) on language. See Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 90.

<sup>20</sup> Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 74.

<sup>21</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 200.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>23</sup> Raftery-Skehan, “Deconstructing Hegel’s Sign-Making Imagination,” 131.

expression of an objective, communicable content.”<sup>24</sup> This objectifying power of the *ZmP* in the advent of language being a key moment in the progression of the mind, paves the way for the spirit’s further developments in the formation of political organizations and institutions, the first form of art (the first fine art form), and so on and so forth. In other words, in demonstrating the spirit’s dynamic evolution or progression from it being subjective to it being objective or it expressing itself in objective form, Hegel claims that *ZmP* forms language in its nascent shape, in the shape of spoken language. Furthermore, by the same movement of the *Aufheben*, the *ZmP* contains and sublates in it all those various shapes or moments the spirit has traversed thus far, or at least those moments the spirit has sublated and raised up (*aufgehoben*) to itself prior to *Gedächtnis*. More particularly those earlier moments of *Geist* which come immediately prior to *Gedächtnis*, namely, the imagination that reproduces images, relates images, and creates universal representations, and the imagination that symbolizes and signifies. In line with the immediately preceding point, Derrida maintains that all the contradictions that the dialectics of the *Aufheben* seeks to resolve come to be housed within the sign and its conception. It must be noted that, for Hegel, the arbitrariness of the sign-signified relation extends beyond the bounds of linguistic signs. Hence, the objectifying power of *ZmP* which implicates imagination in language formation may be understood further if we return from the preceding articulation to the claim Hegel makes regarding the complete arbitrariness of the sign-signified relation evident in non-linguistic signs.

I must note that even when I restrict my inquiry to *ZmP* and exclude symbol-making phantasy for the purpose of the argument I demonstrate here, I must recognize that the first example Hegel provides of *ZmP*’s labor of signification are not yet linguistic signs. Among the first examples that Hegel gives are “Cockades,” “flags”, and “gravestones.”<sup>25</sup> These non-linguistic signs demonstrate that the spirit in *ZmP* acquires a higher degree of freedom in terms of exteriorizing meanings. More importantly, the complete arbitrariness of the sign-signified relation evident in non-linguistic signs will come to operate fundamentally as well in linguistic signs. Hence, insofar as the sign and the signified have nothing to do with each other, one must *learn* the meaning that the sign in the form of spoken word signifies.<sup>26</sup> The latter is also definitely the case in written language. The sign, as in the case of the spoken or uttered word, assumes “the essential determination of

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> See Hegel, *Encyclopedia, Zusatz* to §457.

<sup>26</sup> See Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 194.

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occurring only as sublated.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, similar to non-linguistic signs, the spoken word means something other to itself, such that it does not merely present itself as intuition or as its own intuitable content.<sup>28</sup> And because the spoken word or the sign as what is an ideal medium given to its own sublation does not yet possess the kind of existence written language has, it dissipates that very moment it is uttered. As Inwood puts it: “[I]f the intuition is temporal rather than spatial [...] it disappears as soon as it has served its purpose.”<sup>29</sup> Hence, the spoken word assumes the status of being a “physicalized time,” as Hegel calls it, until eventually language becomes structured or established and given a temporal existence in its written form. Thus, speech unfolds in time and that the temporality of the material inscription is different to that of the spoken word. The latter is precisely so, as Hegel informs us in his remarks to §459 of the *Encyclopedia* insofar as the spoken word being the original language, does not yet possess a spatial existence which the written form of language has, the latter being a further or later development of language.

### Hegel’s Historicization of Imagination

The gradual dialectical progression of spirit in the shape of imagination indicates Hegel’s historicization of imagination, a historicization that implicates *ZmP* in language formation. As Raftery-Skehan writes: “[I]t is Hegel’s historicization of imagination—his dialectical rendering of its distinct moments and of the contributions it makes to the mind and representation’s development—that creates the conditions conducive to him taking the unorthodox step of attributing to *Phantasie* the creation of the nonmotivated sign.”<sup>30</sup>

Hence, as against the static, immutable faculty-psychology of the empiricists and Kant, Hegel’s historicization of imagination as a dynamically evolving agency prepares the seedbed, so to speak, from which imagination in the shape of the *ZmP* functions in sign-creation or language formation. And as the ultimate moment in the dialectical evolution of imagination, *ZmP* accumulates in it the collective moments the spirit has traversed through in its dynamic evolution. Put differently, it is only through the progressive setting in place of universal abstractions formed from the network of *erinnerte* images, and from the fact of having elements of intuitable content that can

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<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 194.

<sup>28</sup> See Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, §458 and the *Zusatz* to §462.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Inwood, *A Commentary on Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013), 497.

<sup>30</sup> Raftery-Skehan, “Deconstructing Hegel’s Sign-making Imagination,” 133.

serve as the body of signs, that *ZmP* can bring language into being. Imagination in its different, successive moments operates with a different set of materials or forms of intuitable contents available to it, hence its own evolution and the role it plays in the evolution of the representing and signifying mind.

As such, through its dynamic activity of negating, sublating, containing, and or preserving its previous shapes or moments, the seed of what comes to be language or thought has been dynamically evolving as well, until it eventually becomes what it is in its nascent stage in *ZmP*. Although by way of an analogy, Hegel spells out the same point as regards the seed bearing all the (virtual) possibility of becoming a fully-grown tree in §453 of the 1830 *Encyclopedia*. Hegel recounts: “the universal requirement to conceive the concept as concrete, as we conceive e.g. the seed as *affirmatively* containing, in virtual possibility, all the *determinacies* that come into existence only in the development of the tree.”<sup>31</sup> Hence, as Hegel notes in §458, the spirit that has been raised up in the form of *ZmP*, bears or conceives the seed, like that of a pregnant woman that is about to give birth, what will come to be the spirit in the shape of language or thought. And by its exteriorizing or signifying power, *ZmP* incarnates or gives birth to spoken language. Hence, it can be inferred that the *ZmP* is the parent (*parens*), as it were, of language.<sup>32</sup>

Let me round out what I have demonstrated thus far. For Hegel, imagination in all its formations and by its increasing power to take hold of materials in its possession (or stored in that “dark-night-pit”), actively and dynamically reworks these materials. Hence, imagination progresses from one shape to another within the new context of images, universal representations, symbols, and signs generated by imagination in its various moments. Clearly, from the preceding articulations, imagination belongs to the realm of *Vorstellung* which Hegel consistently and negatively contrasts with the domain of thought. And undeniably as well, the *ZmP* assumes a

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<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 187. An analogy has definitely a number of “pitfalls” in that it could not thoroughly explain why such and such is the case. Thus, here it must be pointed out that, while this is the case as regards the development of the (oak) tree, and that this may resonate to some extent with spirit’s progression, this is not “totally” the case as regards the progression of spirit. The spirit, having gone through exteriorizing itself, comes back to itself, and thus re-appropriates the progress it accumulates from its being thrown to “otherness.” As Hegel maintains, the (oak) tree is not like *Geist*. For while the seed gradually develops into a tree, it does not re-appropriate the same progression to itself, rather, it takes on a new shape, in the form of the seed, which is contained in the fruit of the tree]. (See Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, §379. Cf. Inwood, *Commentary on Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind*, 484–485, particularly Inwood’s remark number 3, i.e., “difference between seed and mind/spirit,” where Inwood writes: “whereas one acorn is much like another, the intelligence develops, continually absorbing new materials and consigning it to, and occasionally retrieving it from, the nocturnal pit.”)

<sup>32</sup> See Bates, *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*, xiii.

pivotal role in language, but this role, as we shall soon see, will be left out when the *ZmP* is consigned to a past moment once language has been brought into being such that the role of reproducing the sign or word is being assigned to *Gedächtnis*.

The latter point, I conjecture, is owing in part to the overall dynamic movement of spirit evident in Hegel's philosophical system—a movement which is also fundamentally manifest in the progression of spirit in the "Psychology." Furthermore, *Gedächtnis*' usurping of *ZmP*'s role in language may be owing in part to the precaution Hegel takes to safeguard philosophy from the *supposed* contaminating force or power of imagination as he warns us in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. It must be said further that the concept of *ZmP* is only briefly invoked by Hegel, no sooner mentioned than dropped in favor of *Gedächtnis*. These two conjectures will therefore occupy our inquiry and exposition in the following sections.

### ***Zeichen machende Phantasie Excised: The Birth of Language***

What does Hegel's negative evaluation of imagination consist of? We may respond to this question by spelling out three important points. The first one concerns Hegel's act of consigning *ZmP* to a *past* moment once language is brought about, thereby implying no dynamic innovation or involvement of imagination to occur within the history and life of signs or of language. The second point revolves around the obvious fact that *ZmP* is never mentioned after Hegel's articulation of language in its nascent form and in the formation of written language. The third reason directs us back to the movement of *Aufheben* which is fundamentally operative not only in the progression of spirit in the "Psychology," but in the spirit's progression from it being subjective to being objective to being absolute. Throughout the course of expositing or elaborating these three reasons, I shall treat reasons one and two jointly yet distinguish them from each other simultaneously. The reason for this move is that, while it may be possible that Hegel's *silence* on the possibility for *ZmP* to take on a role in the life of language or thought may have been a corollary to his subjugating of *ZmP* to the merely reproductive operation of a sign-memory, these two reasons are, nonetheless, distinct from each other. The former refers to Hegel's affirmation of the very movement of *Aufheben* itself which is fundamentally at play in his recounting of the



life of spirit, while the latter points to his act of relegating *ZmP*'s role to memory.

### ***Gedächtnis*: Hegel's Silence on *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, and Its Demise**

Hegel's act of relegating *ZmP*'s role in the formation of language to *Gedächtnis* (memory) is clearly spelled out in a remark he makes in §458 of *Encyclopedia* where he insists that sign-creating activity is fundamentally the work or function of memory or *Gedächtnis*. Hegel writes: "[T]he sign-creating activity may be specially named *productive* memory (the initial abstract Mnemosyne); since memory, which is in ordinary life is often confused with recollection (*Erinnerung*) and used synonymously with it, even with representation and imagination, has in general to do with signs only."<sup>33</sup> In a remark he makes in §464, Hegel once again insists that language has now become the work of memory. Hegel writes, thus: "[O]ur language already assigns memory (*Gedächtnis*), of which it has become a prejudice to speak contemptuously, the high position of immediate affinity with thought (*Gedanke*)."<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, albeit in another and in an earlier work, Hegel, particularly in §158 of his *Philosophical Propaedeutic*<sup>35</sup> speaks of or refers to language as primarily and ultimately the highest work of productive memory, there being no mention of the *ZmP* in this work. Hence, there will be no room for *ZmP* in language, at least once language has become a reality. Furthermore, in *Philosophical Propaedeutic* §160, Hegel categorically asserts that "the further development of language belongs to the power of universality, to the Understanding."<sup>36</sup> The preceding point, however, requires further expositing. For, if we set aside the fact that such a move is necessary insofar as the spirit is directed towards the full realization of its *telos*, a question may still be asked: why would language be the labor of *Gedächtnis* when clearly, *ZmP*, as demonstrated above and as Hegel himself articulates, is necessary to the creation or genesis of language, and language is itself an evolving and dynamic system?

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<sup>33</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 194.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>35</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>36</sup> Hegel, *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, 157. As Inwood notes, this work is Hegel's notes on his lectures to schoolboys given between the years 1809 and 1811. See Inwood, *Commentary on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, 495–496. Here, in his *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, parallel to his discussion in the "Psychology" in the 1827–8 *Lectures* and the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel recognizes as well that productive memory is responsible for "language formation," both the "spoken" and the "written" form.

A brief elaboration as regards the German term *Gedächtnis* helps us here. As Inwood informs us, Hegel's assignation of the creation of signs to memory or memory is since "*Gedächtnis* and the verb *gedenken*, 'to remember', are etymologically close relatives of *denken*, 'to think' with its perfect participle, *gedacht* ('thought')." <sup>37</sup> As Inwood further notes, Hegel considers *Gedächtnis* as close to thinking inasmuch as the latter is definitely moved away or detached from the sensory material. Hence, insofar as signs for Hegel are far detached from the actual intuition from which they are formed, throughout the course of the spirit's or intelligence's progression, signs become, as Inwood puts it, "an old intuition harnessed to a representation," <sup>38</sup> then necessarily become the objects of *Gedächtnis*. Hence, the notion of memory or sign-memory is necessary to the extent that in signitive, linguistic acts there is obviously a work of reproduction in drawing upon signs that belong to a language and that have been assimilated by a speaker of a language. This will be the *mechanical other* that inhabits thought, as Hegel goes on to note. As Inwood remarks, "[S]ign-creation calls for inventiveness, but not for imagination, at least not for the type of imagination required for the creation of symbols, allegories, and metaphors. So[,] memory, or rather *Gedächtnis*, takes on the task of sign-creation." <sup>39</sup> The latter point, however, calls for a brief remark. The thesis that *Gedächtnis* assumes the task of creating signs can be both affirmed and denied. Because, although the arbitrary assignation of intuitable content to meanings seems to be lacking precisely in the sort of creative intelligence with which imagination is identified, there is the creativity involved in realizing *a mode of signification* in which there is no intrinsic relation of sign to signified. A subtle and nuanced distinction must therefore be made, i.e., who or what comes up with the idea of linguistic signification, with the idea of pairing signs and signifieds, rather than each sign/signified pairing?

Furthermore, in the *Zusatz* to §462, Hegel informs us that thought invigorates or animates the word such that "words thus become a reality animated by thought." <sup>40</sup> Hegel recounts that the mind in the activity of exteriorization through the use of the word "gives to thoughts their most worthy and genuine reality." <sup>41</sup> As such, the coming to life of the word(s) is primarily the labor of understanding and not that of the signifying phantasy. Thus, we see that in the sections immediately following Hegel's discussion of the signifying imagination, *Gedächtnis* completely sublates *ZmP* into itself. This is an act that, I argue, will be tantamount to Hegel's consigning of *ZmP*'s

<sup>37</sup> Inwood, *Commentary on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, 496.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 496–497.

<sup>40</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, 200.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

role in language formation to memory. The latter is necessarily so to the extent that in language use, for the most part, we *recall* signs and put them to work in our utterances. However, it must be pointed out that we cannot simply imagine language, upon its being created, as a monolithic immutable form. It is plausible that in the developments of meanings, forms of writing, genres, literature, etc., there appears to be an immense series of roles and moments for imagination.<sup>42</sup> The latter point confronts the task of understanding how reproductive *Gedächtnis* operates alongside an imagination that accounts for the innovations in language. Kathleen Magnus' contention in *Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit* is relevant here. Magnus writes, "although words gain their meaning by being designated as signs, several dimensions of meaning may be present with every word."<sup>43</sup> In other words, the possibility of (a) meaning(s) arising from a word suggests that there is a quintessential role for the imagination in meaning-creations, conceptual innovations, and whatnot.

Moreover, Derrida's remarks in *Margins* will help us understand the possibility of there being a role for *ZmP* in language formation and beyond, on the innovations required between the mere formation of signs and developed languages and their products. Hegel's *ZmP*, Derrida informs us, assumes a kind of a position whereby it is torn between or is in the tension between, opposites, a position which Derrida describes as follows: *ZmP* "is a *Mittelpunkt*: both a central point, a middle in the sense of element, of *milieu*, and also the medium point, the sight where opposites pass one into the other."<sup>44</sup> This role is crucial or vital to *ZmP* inasmuch as it opens up the possibility for the sign to function or "to extend its field infinitely."<sup>45</sup> Derrida's reading of Hegel here is relevant to understanding how *ZmP* can play a role in the creation and the development of language, both in its written and spoken form. Hegel, I believe, will have provided an account that articulates or hints at the possibility for *ZmP* to function in close coordination with memory, but as his account shows, such a possibility is subordinated to memory. As Derrida informs us, the reason for Hegel's subordination of *ZmP* to memory is the dialectic that governs the life of spirit itself, which, in this case, restricts or confines *ZmP* to the ambit of productive imagination or *Phantasie*. Is there a possibility for *ZmP* to work in close coordination with

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<sup>42</sup> Aristotle demonstrates this clearly in the *Poetics* when he argues for the supremacy of poetry over history. Derrida and Ricoeur likewise, will also maintain that imagination assumes a role in metaphor and in literary works, for that matter.

<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Dow Magnus, *Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 99.

<sup>44</sup> Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 80.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

memory in the formation of language? Such a question, I believe, requires looking into Hegel's account of *Gedächtnis*.

Hegel maintains that the mind in the form of *Gedächtnis* shows or exhibits the same movement displayed by the mind as *Vorstellung*.<sup>46</sup> It may be recalled that in representation, i.e., in *Erinnerung* (and imagination), the mind forms images, stores them in the nocturnal pit, and revives them the moment it encounters an intuition that showcases similarity with these images. Likewise, *Gedächtnis* retains names, recognizes that name as such or recognizes the intimate connection between the *name* and *the thing named*, and it mechanically produces or reproduces names such that the distinction between the word or sign and its meaning or soul dissipates. In other words, in mechanical memory the word or name is simply recalled spontaneously without one taking cognizance of the meaning of the word (as in rote memorization), hence it is *mechanical*. In this moment, as Houlgate maintains, "the mind as we know it in imagination and recollection—that is, the mind animated by meanings—disappears, and the mind becomes a simple, mindless, spiritless machine."<sup>47</sup>

I surmise that the *ZmP* could have played a role in coordination with the reproductive memory. The possibility of recognizing the name and the *corresponding thing named as such* evinces a strikingly parallel work performed by *ZmP*. For, by bestowing meaning upon the sign, the *ZmP* recognizes the sign as such and such a specific sign. The word "dog" for instance, signifies an existing being or thing we may call "dog." There is no inherent connection whatsoever between the name "dog" and the "existing dog," but I am nonetheless signifying, and thus, recognizing that the term "dog" means this being, this existing being. The recognition of the name (i.e., dog) and thing named (i.e., this existing being) which is fundamentally operative in reproductive memory demonstrates a close coordination between reproductive memory and *ZmP*. In other words, the *ZmP*'s activity of exteriorizing meaning through linguistic sign(s) very much demonstrates what the reproductive memory does in recognizing the name in the thing named.

It can hardly be denied that when a language is attained, the speakers of such a language will possess a mechanical mindless memory that facilitates the rapid use and reception of signs that we witness in discourse. The crucial question for imagination, however, is whether imagination halts completely at this point in the life of language. Does it not, as it had before, re-engage with its new object, in the new product in certain ways? Does imagination

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<sup>46</sup> See Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, §461.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel, Derrida, and the Restricted Economy: The Case of Mechanical Memory," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34:1 (January 1996), 87.

operate in our using of the word or meaning in figurative uses, in semantic innovation, in the innovations by which we use language generatively (a language being a finite lexical system but capable of infinite possibilities of meaning), in generating fictional genres? Pure reproduction surely stands alongside a productive, creative imagination that comes to inhere not only in producing signs in the first instance, but in innovating with what is given to the user in a language, in conceptual innovation and reinvention, in metaphor, in lyrical language, and whatnot. However, Hegel, as it appears in *Encyclopedia*, has not developed this rapport, or has perhaps not even thought about this possibility.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, Hegel may have inherited and thus shared the prominent view concerning the alleged contaminating powers of imagination to truth so prominent in the western metaphysical tradition. Thus, as his account of imagination in the “Psychology” presents, we see such a prejudice on his part in accounting for or in recognizing the possibility of imagination to be actively engaged in language formation. Early on in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*,<sup>49</sup> in the section on “poetry,” Hegel emphasizes this movement from the “prose of imagination” to the “prose of thought.” Here, I think, Hegel hints at the necessity to transcend imagination and move towards thought. He writes: “[Y]et, precisely, at this highest stage, art now transcends itself, in that it forsakes the element of a reconciled embodiment of the spirit in sensuous form and *passes over from the poetry of the imagination to the prose of thought.*”<sup>50</sup>

The disappearance of the imagination that creates signs—both non-linguistic and linguistic—fortifies or establishes the fact that imagination is now relegated to a past moment, and henceforth constitutes itself as a particular layer on which other layers have been “superimposed,” consigned to the past by the spirit in a higher and more developed formation. Hence, the *ZmP* has now become one among other moments the spirit has negated, suppressed, and interiorized into itself. However, it must be clarified that the relegating of *ZmP* to a past moment with the advent of *Gedächtnis* is justified *only* to the extent that language becomes a relatively stable body of reproducible signs and meaning. A problem in this regard, however, persists.

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<sup>48</sup> It is worth noting that Bates forcefully argues that there is a possibility for Hegel’s conception of the imagination to be engaged in conceptual innovations, (re-)creation of meanings, and whatnot after language is instituted. Key to understanding this role of imagination, Bates maintains, is the “inwardizing activity of the interpreting other” —the same inwardizing dynamic discernible in “recollection.” See Bates, *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*, 96. But I would like to maintain, however, that nowhere is the imagination mentioned after Hegel has reached the moment of “memory” in *Encyclopedia*.

<sup>49</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art Vol. I*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 89. Italics is mine.

As I was mentioning above, in opposition to the stasis of the mechanical memory, there is apparent in the life and history of (a) language a great deal of innovation, which suggests *ZmP* to have had its own further moments, for there to be an imagination operative within language or after it has been instituted as a means of representation and signification. Hence, it may be deduced that Hegel simultaneously avails of and expunges imagination in language formation, hence, the ambiguity blurring his conception of imagination. This is analogous with the eikastic imagination that generates the conditions for the *logos* but is thereafter set aside. Inevitably, the *ZmP* is going to have a certain ambiguity by which language is at one point “not yet invented” and later, a point at which it has already been invented, a movement which is central to all Hegelian moments. This latter point may be further clarified when careful attention is directed to the overall movement of *Aufheben* governing Hegel’s recounting of the life of spirit.

Early on in *Phänomenologie des Geistes*,<sup>51</sup> Hegel spells out the *telos* of spirit, that is, that of knowing itself as such, as *Geist*. Hence, necessarily so, insofar as the spirit progresses or gradually unfolds towards the realization of its *telos*, it follows that those various moments which lie at the vanguard of the spirit’s development recede into the past and are negated and sublated yet conserved and preserved. This implies the definite inclusion of the fateful effacement of imagination in favor of *Gedächtnis*.

Throughout the course of the progression of imagination in Hegel’s account of subjective spirit, imagination evolves and accumulates new powers, which it then exercises in reworking the materials it has produced and which have come to be in its possession. Particularly, and as I have shown above, this evolution is evident in imagination appearing in the form of being reproductive, to being associative, and to becoming phantasy, such that in this evolution, imagination simultaneously redetermines both its object and itself. As Raftery-Skehan writes: “Hegel’s dialectic of imagination suggests that its changing roles and functions transcend and usurp one another in terms of the sophistication of their products.”<sup>52</sup> For Hegel, such a dialectical progression, therefore, necessitates that one shape or moment of spirit will soon be sublated into a higher and more developed shape, and thus, the effacement of imagination that creates signs and linguistic signs in the form of the spoken word. But since the effacement occurs alongside a new product

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<sup>51</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Terry Pinkard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). This is Hegel’s introductory work to his overall philosophical system where he traces in detailed fashion the various moments constitutive of the spirit’s dialectical unfolding or becoming from it being “Logic” or “Idea” to exteriorizing itself into nature, to becoming a subjective spirit, to objective spirit, and to becoming absolute spirit culminating in philosophy or science.

<sup>52</sup> Raftery-Skehan, “Deconstructing Hegel’s Sign-making Imagination,” 141.



(in the case of *ZmP*, that of “language”) it also occasions a new opportunity, a new moment in imagination—an imagination operative in language. I maintain that it is Hegel’s failure to consider this and determine language as entailing a mere mechanical reproduction that constitute the delegitimizing of imagination, and his toeing the line as regards philosophy tending to segregate imagination and thought.

Furthermore, it is an effacement which arguably preserves the effaced shape in the spirit’s new moment. It is not surprising then that from the moment when Hegel begins to deal with the name-retaining memory to reproductive memory to mechanical memory, the imagination that marks a promising role in language formation, will, like a word, dissipate as soon as its uttered. Imagination assumes the status of being a *past moment* negated and contained in and by *Gedächtnis* and lying buried and *dormant*, as it were, in the latter. And such is precisely the movement of *Aufheben* and *Verneinung* (negation) which govern not only the progression of spirit articulated in the “Psychology” but the overall progression of Hegel’s philosophical articulation and/or historicization of *Geist*.<sup>53</sup>

### Conclusion:

#### Hegel’s Verdict, the Fate of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*

I have shown that Hegel’s conception of imagination as a dynamically evolving agency and as a series of dialectical mediations between intuition and language reiterates a common trend in the form of an *ambiguity* that is present in the treatments of imagination in the western metaphysical tradition.

It can be inferred that Hegel articulates a promising account of imagination in the shape of *ZmP*, that is, assuming a vital role in the formation of language. However, rather than allowing for an imagination that will set to work on the new product, on signs, and linguistic meanings and on signifying forms and genres of discourse, Hegel consigns the sign-creating imagination to oblivion. Imagination becomes a past moment that now only forms part of a chapter of the story of *Geist*’s dynamic unfolding towards its *telos*. Hence, it can be said further that imagination, be it “*Einbildungskraft*,” “phantasy,” “*Phantasie*,” and “*Zeichen machende Phantasie*,” undeniably functions as a bridge that as Kearney remarks in WI, like Wittgenstein’s ladder, will be set aside as soon as it serves its purpose. Such a treatment of

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<sup>53</sup> As pointed out earlier, *Aufheben* is not only at work in Hegel’s “Psychology” but in the overall thrust of spirit. See “Pit and Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s Semiology” in Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 88–89.

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imagination, therefore, demonstrates what may be called, albeit only “partially,” the unfortunate fate of imagination in western philosophy or in western metaphysical tradition.

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## Objectual Understanding as the Primary Epistemic Aim of Education

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**Abstract:** A fundamental issue conceived out of the development of epistemology of education has to do with what epistemic state/s education ought to aim for. We offer a solution to this problem, one that deviates from *truth*, *critical thinking*, and *intellectual virtues* which have already been positioned as compelling solutions on their own. Instead, we argue that it is *objectual understanding*, from the framework of Jonathan Kvanvig, that best suits the place of primacy in epistemic educational aims. The paper's structure finds order and consistency with how the problem is treated as mentioned above. Section 1 introduces the different types of understanding in epistemology. In section 2, the epistemic value of objectual understanding is established, along with a defense of this epistemic state from the problems encountered for other positions. The second section also includes a discussion of the compatibility of objectual understanding with other epistemic aims of education. In section 3, we proceed to examine the influence of having addressed the epistemic aims debate to the educational concepts of curriculum, teaching, and learning.

**Keywords:** Kvanvig, epistemic aims, epistemology of education, objectual understanding

Does philosophy have anything to say about education? Answering in the affirmative might not seem to be a controversial claim in more recent times. However, prior to the introduction of analytic philosophy of education in the late 1950s, educational theory was not always as welcoming to philosophical pronouncements as it is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—and not without good reason. According to Colin Evers,



it was fashionable among philosophers of education to attempt to *deduce* educational claims from philosophical premises. As the 1942 and 1955 *National Society for the Study of Education* yearbooks indicate, philosophy of education was something of a smorgasbord, with characteristic educational positions being associated with particular philosophical ‘isms’, such as empiricism, existentialism, rationalism, pragmatism, and so on ....<sup>1</sup>

Given this tendency for philosophy to be reductive of its pronouncements about education, a crucial message can be learned from it—particularly, that addressing educational issues from a philosophical standpoint demands careful and scholarly scrutiny. This criticism can also be taken to mean that a mere contextualization of educational issues within a philosophical *-ism*, so to speak, is not enough to render one’s position as a philosophy of education. Provided that the methods being used to treat educational issues are aligned with philosophical methods and are stated as such, a healthy exchange of ideas can be achieved in the realm of academic research.

Having laid down these considerations, it should be mentioned that this paper is aligned with the analytic tradition in epistemology as a way to resolve the issue of which epistemic aim ought to be primarily cultivated by education. The problem is first and foremost a *normative* problem as it deals with an analysis of epistemic value derivable from a given set of epistemic goods. Second, it is an *epistemological* problem as it follows from, and further contributes to, literature centered around epistemological ideas (i.e., discourse on the nature of epistemic states, intellectual virtues, etc.). Third, it is a problem that, once addressed, will inevitably influence the philosophical treatment of certain educational concepts.

Our principal intention is to argue that Jonathan Kvanvig’s *objectual understanding* ought to be the primary epistemic aim of education.<sup>2</sup> The paper’s structure finds order and consistency with how the problem is treated as mentioned above. Section 1 introduces the different types of understanding in epistemology. In section 2, the epistemic value of objectual understanding is established, along with a defense of this epistemic state

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<sup>1</sup> Colin W. Evers, “Analytical and Post-Analytic Philosophy of Education: Methodological Reflections,” in *Philosophy of Education: Major Themes in the Analytic Tradition, Volume 1*, ed. by Paul Hirst and Patricia White (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 120.

<sup>2</sup> See Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

from the problems encountered for other positions. The second section also includes a discussion of the compatibility of objectual understanding with other epistemic aims of education. In section 3, we proceed to examine the influence of having addressed the epistemic aims debate to the educational concepts of curriculum, teaching, and learning.

## 1 Types of Understanding in Epistemology

Just as there are varieties of knowledge, understanding comes in different varieties as well. These are, according to Kvanvig, mainly drawn from the distinctive use of the term “understanding” in various grammatical and logical forms.<sup>3</sup> Granted that its types are varied by virtue of their use, this entails that the *nature* of each type will also result in varied alterations. To begin with, consider the cases below—each of which represents one variation of understanding:

- (1) I understand that the Earth is not the center of the solar system.
- (2) I understand why the Earth is not the center of the solar system.
- (3) I understand the Copernican revolution.

Case (1) is of the form “I understand that *p*.” It is very similar to propositional knowledge which takes place whenever the words “I know that” are followed by a proposition. Here, the utterance of “I understand that” is followed by a proposition, thus resulting in the name *propositional understanding*, where the epistemic agent understands that *p* is the case. Case (2) is of the form “I understand why *p*,” where *p* is a proposition that happens to have some cause for explanation. Not only does the epistemic agent commit to a belief in *p*, but he/she also claims to have an understanding of the explanation, cause, or reason for *p*, perhaps, in another proposition *q*. This is often simply called *understanding-why*, but in some instances, it is also rendered the name *explanatory understanding* by virtue of its inclusion of explanation for the reason or cause that allowed the given proposition to obtain. Finally, Case (3) exhibits the form “I understand *X*,” where *X* is the *object* of understanding; hence, the name, *objectual understanding*. It is this latter variation of understanding that this paper endorses due to its epistemic value, which is elaborated in subsection 2.1.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

## 2 The Primary Epistemic Aim of Education

The problem at hand involves a comparative analysis of the epistemic goods education ought to attain. Certainly, there are educational aims that come from a non-epistemic nature, i.e., economic, moral, personal, etc.<sup>4</sup> A learner may want to enter formal education for many reasons, such as long-term financial security, qualification for a graduate or postgraduate degree, or even for the sole purpose of learning. Analysis of these goals adheres to individual preferences and epistemology may not necessarily be the correct framework to address them. There are, however, intrinsic values promoted in education that are categorized as epistemic ends.

Harvey Siegel addresses these by promoting the idea that education should strive to cultivate *critical thinking* in its ultimate epistemic pursuits.<sup>5</sup> Alvin Goldman promotes a different view, one that is more strictly oriented towards the achievement of truth.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, Jason Baehr adopts significant themes in virtue epistemology and promotes the cultivation of intellectual virtues as the fundamental goal of education.<sup>7</sup> Finally, we utilize Kvanvig's conception of *objectual understanding* to address the problem of primary epistemic goals.<sup>8</sup> Promoting this claim requires an examination of the inherent value contained in the epistemic state, which is why subsection 2.1 explores the *final* or *inherent value* of objectual understanding. Second, a defense of this proposal will have to address the issues that the three other positions have encountered and subsection 2.2 rightfully serves this purpose. Finally, subsection 2.3 addresses the relationship between understanding and other epistemic aims and explores the *instrumental* and *constitutive* value that the other epistemic aims hold.

### 2.1 Understanding as Epistemically Valuable

Integral to defending objectual understanding is putting emphasis on its epistemic value. As a normative inquiry, *value* is a key area of investigation for epistemic aims. Contrary to descriptive statements which are merely

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<sup>4</sup> See John White, *The Aims of Education Restated* (London: Routledge, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> See Harvey Siegel, "Truth, Thinking, Testimony and Trust: Alvin Goldman on Epistemology and Education," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 71:2 (2005).

<sup>6</sup> See Alvin Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> See Jason Baehr, "Educating for Intellectual Virtues: From Theory to Practice," in *Education and the Growth of Knowledge: Perspectives from Social and Virtue Epistemology*, ed. by Ben Kotzee (United Kingdom: Wiley Blackwell, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> See Kvanvig, *Value of Knowledge*.

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concerned with *matters of fact*, normative statements are concerned with *matters of value*.<sup>9</sup> And appealing to a notion of intrinsic value, that is to say, “value a thing has in itself and thus independently of its consequences,”<sup>10</sup> makes for a promising starting point. While there is intrinsic or final value, there is also instrumental value which works so that having value “is to contribute—in a factually analysable way—to something further which is (say) deemed desirable.”<sup>11</sup> In arguing for what one *ought to* attain and cultivate, therefore, the prospective end goal will be indicative of the sorts of things one takes to be of *value*.

In the case of objectual understanding, epistemic value is evident in at least three distinct ways and a glimpse into the discussions that surround the value of knowledge gives us a better idea at how the final value of understanding is to be defended. In the conventional *justified true belief* account of knowledge,<sup>12</sup> there are at least two ways in which value is undermined: (1) the value of the epistemic good in question can be attributed to its constituents, therefore value is *constitutive* rather than *final*, and (2) value is undermined by Gettier cases. The argument for (1) suggests that an epistemic good whose value relies on the value of its constituents cannot be rendered *finally valuable*. An epistemic good is *finally valuable* only when its value is independent of the value of its constituents.

In the general sense, the value of objectual understanding lies in its capacity to systematize and organize one’s thinking about a subject matter.<sup>13</sup> Having objectual understanding indicates that one does not merely hold a cluster of unconnected information about a subject matter. Rather, one tends to have mastery of the coherent system embedded within the object in question. So, when a learner understands the basic principles of arithmetic, there is more to her understanding than a mere cluster of arithmetic rules in propositional form. In other words, rather than being reduced to the sum total value of its constituents, an emergent value can be attributed to objectual understanding. One cannot simply pick apart the value of each individual belief that makes up one’s objectual understanding and say that the value lies in each of those beliefs. As previously mentioned, intrinsic value is formed in

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<sup>9</sup> See Robert Audi, “Fact/Value,” in *A Companion to Epistemology: Second Edition*, ed. by Jonathan Dancy, Ernest Sosa, and Matthias Steup (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 369.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> See Roderick Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> See Kvanvig, *Value of Knowledge*, 205.

the holistic attainment of understanding, thereby allowing systematization and organization of thinking to take place.

Kvanvig also addresses how objectual understanding can work around issue (2)—specifically the undermining of value under Gettier cases. He maintains that while most accounts of propositional knowledge are susceptible to weakening through sort form of luck, objectual understanding does not seem to espouse the same problem. Scholars after Kvanvig have labeled his view as *full compatibilist* because he views objectual understanding to be immune to all cases of epistemic luck.<sup>14</sup> Even if it turns out that the facts leading to one's understanding have been Gettierized and only luckily that the relationships and factive information were correctly gathered by the epistemic agent, the grasped relationships and central pieces of information remain intact and uncompromised.

There is also a third kind of value that can be ascribed to cases of objectual understanding. This is what Kvanvig calls *response-dependent* special value of understanding.<sup>15</sup> In his view, objectual understanding finds its special value in the fact that it satiates an epistemic agent's curiosity. Specifically, he states that what sates curiosity is "not a matter of coming to know or justifiably believe some individual proposition, but rather having figured out or learned some body of information about the target of curiosity, whether the target was propositional or objectual."<sup>16</sup> Altogether, these three features of understanding expose its intrinsic value among other epistemic goods.

## 2.2 Responses to the Problems for Goldman, Siegel, and Baehr

After the discussion of epistemic value, the study can now proceed to the responses to the problems raised for Goldman's, Siegel's, and Baehr's positions. What were the issues in the veritistic view? What about Siegel's view of critical thinking and Baehr's intellectual virtues? Is Kvanvig's conception of understanding able to address these issues? Subsection 2.2.1 returns to the objections against veritism including the indirect access to truth, and the inapplicability to certain fully intellectual subjects. Subsection

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<sup>14</sup> See Fernando Broncano-Berrocal and J. Adam Carter, "Epistemic Luck," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Tim Crane (London: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> See Jonathan Kvanvig, "Curiosity and the Response-Dependent Special Value of Understanding," in *Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: Essays on Putting Epistemic Virtue to Work*, ed. by Tim Henning and David P. Schweikard (Routledge: New York and London, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

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2.2.2 is an exposition of objections to Siegel's position, which includes the instrumentality claim for critical thinking. Subsection 2.2.3 returns to the difficulties of assessment in Baehr's intellectual virtues and raises the problematic nature of pluralism. The discussions principally involve counterclaims in defense of Kvanvig's objectual understanding.

### 2.2.1 Quasi-factivity and Coherence contra Veritism

Goldman advocates for a monistic veritistic view. In his account, he posits that the main epistemic goal of education is the acquisition of true belief.<sup>17</sup> He also recognizes that critical thinking can be useful for truth acquisition, but that it only pushes the epistemic value of critical thinking towards instrumentality. The finally valuable aim, he maintains, ought to be truth. But there are two critical issues for this veritistic view.

First, there is the inability of epistemic agents to directly access truth. This was previously raised by Siegel, stating that "We don't in general have 'direct access' to truth; if we want our beliefs to be true, we typically have no option but to reason evidentially."<sup>18</sup> This is unlike critical thinking which can, in principle, be directly accessed by the individual epistemic agent. It is conceivable to evaluate critical thinking without evaluating the degree to which the cognitive state relates to facts or states of affairs. But the same cannot be said of the veritistic view. If true belief is the end goal, it may be difficult to develop evaluative tools that measure just how much a learner has acquired true beliefs.

Additionally, this allows for unfavorable consequences where even the educator may be imparting false beliefs by virtue of not having discovered the truth, given a particular socio-historical context. It is very easy for educators to be imparting, say, a scientifically recognized truth at one point in time only for it to be falsified centuries later. The problem here is not that neither the educator nor the learner eventually held *false beliefs*. Certainly, one could say that such falsity does not undermine the quality of education. The problem is that with a monistic veritistic view, it would seem as though there was no substantial education that took place, just because they were left holding false beliefs. If intuition says that such falsification does not warrant the undermining of the education that occurred, then that is a problem for veritism.

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<sup>17</sup> See Alvin Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*.

<sup>18</sup> Siegel, "Truth, Thinking, Testimony, and Trust," 351.



In the case of objectual understanding, the issue of having no direct access to truth becomes apparent in its treatment of what is known as *quasi-factivity*. According to Kvanvig, “on the quasi-factive view, the pieces of information that are central to the understanding in question must be true.”<sup>19</sup> Once the factivity in those central pieces of information is secured, the existence of falsehoods in the periphery is warranted.

A crucial thing to note here is the manner through which Kvanvig’s objectual understanding deviates from Goldman’s knowledge in the weak sense (which is *true belief*). Kvanvig stresses that in order for objectual understanding to take place, the epistemic agent must have been able to grasp the relationship between the pieces of information available at their disposal. This entails that *coherence* is necessary in the attainment of understanding. Not having a direct access to truth, in the proposed model, certainly affects objectual understanding, but given its necessity for coherence, understanding is less likely to be undermined by falsification. The learner, in this model, is expected to obtain a mastery of the relationships that comprise the body of information in question.

A second objection exposes the extent to which the veritistic model can be applied. While there are practical subjects that require more than intellectual training, there are fully intellectual subjects that nevertheless require outcomes that go beyond truth. The goals of logic education, for instance, are, fully intellectual, whereas the goals of physical education are in part intellectual, and in part physical. It should follow that a truth-oriented logic education should be aspired for in the veritistic model and that its fully intellectual nature should not get in the way of its acquisition. However, this can become a challenge for the correspondence view of truth that Goldman’s position is imposing.

A strong case can be made for logic education to be aimed at a mastery of the system’s *coherence* rather than its *correspondence* to facts, especially given the nature of how systems in logic work. One could argue that there are standard rules for certain logical systems (that can be translated into propositional information) and that knowledge of these rules can be acquired as true beliefs. But the aim of logic education is arguably a mastery of the relationships at play among its varying elements. A mastery of such relationships involve the kind of mastery at work in acquiring objectual understanding.

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<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Kvanvig, “Responses to Critics,” in *Epistemic Value*, ed. by Adrian Haddock, Alan Millar, and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 341.

## 2.2.2 Against Instrumentality

Siegel's view of epistemic aims initially started as a monistic, rationality-driven position. But upon Goldman's veritistic proposal, he adjusted his position to be pluralistic so that it accommodates truth as an educational aim that is equally fundamental as rationality/critical thinking.<sup>20</sup> In fact, he was the first to propose that a pluralistic view of aims can be made—one that accommodates more than one epistemic aim, but nevertheless rendering both aims to be of equal footing. Siegel defends his view by objecting to Goldman's claim that critical thinking is only instrumental to the goal of truth. As a reply, he raises a situation where two epistemic agents arrive at the same *true belief*, but with one having arrived at it through rational means, and one having arrived at it by luck. Intuitively, the epistemic agent whose belief is not only true but also rationally held is more epistemically commended compared to the epistemic agent whose belief is only accidentally or luckily true.

He reasons that this objection suffices to lift the *instrumentality* claim from critical thinking and establish it as being *finally* valuable and therefore ought to be attained, as well. But as Marabini and Moretti point out, this does not suffice to absolve critical thinking of its alleged *instrumental* status.<sup>21</sup> Rather, it further reinforces that the pursuit of critical thinking is only incentivized when exercising it results in the acquisition of true belief. The same accusation does not hold for Kvanvig's understanding. It was previously established that the value of understanding is neither *instrumental* nor *constitutive*, but *final* or *intrinsic*. It is not achieved for the purpose of arriving at truth or any other epistemic good, for that matter.

## 2.2.3 Issues of Assessment and Contradiction

In the case of Baehr's position, problems come in terms of the difficulty in its application. His view is an endorsement of intellectual virtues as the primary epistemic aims of education, particularly, the virtues of *curiosity*, *inquisitiveness*, *attentiveness*, *reflectiveness*, *determination*, *perseverance*, and *courage*.<sup>22</sup> He argues that the cultivation of these virtues are necessary for

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<sup>20</sup> See Siegel uses these terms interchangeably. See Siegel, "Truth, Thinking, Testimony, and Trust."

<sup>21</sup> See Alessia Marabini and Luca Moretti, "Goldman and Siegel on the Epistemic Aims of Education," in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 54:3 (2020).

<sup>22</sup> See Baehr, "Educating for Intellectual Virtues," 2–3.

the attainment of lifelong learning, which is what education ultimately ought to aim for.

There are at least two problems that arise from this. The first problem has something to do with the difficulty in assessing moral character. As Ben Kotzee pointed out, doubts are casted upon the ease of applying such a model in terms of coming up with standardized tests that may appropriately serve to assess intellectual virtue.<sup>23</sup> Certainly, there are a lot of conceivable ways to go about it. For instance, one could argue that the practice of standardized tests should also be subject to change. However, drastic measures will have to be made in order to reappropriate the educational system and its priorities towards the attainment of intellectual virtues. By no means does this entail that intellectual virtues are unworthy of cultivating. It is the proposed *primacy* in aims that is being called into question. Once the status of primacy/fundamentality to the epistemic aim is ascribed, achieving such aim becomes the ultimate priority for education. And when a learner fails to attain such a fundamental epistemic aim, education is rendered unsuccessful.

Is the same difficulty of assessment applicable to objectual understanding? We argue on the negative. Baehr's intellectual virtues come across with this problem primarily because of the nature of intellectual virtue. Patterned after an Aristotelian notion of virtue, intellectual character virtues are exercised habitually, and they vary depending on the epistemic agent's psychological constitution and character. In other words, the embodiment of virtues are person-specific and therefore unfeasible to standardize. Add to that an even more difficult challenge of coming up with psychometric assessment tools. The key thing to note here is that the nature of objectual understanding is not the same as that of intellectual character virtues.

Objectual understanding, however, is not a character trait to be cultivated over time through habitual practice. Rather, it is acquired after gathering the necessary information about a subject matter. It certainly helps to at least have these virtues so that the acquisition of understanding becomes easier, but they are nevertheless different when it comes to cultivation and assessment. The objections presented above are specifically targeted towards the assessment of character rather than the acquisition of epistemic states.

Finally, there is the issue of pluralism present for both Siegel's and Baehr's views. A pluralistic view is susceptible to difficulties in application

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<sup>23</sup> See Ben Kotzee, "Problems of Assessment in Educating for Intellectual Virtue," in *Intellectual Virtues and Education: Essays in Applied Virtue Epistemology*, ed. by Jason Baehr (Routledge, 2015), 144.

because of the tendency for the fundamental aims to come into contradictory situations. When such situations are at play, one would have to favor one aim over the other, and this defeats the purpose of having *equally fundamental* aims. Critical thinking and truth, for one, are not always compatible with each other, and perhaps, the same can be said of the multiple intellectual virtues presented by Baehr. The problem is very easily addressed here by simply stressing that the proposed position is *monistic* rather than *pluralistic*. We propose that *objectual understanding* is the primary epistemic aim, where other epistemic aims come secondarily to it. Therefore, no issues of contradiction and priority are encountered in the process.

### 2.3 Understanding and Secondary Epistemic Aims

After addressing the objections to other views, this appears to be the perfect transition to discuss the compatibility of objectual understanding with other aims. Granted that understanding is promoted as the *primary* epistemic aim, could there be *secondary* epistemic aims? There is no need to look any further. A reasonable place to find such aims is within the other positions themselves. How does *truth, critical thinking, and intellectual virtues* play out with the pursuit of understanding?

The quasi-factive nature of understanding, first and foremost, establishes truth to be a partial constituent for objectual understanding. Truth is *constitutively valuable* to the attainment of objectual understanding. What about the relationship of objectual understanding with intellectual virtues and critical thinking? In an earlier work, Kvanvig expresses an inclination to defending virtue epistemology.<sup>24</sup> It appears that this inclination is also evident in his discussions concerning the value problem. He writes that:

virtue epistemology has an important contribution to make to the discussion of the value of knowledge, for we have seen how credit is due for virtuous belief and how the value of such credit is not swamped by the value of true belief itself.<sup>25</sup>

At best, Kvanvig does not take away the epistemic value attributed to beliefs that were formed out of virtue. It should, nevertheless, be noted that

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<sup>24</sup> See Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind: On the Place of the Virtues in Epistemology* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Kvanvig, *Value of Knowledge*, 106.

virtuously formed beliefs are not guaranteed to be error-proof. Having them certainly strengthens the core beliefs of the epistemic agent and, as a result, furthers the intricacy of the pieces of information tied together in any instance of objectual understanding. But the caveat is that there is no guarantee that virtuously held beliefs will always arrive at useful epistemic goods. The most that virtue provides is a capacity to heighten the epistemic value to one's objectual understanding.

While there is a potential avenue for intellectual virtues to be rendered education's secondary epistemic aims with its provision for supplementary epistemic value, it might be worth noting that Kvanvig understands intellectual virtues to be "cognitive powers or abilities, such as accurate perception, reliable memory, and sound reasoning."<sup>26</sup> This is different from Baehr's notion of intellectual virtue which is more specifically aligned with interpreting intellectual virtues as "character traits more analogous to the moral virtues, such as intellectual courage, intellectual honest, and fair-mindedness."<sup>27</sup> Rather than character traits, therefore, objectual understanding can connect with intellectual virtues when it is placed at the receiving end of cognitive abilities.

This conclusion leads to another possibility for epistemic aims. Rather than the intellectual virtues proposed by Baehr, it is the critical thinking of Siegel that more closely adheres to the kind of virtue that Kvanvig's understanding is compatible with. Siegel argues for critical thinking as an ability that results in rationally held beliefs. Upon redirecting this end result into objectual understanding, its instrumental value makes it a suitable candidate for secondary epistemic aims. This is in conjunction with truth and the purpose it serves for the quasi-factive aspect of objectual understanding.

### 3 Intersections of Epistemic Goods and Education

What can be gathered from the preceding discussions is that education is directed at the attainment of objectual understanding, and that truth, critical thinking, and certain kinds of virtues make the drive towards getting there much faster. One's reasons for opting to arrive at it are drawn from the intrinsic value it is equipped with. Finally, the study is in a position

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<sup>26</sup> John Greco, "Virtue Epistemology," in *A Companion to Epistemology: Second Edition*, ed. by Jonathan Dancy, Ernest Sosa, and Matthias Steup (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 75.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

to address its second major philosophical question. How does resolving the primary epistemic aim influence other areas in epistemology education?

The following subsections explore the implications of epistemic aims for curriculum theory, teaching, and learning—all of which are mapped onto existing epistemic discussions of the said concepts. In subsection 3.1, we demonstrate the place of the primary epistemic aim in issues surrounding curriculum theory, emphasizing the need for a unifying framework in curriculum design and development. In subsection 3.2, we highlight the role of teaching with the objective of understanding in mind. Lastly, subsection 3.3 pins the connection that resonates between learning and understanding.

### 3.1 *Epistemic Aims and Curriculum Theory*

Although epistemology of education is only starting to grow as a discipline, philosophy of education has been around for quite some time now, in the likes of Plato, the Stoics, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey, and, eventually, contemporary philosophers of education.<sup>28</sup> Philosophical approaches to educational concepts like teaching, learning, and the curriculum have already been the subject of conversation in academic research, prior to its migration to epistemology. Thus, when epistemic issues were becoming a focal theme in the matter, the traditionally conceived philosophical treatment of educational concepts started intersecting with epistemic concepts. Curriculum theory was not spared from these conceptual intersections.

One of the prominent issues discussed in relation to curriculum pertains to the skills/content debate, particularly, “whether the school curriculum should be structured around the transmission of educational content or should focus on inculcating skills.”<sup>29</sup> On the onset, this seemingly purports a kind of *knowledge-how* versus *knowledge-that* debate, if one were to bank on the assumption that education’s ultimate goal is knowledge. But there is more to it than that. Carter and Kotzee further posits that there are at least two levels of interpreting the problem: (1) on the macro-level, the problem demands an answer to whether “the curriculum as a whole should be weighted towards theoretical subjects such as history, mathematics, science and literature (content) or vocational subjects such as cookery,

<sup>28</sup> See Randall Curren, “Introduction,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*, ed. by Randall Curren (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> J. Adam Carter and Ben Kotzee, “Epistemology of Education,” in *Oxford Bibliographies Online* (forthcoming), 19.



carpentry, engineering or accounting (skills),” and (2) on the micro-level, the problem demands an answer to whether *disciplinary content* favors *disciplinary skills* or vice versa *within* the disciplines themselves.<sup>30</sup>

It should be noted that the framing of the problem as an opposition that supposedly resonates between theoretical and vocational subjects is questionable on its own. When operating from a purely epistemological standpoint, it will be inevitable for discussions to cover mainly the contents of propositional attitudes. But this does not entail that epistemology automatically advocates for theoretical subjects to be favored in the macro-level of curriculum creation. It would be quite similar to pitting the epistemic aims against the non-epistemic aims of education. They work in conjunction with, and not against, each other. Thus, it is far more reasonable to dismiss problem (1) than it is to accept it and favor one of the two presupposed options. In so doing, we challenge the presupposition that theoretical *contra* vocational subjects should dominate the macro-level facet of the curriculum, or vice versa. The same can be said of problem (2), except that, in this instance, the content-skill opposition is dropped to the level of the subject area/discipline.

One thing that the study can obtain from these discussions, though, is a peek at how the topic of epistemic aims fits into the conversation. With respect to the issue of *content*, the epistemic aims debate asks precisely *in what form* such content ought to be reached. Does content mean the object of knowledge or the object of understanding? Given this study’s theoretical preference, evidently the study adheres to the latter.

The connection that underlies holding a firm stance over educational aims and its subsequent influence on curriculum development and design is by no means accidental. Initially, one could refer to the contributions of Ralph W. Tyler who postulated that, in curriculum development, the first question to be asked is what *educational purposes* the school should seek to attain.<sup>31</sup> In other words, he points to the need to identify a set of principal objectives before proceeding to the more practicable aspects of curriculum development, i.e., how educational experiences can be effectively organized and how one can determine whether such purposes are attained in education. Similarly, Robin Barrow and Ronald Woods put emphasis on the necessity of having a pre-determined educational aim in mind when developing and

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> See Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

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designing a curriculum.<sup>32</sup> Arguing from the negative, they postulate that a lack of a defined educational aim is detrimental to this process. They further argue that although determining such an aim is a task for philosophy, much of it is disregarded as a worthy task to undertake, stating that:

The ends are variously presumed to be given, unproblematic, the product of democratic consensus, self-evident, or, paradoxically, too complex for anyone but absent-minded philosophers to worry about. What they are not is firmly grasped, stated and connected to research, argument and prescription pertaining to means.<sup>33</sup>

Holding this view, they argue, can be detrimental as it results to the curriculum where there is an implicit “set of very dubious and ill-thought-out objectives or end states. Notions such as intelligence, imagination, understanding—specifically human attributes—are either ignored or travestied by operational definitions.”<sup>34</sup> It is for these reasons that reaching a thoughtful conclusion for epistemic aims of education, at least, at the level of philosophical research becomes a valuable task. In the case of the study at hand, *objectual understanding* of the foundational principles in any given subject/discipline in question is being promoted as the ultimate goal. Identifying the form in which intellectual ends are projected to play out is a step closer towards the development of an epistemic framework for curriculum theory.

### 3.2 Teaching Epistemic Goods

In a paper, titled “Teaching and Training,” Gilbert Ryle sets up an insightful thought experiment that accounts for the nature of teaching.<sup>35</sup> He asks, “how, in logic, can anyone be taught to do untaught things?”<sup>36</sup> In asking this, he brings out two seemingly different cases of learners: Case 1 involves the self-taught man who did not receive any formal education but who taught

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<sup>32</sup> Robin Barrow and Ronald Woods, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Education* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 65.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See Gilbert Ryle, “Teaching and Training,” in *The Concept of Education*, ed. by R.S. Peters (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2010), 73.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

himself through textbooks, encyclopedia articles, etc., and was successful in doing so. One could say that he had an untrained teacher, but then again, it was himself who embodied the role. Case 2, on the other hand, involves that of the average boy. He is described by Ryle to be quite ordinary, not necessarily brilliant, but not really unintelligent either. Now, consider the following scenario of the boy in Case 2:

He has learned to spell and read monosyllables like 'bat', 'bad', 'at', 'ring', 'sing' etc., and some two-syllable words like 'running', 'dagger' and a few others. We have never taught him, say the word 'batting'. Yet we find him quite soon reading and spelling unhesitatingly the word 'batting'. We ask him who taught him this word and, if he remembers, he says that he had found it out for himself.<sup>37</sup>

Ryle invites us to examine how it was even possible for the boy in Case 2 to have learned the word "batting" when it was not originally part of the propositional information taught to him. Once again, his initial inquiry demands an answer: how, in logic, can anyone be taught to do untaught things?

Noticeably, the above exhibits a complex question as it presupposes a claim that happens to be unfounded. Ryle says that the premise of this question is wrong, to begin with. One cannot be taught to do untaught things. The learner eventually wills himself to reason from the base ideas imparted to him in the process of education. It is unfeasible for the learner to be *forced* by the educator into creating new products of thinking. So, while it is reasonable to give the educator credit for laying down the basic epistemic ingredients to the learner, the educator does not get full credit for the eventual cognitive success and creation of new products of thinking by the learner. The learner cannot be forced into creating beyond what was taught to him. It has to come from his own will.

If it is impossible to *coerce* independent thinking, what, then, is the function of teaching? In Ryle's view,

A familiar and indispensable part or sort of teaching consists in teaching by rote lists of truths or facts, for example the proposition that  $7 \times 7$  is 49, etc., the

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

proposition that Waterloo was fought in 1815, etc., and the proposition that Madrid is the capital of Spain, etc.<sup>38</sup>

This tells us a lot about teaching epistemic goods. There are basic epistemic ingredients that are handed to learners by their teacher upon entering formal education. What they do with these foundational epistemic tools will depend on their own agency. Ryle begins with Case 1 in an effort to expose the intuitive assumptions of what a self-taught man looks like, but fundamentally, the admirable learner involved in Case 2 is, by the very essence of such description, a self-taught boy himself. None of this entails that the presence of a teacher in the educational process should be eliminated. In a similar Socratic fashion, the teacher is the metaphorical midwife who provides assistance to the autonomous learner so that the latter gives birth to new ideas.

The task of the teacher is, therefore, to show the ropes, but the learner will have to will himself to operate on them. Here, it becomes important to raise the kind of epistemic goods that are to be imparted to learners. Although Ryle suggests that there are certain truths or facts that are necessarily imparted, ultimately such facts will have to be tied together in a coherent system. This way, the learner is given a coherent set of conceptual tools that will later be useful for when he/she eventually pursues further independent thinking. In so doing, the learner becomes equipped with a capacity to reason from the basic informational chunk obtained through education. The way to make this ambition possible is to aim for the students to attain understanding of the basic conceptual tools that allow them to reason further.

### 3.3 *Understanding as Learning*

Simultaneous with the teaching process is, of course, the learning process. Education is not complete without some form of learning. It should be noted, however, that the concept of *learning* is different for philosophy as it is for psychology. The theories of learning that came out in 20<sup>th</sup>-century educational theory have semblances of psychological theory. Usually, they define learning as “an enduring change either in behavior or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience.”<sup>39</sup> Describing learning as a kind of behavioral change naturally

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>39</sup> Dale H. Schunk, “Theories of Learning,” in *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy*, ed. by D.C. Phillips (SAGE Publication, Inc., 2014), 466.

pushes the conversation towards the center of psychological studies. But there is an undeniable link between learning and epistemic states.

Consider the following descriptions of learning according to philosophers of education. For Christopher Winch and John Gingell, “The standard case of learning involves an individual acquiring knowledge that they did not have before.”<sup>40</sup> Here, they speak of learning as the acquisition of new knowledge by the individual epistemic agent. For Carol and Thomas Wren, “learning consists in coming to know something.”<sup>41</sup> Again, there is the attribution to knowledge acquisition. But adding further, they posit that the question of how one comes to know is an entirely separate philosophical enterprise. Finally, there is Michael Luntley’s postulation that “Learning by reasoning is learning in which the pupil works out what to do and what to think for herself,”<sup>42</sup> which hints at the possibility equating learning by reasoning with independent thinking.

Evidently, when viewing *learning* from epistemic lenses, it becomes an academic battle for the kind of epistemic good that can be equated to it—i.e., whether learning is equivalent to, if not involves, knowledge acquisition, intellectual character virtue cultivation, or independent thinking cultivation. The contention of this study is that learning, as is the case with objectual understanding, comes in varying degrees. It is conceivable for a learner to have learned and continue to learn further. It is possible for there to be two learned students where one is *more learned* than the other. In other words, there is a degree at which learning is achieved. And it is this furtherance of learning that is key to finding the epistemic good in question.

The issue with equating learning with propositional knowledge is that the latter is *atomistic* in nature. It accounts for the furtherance of learning as a kind of *cumulative* activity, where the learner can be said to have furthered his/her learning through an accumulation of individual items of propositional knowledge. In other words, the continuous process of learning is equated with a mere incessant collection of propositional information over time. In such a model, a *more learned* person is a *more knowledgeable* person by virtue of him/her holding more pieces of propositional knowledge relative to another person. David Hamlyn argues against this and in defense of

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<sup>40</sup> Christopher Winch and John Gingell, *Philosophy & Educational Policy: A Critical Introduction* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004), 38.

<sup>41</sup> Carol Wren and Thomas Wren, “The Capacity to Learn,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*, ed. by Randall Curren (Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 247.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Luntley, “Learning, Empowerment and Judgement,” in *Critical Thinking and Learning*, ed. by Mark Mason (USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 79.

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understanding.<sup>43</sup> In his view “Nothing is contributed by way of understanding when people are made to recite general propositions, even if these are fundamental to a subject.”<sup>44</sup>

Hamlyn recognizes knowledge to be involved in the learning process. But a furtherance of learning leads, in fact, to understanding. He explains that:

Understanding, moreover, involves and presupposes the acquisition and use of concepts. One can understand nothing of a subject unless one has the concepts in which that understanding is to be expressed. Hence, the process of learning a subject goes hand in hand with the process of acquiring the relevant concepts, the concepts in terms of which the subject matter and its principles are to be formulated.<sup>45</sup>

We argue here that the most mature phase of learning takes the form of objectual understanding. It was previously established that the role of teaching involves laying down the basic epistemic ingredients for the learner to reason further. When objectual understanding of these conceptual tools is attained, the learner independently expands this understanding (either more broadly or more deeply) in his educational pursuits using the basic tools handed to him/her early on in formal education. As a result, this allows the continuity of education to progress even beyond the institutional mechanisms of formal education.

### Conclusion

The primary aim of understanding has been extended to epistemic conversations about the educational concepts of curriculum, teaching, and learning. It was revealed that having a unifying epistemic aim is substantial to the design and development of the curriculum. The discussions also showed that teaching necessitates the foundational principles of a discipline to be objectually understood. We have consistently and strongly maintained the necessity of educating for the pursuit of objectual understanding, which is contrary to the prevalent notions of prioritizing truth, critical thinking, and

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<sup>43</sup> David W. Hamlyn, “The Logical and Psychological Aspects of Learning,” in *The Concept of Education*, ed. by R.S. Peters (Taylor & Francis E-Library, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



intellectual virtues. Although such ends are valuable and supportive of the ultimate goal, learning is arguably incomplete upon attainment of these secondary ends. Intuitively, one does not imagine the learner who has acquired innumerable true beliefs as the ideal result of successful education. By contrast, the acquisition of an understanding of the fundamental tools of reasoning is indicative of successful education. Ultimately, such understanding is equivalent to the most mature degree of learning.

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## **Pananahimik, Pamumuná, Pagtutol, at Pag-asa: Isang Pagdalumat sa Praktis ng Sci-Hub**

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***Franz Giuseppe F. Cortez***

**Abstract:** In this study, I explore the practice of Sci-Hub using some concepts derived from the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire and the Canadian philosopher Henry Giroux. These are the concepts of culture of silence, language of critique, culture of resistance and language of hope. In general, the world of education silently and passively accepts a regime perpetrated by giant publishing corporations. The practice of Sci-Hub mirrors a critique of a form of oppression and domination of consciousness - that a sensible rationality, discourse, and regime is one which is advocated by big corporations. I affirm that Sci-Hub is a creative response to a culture of silence effectively perpetuated by the regime of intellectual property, publishing industry and corporatization of the school. But at the same time, the practice of Sci-Hub manifests a clinging to the language of hope that resists the ideology of "There Is No Alternative" (TINA). Despite the inherent difficulties in the contemporary society, the practice of Sci Hub persists to look for small spaces to offer effective alternatives to the present order or lack of it.

**Keywords:** Sci-Hub, Elbakyan, piracy, academic publishing

*Isang araw ay liliparin, isang araw ay bubuwagin  
Ang matataas na pader ng aking eroplanong papel  
- Gary Granada (Pilipinong mang-aawit at aktibista)*

Noong Mayo 19, 2020, hinanap ko sa *internet* ang artikulong "Masturbation: Vice or Virtue?" ni William Phipps na nalathala noong Hulyo 1977 sa *Journal of Religion and Health*. Bahagi ito ng isang pag-aaral tungkol sa pananaw ni Tomas de Aquino sa masturbasyon. Nang buksan ko ang *website* ng *SpringerLink*, naka-lock ang nasabing artikulo

at ibinebenta ng *SpringerLink* sa halagang 34.95 euros (PhP 1,939.00). PhP 1,939.00 para sa isang artikulo!<sup>1</sup> Isa pang artikulong hinanap ko ay ang "Thomas Aquinas on Sexual Pleasure" na nalathala sa *The Journal of Religious Ethics* noong 1977. Naka-lock naman ito sa JSTOR at ibinebenta sa halagang 39 US dollars (PhP 1,977.00). Maaari mo raw itong basahin nang libre sa *online* kung gagawa ka ng *personal account* sa JSTOR. At sinabi pang "With a personal account, you can read up to 100 articles each month for free."<sup>2</sup> Halos dalawang libong piso ang gagastusin para sa isang artikulo!

Humigit-kumulang, ganito ang karanasan ng maraming mananaliksik - iskolar, propesor, o estudyante man - hindi lamang sa Pilipinas kundi sa buong mundo. Kailangang magbayad nang mahal upang magkaroon ng akses sa mga pananaliksik. Sa mga mananaliksik na kabilang sa malalaking unibersidad tulad ng mga estudyante at propesor, kalimitang naakses nila ang mga ito gamit ang kanilang *library account*. Ngunit para sa mas maraming tao kabilang na mananaliksik, guro at estudyante ng maliliit na kolehiyo at unibersidad, nagiging balakid ang kawalan ng pambayad upang tamasahin din ang ganitong pribilehiyo.

Dito pumapasok ang Sci-Hub, isang *pirate website* na nagbibigay-daan sa kahit sino na libreng mag-akses at mag-*download* ng milyon-milyong akademikong pananaliksik. Sapagkat ipinagbabawal ng halos lahat ng lipunan ang pamimirata, maitatanong tuloy natin kung katanggap-tanggap ba ang ginagawa nito.

Pangkaraniwang tutungo sa sangay ng pilosopiyang morál ang pilosopikong pagtingin sa praktis ng Sci-Hub.<sup>3</sup> Kaya nga, uusbong ang mga sumusunod na katanungan: Tama o mali ba (sa lebel ng etika) ang pamimirata ng mga pananaliksik na nilikha ng mga iskolar? Tama o mali bang gamitin ng mga mananaliksik ang Sci-Hub? Tama o mali bang itaguyod ang paggamit nito at ipamahagi ang link nito? Pirata o bayani bang maituturing ang mga tao sa likod ng Sci-Hub? O may mga sitwasyon kaya na bayani rin ang pirata? Anu-ano nga ba ang komplikasyon ng pag-aaring intelektuwal lalo na kung ilalagay sa konteksto ng pinagpanibago at patuloy na nagbabagong mundo ng agham at teknolohiya?

Masalimuot at kumplikado ang mga katanungang ito. At hindi ko hinahangad na sagutin sa papel na ito ang lahat ng mga nabanggit na katanungan. Upang sagutin ang mga katanungang ito, pangkaraniwang

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<sup>1</sup> Dito makikita ang mga nabanggit na detalye tungkol sa artikulo: <<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01533319>>.

<sup>2</sup> Dito makikita ang mga nabanggit na detalye tungkol sa artikulo: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40017725?seq=1>>.

<sup>3</sup> Jack James, "Pirate Open Access as Electronic Civil Disobedience: Is It Ethical to Breach the Paywalls of Monetized Academic Publishing?," in *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology*, 71:12 (2020), 1500–1504.

gagamitin ang mga higanteng teorya tulad ng etika ng utilitarianismo at deontolohiya. Maipapalagay rin na sa paggamit ng mga lenteng ito, hindi malulutas ang usapin ng pagiging tama o mali ng nasabing praktis. Ibig sabihin, maaaring gamitin ng magkasalungat na kampo ang mga teoryang ito upang depensahan ang kani-kanilang posisyon.

Kaya nga, hindi na ako makikisali sa mga talakayang nakabatay sa pilosopiyang morál. Ngunit patuloy kong isasaalang-alang ang aspektong etikal ng nasabing penomenon. Sa pagpasok sa mundo ng etika na hindi nangangahulugan ng pagpasok sa mundo ng pilosopiyang moral, sinusundan ko ang pananaw ni Raymond Geuss sa kanyang aklat na *Outside Ethics* nang sinabi niyang hindi lang tumutukoy ang etika sa mga panuntunan ng tamang pagkilos at pagtrato sa kapwa ngunit ganundin sa buong paraan ng pagtingin sa daigdig at pag-iisip tungkol dito.<sup>4</sup> Inuunawa ni Alasdair McIntyre ang etikang ito sa labas ng etika (pilosopiyang moral) bilang pangangailangan sa seryosong pagsasaalang-alang ng mga alternatibong paraan ng pag-iisip tungkol sa praktikal na buhay.<sup>5</sup> Kahawig ng ganitong daloy ng pag-unawa nilikha ni Paolo Bolaños ang konsepto ng "etika ng pag-iisip" na tumutukoy sa isang etikang sumusuri sa inklinasyon ng rasyonalidad ng tao na dominahin, kontrolin at kasangkapanin ang daigdig ng tao at ng iba pang nilalang.<sup>6</sup>

Ipinapalagay kong sinusundan ko rin ang ganitong pag-unawa sa etika kung susuriin ko ang praktis ng Sci-Hub gamit ang mga pananaw na umuugat sa Brasilyanong pilosoper na si Paulo Freire at sa Canadianong pilosoper na si Henry Giroux. Ipapanukala ko na ang praktis ng Sci-Hub ay umuusbong sa loob ng gahum ng kultura ng pananahimik. Isa itong kontra-gahum na mailalarawan gamit ang lengguwahe ng pamumuná, kultura ng pagtutol at lengguwahe ng pag-asa.

## Ano ang Sci-Hub?

Tulad ng nabanggit sa itaas, ang Sci-Hub ay isang pirate website na nagbibigay-daan sa kahit sino na libreng makaakses at maka-download ng milyon-milyong akademikong pananaliksik.<sup>7</sup> Ayon sa website ng Sci-Hub, mula Setyembre 5, 2011 hanggang Disyembre 18, 2021 nasa 84,794,279 nang

<sup>4</sup> See Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>5</sup> See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Review of Raymond Geuss' *Outside Ethics*," in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (5 March 2005), <<https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/outside-ethics>>.

<sup>6</sup> See Paolo Bolaños, "Language, Critique and the Non-Identical: Nietzsche and Adorno on the Ethics of Thinking," (Macquarie University, Australia, 2009), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Resnick, "Why One Woman Stole 50 Million Academic Papers – And Made Them All Free to Read," in *Vox* (28 April 2016), <<https://www.vox.com/2016/2/17/11024334/sci-hub-free-academic-papers>>.

mga akademikong papel ang maaaring ma-download dito. Karaniwang kailangang magbayad upang makita nang buo ang mga pananaliksik na ito— humigit-kumulang PhP 1,500. Kung walang pambayad, maaaring makipag-ugnayan sa mga aklatan ng mga paaralan. Ito namang mga aklatan ay nagbabayad din ng milyon-milyong halaga upang magkaroon ng komprehensibong koleksiyon ng mga akademikong pananaliksik.

Ganito ang sistema ng industriya ng pananaliksik at paglilimbag sapagkat karamihan sa mga pananaliksik na ito ay pag-aari ng mga higitang korporasyon (Reed-Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, SAGE) na ginagawang malalaking negosyo ang paglilimbag ng mga akademikong pananaliksik. Noong 2017, iniulat nga na ang industriyang ito ay nagkaroon ng kabuuang kita na USD 19 bilyon o humigit 999 bilyong piso. Sa isang paghahambing na ginawa, lumalabas na mas mataas pa sa *profit margin* ng Apple, Google at Amazon ang *profit margin* ng Elsevier noong 2010.<sup>8</sup> Lumalabas tuloy na ginagawang gatasán ng iilang mga pribadong korporasyon ang kaalaman sa pamamagitan ng pag-*digitize* at pagkukulong dito. Para silang mga parasitikong lintá na kumukuha ng malaking tubò sa paraang halos wala silang kapawis-pawis.

Itinatag ang Sci-Hub ng Kazakhstaning *computer programmer* na si Alexandra Elbakyan noong 2011. Hinahangad niyang mawala ang mga paywall ng mga akademikong pananaliksik upang maging unibersal at malaya ang pagdaloy ng kaalaman. Sabi nga ng islogan ng SciHub: "*removing all barriers to knowledge*"—tinatangal ang lahat ng mga balakid sa pagkamit ng kaalaman. Sinabi ni Elbakyan na dalawa ang pamamaraan ng Sci-Hub upang makapag-imbak ng mga akademikong pananaliksik. Una, maraming mga akademiko ang boluntaryong nagbibigay ng mga papel. Ikalawa, gumagamit sila ng mga *user ID* at *password* ng mga tao at institusyon na lehitimong may akses sa mga dyornal. Iniulat noong 2018 na nasa 64 milyong akademikong pananaliksik ang maaaring makuha nang libre gamit ang Sci-Hub. Nirerepresenta nito ang 2/3 ng lahat ng mga nalimbag na akademikong pananaliksik.<sup>9</sup> Noong Disyembre 2021, sinabi naman ng website ng Sci-Hub na halos nasa 85 milyong pananaliksik na ang nasa mga kamay nito.

Hindi nakabibiglang kinasuhan si Elbakyan ng mga korporasyon partikular na ng Elsevier at Springer Nature. Mas lalong hindi nakabibigla na noong 2017 natalo siya sa isang hukuman sa Estados Unidos at pinagmumulta sa Elsevier, ang pinakamalaking manlilimbag ng mga

<sup>8</sup> See Stephen Buranyi, "Is the Staggeringly Profitable Business of Publishing Bad for Science?" in *The Guardian*, (27 June 2017), <<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jun/27/profitable-business-scientific-publishing-bad-for-science>>.

<sup>9</sup> See Ian Graber-Stiehl, "Science's Pirate Queen," in *The Verge* (8 February 2018), <<https://www.theverge.com/2018/2/8/16985666/alexandra-elbakyan-sci-hub-open-access-science-papers-lawsuit>>.



akademikong pananaliksik, ng humigit-kumulang sa 780 milyong piso.<sup>10</sup> Noong 2018 naman, nagpasya ang isang korte sa Moscow na i-block sa buong Russia ang Sci-Hub. Samantalang isang korte sa Virginia ang nag-utos sa lahat ng mga *internet service provider* at *search engine* na i-block din ang Sci-Hub. Idagdag pa na humigit-kumulang sa 250 milyong piso ang kailangang ibigay ni Elbakyan sa *American Chemical Society* bilang bayad-pinsala.<sup>11</sup> Hanggang sa mga oras na isinusulat ang papel na ito, nagtatago pa rin si Elbakyan upang hindi mahuli ng mga otoridad.

### Kultura ng Pananahimik

Nilikha ng Brasilyanong pilosoper na si Paulo Freire ang katagang "kultura ng pananahimik."<sup>12</sup> Naobserbahan niya ito sa mga magsasaka ng *latifundia*<sup>13</sup> sa Brazil na tahimik at pasibong sumusunod sa utos at kagustuhan ng kanilang mga amo. Sa konteksto naman ng edukasyon sa Brazil, tumutukoy ang kulturang ito sa tahimik at pasibong pakikinig (kung nakikinig man) ng mag-aaral sa kanyang guro. Ang guro ang pitsel ng kaalaman samantalang ang mag-aaral ay isang basong walang laman na kailangang salinan ng kaalamang nanggagaling sa guro. Katulad ng karanasan ng mga magsasaka sa loob ng latifundium, tahimik at pasibong tinatanggap ng mag-aaral ang prosesong ito ng dominasyon at opresyon.<sup>14</sup>

Sa pangkalahatan, meron ding kultura ng pananahimik na umiiral sa mundo ng akademikong paglilimbag. Tahimik at pasibong tinatanggap ng maraming iskolar ang rehimeng ipinapalaganap ng mga higanteng korporasyon na ginagawang negosyo ang pagpapakalat ng kaalaman. Sa kabila ng patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng mga dyornal na ipinagbibili ng mga negosyanteng manlilimbag, patuloy nilang isinusuko sa mga korporasyong ito ang karapatan sa pag-aari ng mga pananaliksik na sila naman mismo ang nagpakahirap na gumawa. Patuloy rin nilang sinusupportahan ang mga korporasyon sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng

<sup>10</sup> See Quirin Schiermeier, "US Court grants Elsevier millions in damages from Sci Hub," in *Nature* (22 June 2017), <<https://www.nature.com/articles/nature.2017.22196>>.

<sup>11</sup> See Dalmeet Singh Chawla, "Sci-Hub Blocked in Russia Following Ruling by Moscow Court," in *Chemistry World* (3 December 2018), <<https://www.chemistryworld.com/news/sci-hub-blocked-in-russia-following-ruling-by-moscow-court/3009838.article>>.

<sup>12</sup> Paulo Freire, "Education as the Practice of Freedom," in *Education for Critical Consciousness*, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos, Louise Bigwood, and Margaret Marshall (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), 37.

<sup>13</sup> Ang *latifundia* ay malalaking lupaing pag-aari ng iilang mayayaman at makapangyarihan sa Brazil. Katumbas ito ng mga *hacienda* sa Filipinas.

<sup>14</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1984), 58.

libreng serbisyo bilang mga tagásuri ng mga artikulo at bilang mga patnugot ng mga dyornal. Tumatahimik at tinatanggap na lang ng maraming iskolar ang ganitong kalakaran sapagkat hindi naman nila direktang pinapasan at nararamdaman ang presyo ng mga dyornal; problema ito ng mga administrador ng mga silid-aklatan at hindi ng mananaliksik.<sup>15</sup> Higit pa rito, nakikita ng mga iskolar na ang mga korporasyon ding ito ang susi sa kanilang tagumpay bilang mga propesyonal.<sup>16</sup> Kapalit ng libreng serbisyonang kanilang ibinigay, nakatutulong na naka-ugnay ang kanilang mga pangalan sa mga prestihiyosong dyornal upang mas lalo pa silang kilalanin bilang mga iskolar, maiseguro ang kanilang posisyon at promosyon sa mga unibersidad, at magtagumpay sa kanilang karera at propesyon.<sup>17</sup> Nakadepende ang gantimpala sa kung saang dyornal naglalathala at gaano karaming artikulo ang inilalathala.<sup>18</sup> Nagbibigay-liwanag ang kuwento ni Richard Smith, dating patnugot ng tanyag na *British Medical Journal* at dating *chief executive officer* ng BMJ Publishing Group. Sinabi niya na nang minsang pag-usapan nila ang mga pagbabagong dapat gawin sa sistema ng paglilimbag, ganito ang naging reaksiyon ng maraming mananaliksik: "*There's much we don't like about the present set up, but we are nervous of change. We know how to play the present game well. If the game is changed, we might not do so well.*"<sup>19</sup> Totoo ngang ipinapalagay ng maraming iskolar na ang pag-angat sa kanilang propesyon ay nakabatay sa kanilang tahimik at pikít-matang pakikilahok sa sistemang idinidikta ng mga higanteng korporasyon.

Sa napakahabang panahon, tinanggap din ng maraming administrador ng mga pamantasan ang aspektong negosyo ng industriya ng paglilimbag. Noong mga panahong iniimprenta pa ang mga dyornal, totoo

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<sup>15</sup> See Richard van Noorden, "Open Access: The True Cost of Science Publishing," in *Nature*, 495:7442 (2013)s, 429.

<sup>16</sup> See Glenn S. McGuigan and Robert D. Russell, "The Business of Academic Publishing: A Strategic Analysis of the Academic Journal Publishing Industry and its Impact on the Future of Scholarly Publishing," in *Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship*, 9:3 (Winter 2008).

<sup>17</sup> See James J. Heckman and Sidharth Moktan, "Publishing and Promotion in Economics: The Tyranny of the Top Five," in *Journal of Economic Literature*, 58:2 (2020).

<sup>18</sup> "Why would they send their work to Elsevier then? They feel pressured to do this, because Elsevier is an owner of so-called 'high-impact' journals. If a researcher wants to be recognized, make a career — he or she needs to have publications in such journals." Alexandra Elbakyan, Case 1:15-cv-04282-RWS Document 50 File 09/15/15. Accessed 29 December 2020 <<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6591060-Elbakyan-Letter-to-Judge.html>>.

"...publishing in lesser-known, open access journals is viewed as risky for scientists without tenured positions." Margaret Beaton, "A Small Act of Scientific Civil Disobedience," in *Yes!* (13 March 2017), <<https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/science/2017/03/13/small-acts-of-scientific-civil-disobedience>>.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Smith, "The Highly Profitable but Unethical Business of Publishing Medical Research," in *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 99 (September 2006), 454.

namang gumagastos din ang mga manlilimbag upang mailathala ang mga pananaliksik: mula sa pagtatasa ng mga artikulo, hanggang sa pagsasaayos ng mga ito, hanggang sa pag-iimprenta at hanggang sa pagpapadala ng mga dyornal sa mga unibersidad sa pamamagitan ng koreo. Kaya nga, nakahanda ang maraming pamantasan na maglaan ng sapat na pondo upang bilhin sa mga manlilimbag ang mga pananaliksik na nilikha rin naman mismo ng kanilang mga iskolar. Napakahalagang nalalaman ng mga iskolar ang mga pinakabagong lathalain upang maipagpatuloy ang pananaliksik at pagtuklas ng mga bagong kaalamang makatutulong sa lipunan.<sup>20</sup>

Ngunit sa panahon ng makabagong teknolohiya at internet, lalo pang napaliit ng mga manlilimbag ang kanilang gastos at napadalí ang sistema ng paglalathala at pagpapakalat ng kaalaman.<sup>21</sup> Dahil dito, umaasa ang mga unibersidad na bababâ rin naman ang presyo ng mga dyornal. Kabaligtaran ang nangyari.<sup>22</sup> Maging ang Cornell University at Harvard University na itinuturing na mga primera klaseng unibersidad sa mundo at may malalaking pondo para sa kanilang mga silid-aklatan ay dumaing din sa idinidiktang presyo ng mga korporasyon.<sup>23</sup> At habang dumadaing at naghigpit ng sinturon ang mga unibersidad, ipinapakita naman ng mga datos na mas lalong lumalaki ang tubò ng oligopolistikong industriya ng paglilimbag.<sup>24</sup>

Sa kabila nito, tinatanggap pa rin ng maraming mga unibersidad ang kalagayang ito. Marahil sinasalamín ng reaksiyon ni Lance Fortnow, isang

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<sup>20</sup> See Richard Edwards and David Shulenburg, "The High Cost of Scholarly Journals (And What to Do About It)," in *Change*, 35:6 (2003), 11.

<sup>21</sup> "At the risk of stating the obvious, we in the academic community create the ideas in our papers. We write the papers. We typeset the papers. We review the papers. We proofread the papers. We accept or reject the papers. We electronically archive and distribute the papers. If commercial publishers once played an essential role in this process, today their role is mostly to own the copyrights and to collect money from the universities." Scott Aaronson, "Review of *The Access Principle* by John Willinsky," in *ACM SIGACT News*, 38:4 (December 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Bosch and Kittie Henderson, "New World, Same Model: Periodicals Price Survey 2017," in *Library Journal* (19 April 2017), <<https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/new-world-same-model-periodicals-price-survey-2017>>; Armin Beverungen, Steffen Böhm, and Christopher Land, "The Poverty of Journal Publishing," in *Organization* 19:6 (2012), 22; James, "Pirate Open Access as Electronic Civil Disobedience."

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Knight, "Cornell Axes Elsevier Journals as Prices Rise," *Nature*, 436:217 (2003); Ian Sample, "Harvard University Says It Can't Afford Journal Publishers' Prices," *The Guardian* (12 April 2012), <<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/apr/24/harvard-university-journal-publishers-prices>>; and Kate Murphy, "Should All Research Papers Be Free?," *The New York Times*, (12 March 2016), <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/opinion/sunday/should-all-research-papers-be-free.html>>.

<sup>24</sup> See Edwards and Shulenburg, "The High Cost of Scholarly Journals"; Vincent Larivière, Stefanie Haustein, and Philippe Mongeon, "The Oligopoly of Academic Publishers in the Digital Era," in *PLOS ONE*, 10:6 (2015), e0127502, and Buranyi, "Is the Staggeringly Profitable Business of Publishing Bad for Science?"

tanyag na *computer scientist* at dekanong ng Illinois Institute of Technology, ang kaisipan ng maraming iskolar at administrador ng mga unibersidad. Ganito ang kanyang pahayag tungkol sa panawagang i-boycot ng mga iskolar ang pagtatasa ng mga isinusumiteng pananaliksik sa Elsevier: “*We all have a responsibility to do our fair share of refereeing and it takes no more effort to referee a paper for [Information and Computation] than for any other journal. If you truly dislike a certain publisher, then don’t submit your papers to their journals. But to take a symbolic stand by not refereeing papers only hurts the authors and our community.*”<sup>25</sup>

Nakatulong din nang malaki ang kakatwang dinamiko ng merkado ng mga dyornal. Sa pagtatasa nina Richard Edwards at David Shulenburg, mga akademiko at administrador ng paaralan, sinabi nilang napipilitan pa ring bumili ang mga unibersidad kahit na mahal sapagkat hindi katulad ng ibang produkto na maraming alternatibo sa merkado, ang bawat pananaliksik ay nag-iisa lamang at walang pamalit na mahahanap sa ibang negosyante.<sup>26</sup> Dagdag pa rito, ang mga bukod-tanging artikulo na inilalathala sa mga prestihiyosong dyornal ay nasa pagmamay-ari ng iilang malalaking korporasyon.<sup>27</sup> Sa kakatwang merkadong ito ng monopolyo at oligopolyo ng tinatawag na “Big Five” (Wiley-Blackwell, Springer Nature, Elsevier, ACS, at Taylor & Francis), talagang makapagdidikta ng presyo at kondisyon ang nagbebenta.

Malaking ambag din sa kultura ng pananahimik ang pagkahumaling ng maraming unibersidad sa pagpapataás ng kanilang ranggo at pagpapabangó ng kanilang pangalan sa pandaigdigang merkado. Sinabi ng sosyolohistang si Steffen Mau sa kanyang aklat na *The Metric Society: On the Quantification of the Social World* na kasama ang mga unibersidad sa mga pangunahing institusyon sa modernong lipunan na kailangang makipagsabayan sa paligsahan ng *rating* at *ranking*, sa ayaw man nila o sa gusto.<sup>28</sup> At sa paligsahang ito, malaking puntos ang ibinibigay sa isang unibersidad kung ang kanilang mga akademiko ay kinikilala sa kanilang disiplina. Kaya nga sa halip na talikuran ang mga oligopolistikong korporasyon, hinihikayat at ginagantimpalaan pa ng mga administrador ang pagsusumite ng kanilang mga iskolar ng kanilang pananaliksik sa mga prestihiyosong dyornal na pag-aari ng mga ito. Ikinararangal din ng mga

<sup>25</sup> Binanggit sa Aaronson, “Review of *The Access Principle* by John Willinsky,” 20.

<sup>26</sup> Edwards and Shulenburg, “The High Cost of Scholarly Journals.”

<sup>27</sup> “*The highly concentrated market of academic publishing induces and increases power differentials between academic institutions and corporate publishers to the advantage of the latter.*” Stephan Puehringer, Johanna Rath, and Teresa Griesebner, “The Political Economy of Academic Publishing: On the Commodification of a Public Good,” in *PLOS ONE*, 16:6 (2021), 2.

<sup>28</sup> See Steffen Mau, *The Metric Society: On the Quantification of the Social*, trans. by Sharon Howe (Cambridge: Polity, 2019), 53.

administrador kung ang kanilang mga mananaliksik ay kinukuha bilang mga taga-rebisa at patnugot ng mga nasabing prestihiyosong dyornal. Kaya nga, hindi lang parangal sa indibidwal na iskolar ang inihahatid ng pagkakaugnay sa mga prestihiyosong dyornal. Mismong ang mga unibersidad ay nakikinabang sa kumpetisyon ng *ranking* at *rating* at sa pagpapatibay ng pangalan ng unibersidad bilang makabagong simbolikong kapital.<sup>29</sup>

Samakatwid, ang kultura ng pananahimik na naghahari sa mundo ng paglilimbag ng akademikong papel ay umiiral, nananatili at pinagtitibay ng siklikong proseso na nakapaloob sa isang kalakarang itinuturing na ang kaalaman ay isang kalakal at ang pagpapakalat nito ay laging nababahiran ng pang-ekonomiyang interes.<sup>30</sup> Sa loob ng rehimeng ito, pinagtitibay ang legalidad at moralidad ng karapatan sa pag-aaring intelektuwal na malinaw na pumapabor sa malalaking korporasyon. Tumatahimik na lamang ang maraming iskolar sapagkat dito nakabatay ang kanilang pag-angat sa propesyon – maglathala o maglaho (*publish or perish*).<sup>31</sup> Tumatahimik naman ang maraming unibersidad sapagkat dito nakabatay ang kanilang pag-angat sa walang-katapusang pagmamarka at pataasan ng reputasyon—sumangayon at sumunod (*conform and perform*).<sup>32</sup>

Ganito ang pagkakarawan ni Richard Smith sa napakasuwerteng tadhana ng mga higanteng manlilimbag: "*This might be described as the 'secret ingredient' of the publishers: they have so entangled themselves in the system of academic credit that it is hard for the academic world to 'uncouple' publishing from credit.*"<sup>33</sup> Kailangang sumayaw ang akademiko sa musikang nilikha ng negosyo. Malayong-malayo na nga tayo sa dakilang mithiin ng *Philosophical Transactions*, ang kauna-unahang dyornal ng Royal Society of London na inilunsad may 350 taon na ang nakalilipas at umiiral pa rin sa kasalukuyan. Natabunan na ang dakilang mithiing ibahagi ang kaalaman upang mas lalo pa itong mapagyaman. Napalitan na ito ng gantimpalang hatid ng kislap ng salapi para sa mga negosyante at kináng ng parangál para sa mga akademiko. Samantala, patuloy na nagdarahop ang mas maraming mananaliksik lalo na

<sup>29</sup> See *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> "In addition to being vehicles of knowledge, scholarly journals have become important economic assets owned by private companies." Mahdi Khelifaoui and Yves Gingras, "Branding Spin-Off Scholarly Journals: Transmuting Symbolic Capital into Economic Capital," in *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 52:1 (2020), 1–19. Tingnan din Carolyn Caffrey Gardner and Gabriel J. Gardner, "Fast and Furious (at Publishers): The Motivations behind Crowdsourced Research Sharing," in *College & Research Libraries*, 78:2 (2017), 144.

<sup>31</sup> Hendrik van Dalen and Kène Henkens, "Intended and Unintended Consequences of a Publish-or-Perish Culture: A Worldwide Survey," in *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 63:7 (July 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Mau, *The Metric Society*, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, "The Highly Profitable but Unethical Business," 453.

sa mahihirap na lipunan habang ipinipinid ang mga dyornal at ipinagkakait ang kaalaman.<sup>34</sup>

### Lengguwahe ng Pamumuná

Sa liwanag ng pilosopiyang pang-edukasyon ni Paulo Freire, nilikha ng Canadianong pilosoper na si Henry Giroux ang katagang "lengguwahe ng pamumuná" (language of critique) na tumutukoy sa pagpuná at pagsusuri ng iba't ibang mukha ng kapangyarihan sa loob ng mga institusyong pang-edukasyon.<sup>35</sup> Tinitingnan, halimbawa, kung ano ang nilalaman ng mga kurikulum at ano ang hindi isinasali rito. Pinag-aaralan din kung paanong ang kaalaman ay nagiging instrumento mismo ng dominasyon at opresyon. Kaya nga, sa pamamagitan ng lengguwahe ng pamumuná, pinapangalanan at binabasag ang kultura ng pananahimik at tinutukoy ang puno't dulo nito. Ang pamumuná ay isang gawain ng pag-aangat ng antas ng kamalayan upang maging mulát sa puno't dulo ng isang usapín o suliranin.

Kailangan ding punahin ang praktis ng mga manlilimbag at ang kultura ng katahimikang umiiral sa mundo ng mga akademiko. Ang totoo, matagal na namang pinupuna at sinusuri ng maraming iskolar ang kakaiba at kakatwang ugnayan ng industriya ng paglilimbag at ng mundo ng akademiko. Pinupuná nila ang napakataas at di-makatarungang presyo ng mga dyornal. Ipinapakita nilang isa itong pagsasamantala sa pondong inilalaan ng mga unibersidad at sa bunga ng paggawa ng mga akademiko.<sup>36</sup> Binabansagan nila itong monopolistiko at oligopolistiko.<sup>37</sup> Bagama't kakampi ng mga higitang korporasyon ang batas, hindi naman sila pumapasá sa hukuman ng konsensiya.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Tingnan ang mga panayam kina Brian Nosek, propesor ng sikolohiya sa University of Virginia, Roshan Kumar Karn, isang doktor sa Nepal, at Helena Asamoah-Hassan, direktor ng African Library Association sa dokumentaryong *Paywall: The Business of Scholarship* sa direksiyon ni Jason Schmitt (New York: Utopian Turtletop Productions, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Henry Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey, 1988), 108ff.

<sup>36</sup> See Beverungen, Böhm, and Land, "The Poverty of Journal Publishing."

<sup>37</sup> Tingnan ang mga sumusunod: George A. Chressanthis and June D. Chressanthis, "Publisher Monopoly Power and Third-Degree Price Discrimination of Scholarly Journals," in *Technical Services Quarterly*, 11:2 (1993), 13–36; Michael A. Stoller, Robert Christopherson, and Michael Miranda, "The Economics of Professional Journal Pricing," in *College & Research Libraries*, 57 (1996), 9–21; Richard W. Meyer, "Monopoly Power and Electronic Journals," in *The Library Quarterly*, 67:4 (October 1997), 325–349; Edwards and Shulenburger, "The High Cost of Scholarly Journals"; McGuigan and Russell, "The Business of Academic Publishing"; Puehringer, Rath, and Griesebner, "The Political Economy of Academic Publishing."

<sup>38</sup> See George Monbiot, "Scientific Publishing is a Rip-off – We Fund the Research, It Should Be Free," in *The Guardian* (13 September 2018), <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/13/scientific-publishing-rip-off-taxpayers-fund-research>>.



Hindi lang dumadagdag si Elbakyan sa mahalagang gawain ng pamumuná at pagsusuri. Pinapalalim pa niya ang antas ng pamumuná. Ang praktis ng Sci-Hub ay hindi purong praktis na salát sa rasón. Isa itong pamumuná na nakapag-aangat ng kamalayan ng lipunan tungkol sa samu't saring ideyolohiya at masalimuot na ugnayan ng kapangyarihan, kaalaman at ekonomikong interes.<sup>39</sup> Halimbawa, ipangangalandakan ng kapitalistang manlilimbag na pumapanig sa kanila ang batas na ang ginagawa ng Sci-Hub ay pamimirata, na ang pamimirata ay isang pagnanakaw at ang pagnanakaw ay isang krimen. Ngunit hindi dahil umiiral na ang ganitong rasyonalidad at normatibo, masasabing ito na rin nga ang palagian at di-mapapasubaliang tama.<sup>40</sup> Ang pamumuná ay pagsususpetsa sa nakasanayang umiiral na kaisipan, panuntunan o sistema man.<sup>41</sup>

Sa mas malalimang pagsusuri, makikita namang hindi lang isang ordinaryong pamimirata ang praktis ng Sci-Hub. Hindi ito maihahanay sa pamimiratang nagaganap sa industriya ng musika at pelikula na ang kalimitang hangad ng namimirata ay kumita ng pera.<sup>42</sup> Nanggagaling si Elbakyan sa batayang prinsipyo na ang mananaliksik at pananaliksik ay libreng regalo para sa taumbayan. Hindi sila panindá na kailangang lagyan ng kaakibat na presyo sa merkado.<sup>43</sup> Kaya nga, binubuksan ni Elbakyan ang mga bagong espasyo upang makapag-isip at makapag-usap nang labas sa saklaw ng gusto lang isipin at pag-usapan ng mga dominanteng grupo.<sup>44</sup> Kung sa mata ng manlilimbag at ng pangkasalukuyang mga batas ay pagnanakaw man ang ginagawa ni Elbakyan, mismong ang pag-iral at

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<sup>39</sup> "The conditions call out for ideology critique." Rahel Jaeggi, "Was ist Ideologiekritik?" in *Was ist Kritik?*, ed. by Rahel Jaeggi and Thilo Wesche (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 271. Binanggit sa Manfred Knoche, "Science Communication and Open Access: The Critique of the Political Economy of Capitalist Academic Publishers as Ideology Critique," in *tripleC*, 18:2, trans. by Christian Fuchs (2020).

<sup>40</sup> "The more the existing society, through its overwhelming power and hermetic structure, becomes its own ideological justification in the minds of the disillusioned, the more it brands as sinners all those whose thoughts blaspheme against the notion that what is, is right – just because it exists." Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), 101.

<sup>41</sup> Bülent Diken, "Critique as Justification – and Beyond," in *The Sociological Review*, 63 (2015), 922.

<sup>42</sup> Ganito ang sinabi ni Elbakyan sa isang panayam: "We can have a discussion when copyright is used to stop the free distribution of movies and music, but if the law is against science and knowledge, there is nothing to discuss." Neil Sehgal, "Fighting for Communism in Science: An Interview with Alexandra Elbakyan," in *Brown Political Review* (16 April 2021), <<https://brownpoliticalreview.org/2021/04/fighting-for-communism-in-science-bpr-interviews-alexandra-elbakyan>>.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Suber, *Open Access* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012), 14.

<sup>44</sup> "The point of critique is not justification but a different way of feeling: another sensibility." Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 94. Binanggit sa Diken, "Critique as Justification," 935.

pagdomina ng ganitong kaisipan ang inilalagay sa lente ng pamumuná. Kapag paulit-ulit ang isang inaakalang pagkakamali, baka naman hindi iyon ang mali, o hindi lang iyon ang mali, o meron pang mas mali na nagdidikta ng tama at mali at kailangang mas lalong pagbuhusan ng lakas at isip upang punahin.<sup>45</sup>

Binibigyang-diin din ng pamumunáng nakabatay sa kulturang Sci-Hub ang kontradiksiyon sa pagitan ng isang praktis at ng prinsipyong ipinapalagay na batayan nito. Halimbawa, ang batas at praktis ng kopirait ay pangunahing ginawa upang bigyan ng insentibo ang mga manlilikha na mas lalo nilang pag-ibayuhin ang kanilang kakayahan at tulóy mapabuting lalo ang isang lipunan. Ngunit sa pangkasalukuyang praktis nito, nabigyan ba talaga ng gantimpala ang mga dapat bigyan nito? O napagsamantalahan sila?<sup>46</sup> Ginanahan ba lalo silang pag-ibayuhin ang kanilang talento? O nagkasya na lang silang makipaglaro sa sistema? Napabuti bang lalo ang kondisyon ng lipunan dahil sa praktis ng kopirait? O napigilan pang lalo ang pagsulong ng kaalaman? At nahirapan pang lalo ang mas maraming miyembro ng lipunan? Kaya nga, hindi panghihimasok ng mga bagong normatibo ang pamumunáng nakabatay sa kulturang Sci-Hub. Ipinapamukha lang nito na mismong ang pinupuna ay hindi nakasusunod sa kanyang mga itinakdang batayang prinsipyo.<sup>47</sup> Na may kontradiksiyon sa sinasabing layunin ng batas ng kopirait at sa tunay na nangyayari sa pagpapatupad nito. May malaking problema ang industriya ng paglilimbag. At mismong ang industriya ng paglilimbag ang maituturing na malaking problema.

Hindi natin ipinagkikibit-balikat ang pamumunáng nakabatay sa patuloy na pagsasaalang-alang at paggalang sa batas ng kopirait. Ngunit binubuksan ng Sci-Hub ang isang paraan ng pag-iisip tungkol sa mga hangganan ng kapangyarihan ng mga estado at ekonomiya.<sup>48</sup> Lumalalim ang pamumuná at napapansin ang magkakaugnay na usaping pumapaloob sa rehimen ng pag-aaring intelektuwal, korporatisasyon ng paaralan, at komodipikasyon ng kaalaman. Sa napakahaba nang panahon, nananatiling nasa labas ng batas ang pirata. Ngunit ang pirata ang patunay na may butas

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<sup>45</sup> "...while its methods may be suspect, SciHub is merely a symptom of a much larger problem in science." Steven Park, "Scientist vs Publisher: Sci-Hub Reveals Flaws in Academia," *The Miscellany News* (6 February 2019), <<https://miscellanynews.org/2019/02/06/opinions/scientist-vs-publisher-sci-hub-reveals-flaws-in-academia/>>.

<sup>46</sup> "Copyright was intended to reward creative people, but in fact is used to exploit them." Sehgal, "Fighting for Communism in Science".

<sup>47</sup> "...the critique must be thought to give expression to an already existing conflict within a social practice." Titus Stahl, "Immanent Critique and Particular Moral Experience," in *Critical Horizons*, 23:1 (2022; first published online October 2017), 3.

<sup>48</sup> Martin Parker, "Pirates, Merchants and Anarchists: Representations of International Business," in *Management & Organizational History*, 4:2 (2009), 168.

ang batas at nagtatago ang manlilimbag sa saya ng batas.<sup>49</sup> Ang mismong paglabag sa batas ang nagiging daan ng Sci-Hub upang magawa nitong ituon ang atensiyon sa iba't ibang anyo ng dominasyon na nananatiling nananalaytay sa mga ugat ng ating kontemporaryong lipunan.<sup>50</sup> Ipinapaalala nito na ang mga ipinapalagay nating anyo ng pagsulong at pag-unlad ay pagpapaigting pala ng dominasyon, pagpapalawig ng inhustisya at paghakbang palayo sa mas demokratikong lipunan.

## Kultura ng Pagtutol

Ngunit hindi dapat tumigil sa gawain ng pamumuná at pagsusuri. Mula sa pagpuna, kailangang umusbong ang isang kultura ng pagtutol na walang-sawang tumutuklas ng mga pamamaraan upang hamunin ang isang mapáng-apíng praktis. Ang Sci-Hub ay isang malikhaing tugon sa kultura ng pananahimik na mabisang ipinalalaganap ng rehimen ng pag-aaring intelektuwal, industriya ng paglilimbag, korporatisasyon ng paaralan at komodipikasyon ng kaalaman.

Ang praktis ng pagtutol laban sa industriya ng paglilimbag ay masasaksihan na sa maraming pagkilos ng mga indibidwal, grupo ng mga propesyonal at maging mga unibersidad. Noon pa mang mga unang taon ng bagong milenyo, tatlong mahahalagang pahayag ang nagsulong ng sistemang open access (OA) bilang pagkilala sa batayang prinsipyo na dapat nakukuha at nagagamit ang mga pananaliksik nang walang mga balakid.<sup>51</sup> Noong 2004, binalaan na ng mga pangunahing unibersidad sa Estados Unidos ang Elsevier na ititigil nila ang pagbili ng mga dyornal kung hindi ibababâ ang presyo ng mga ito.<sup>52</sup> Noong 2012, iniulat ang isang panawagan para sa malawakang protesta laban sa Elsevier. Ipinangako ng mga sumali sa protesta na hindi na sila magpapasa ng kanilang mga pananaliksik sa nasabing korporasyon. Hindi rin sila uupo bilang mga rebisador at patnugot

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>50</sup> "In this transitional period in history, from an industrial world to the information age, sovereign and disciplinary powers are being supplanted by widely distributed controls which increasingly generate dominions connected to large corporations. These corporations end up assuming powers previously organized within States. In this world knowledge is a direct source of wealth and power in a manner completely distinct from other periods in history." Sergio Amadeo da Silveira, "Aaron Swartz and the Battles for Freedom of Knowledge," in *International Journal of Human Rights*, 10:18 (June 2013), <<https://sur.conectas.org/en/aaron-swartz-battles-freedom-knowledge/>>.

<sup>51</sup> Ang tatlong pahayag ay ang mga sumusunod: Budapest Open Access Initiative (February 2002), Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing (June 2003), Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (October 2003). Tingnan ang Suber, *Open Access*, 7ff.

<sup>52</sup> See Owen Dyer, "US Universities Threaten to Cancel Subscriptions to Elsevier Journals," *BMJ*, 328:7439 (2004), <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC381040/>>.

ng mga dyornal nito.<sup>53</sup> Sa kasalukuyan, halos nasa 20,000 mananaliksik na ang lumalagda sa panawagang boykot. Patuloy pa ring buháy ang website nito para sa mga mananaliksik na nagnanais ding sumali sa protesta.<sup>54</sup> Nakalatag ang kanilang mga paninindigan sa isang papel na may pamagat na “The Cost of Knowledge.”<sup>55</sup> Noong 2017 naman nagsimula ang sunod-sunod na malawakang protesta ng maraming unibersidad sa pamamagitan ng pagputol ng kanilang mga kontrata sa Elsevier.<sup>56</sup> Kamakailan lamang, nagkaroon naman ng tinatawag na Plan S (*speed, stop paywalls*) na pinangunahan ng 11 malalaking organisasyon sa Europa na nagbibigay ng pondo sa mga mananaliksik. Inaatasan ng mga organisasyong ito ang mga mananaliksik na kanilang popondohan na kaagad bigyan ng akses ang publiko sa kanilang mga ginawa. Ibig sabihin, kailangan nilang ilathala ang kanilang mga pananaliksik sa mga dyornal na open access.<sup>57</sup>

Masasabing positibo ang mga anyo ng pagtutol na ito. Ngunit marahil hindi pa rin ito sapat. Una, kung magtagumpay man ang sistemang open access, ang mga bagong pananaliksik lang ang maaakses ng publiko. Mananatiling pag-aari ng mga korporasyon ang milyon-milyong artikulong nakuha na nila ang kopirait. Malaking kawalan ito para sa publiko.<sup>58</sup> Ikalawa, nakabatay ang maraming protesta sa paghahangad na maibabâ ang presyo ng mga dyornal upang patuloy na makaakses ang mga pangunahing pamantasan mula sa Estados Unidos, Alemanya, Gran Britanya at iba pang

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Lin, “Mathematicians Organize Boycott of a Publisher,” *The New York Times* (13 February 2012), <<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/14/science/researchers-boycott-elsevier-journal-publisher.html>>.

<sup>54</sup> The Cost of Knowledge, (n.d.), accessed 10 December 2021, <<http://thecostofknowledge.com/>>.

<sup>55</sup> “The Cost of Knowledge,” (n.d.), accessed 2 March 2021, <<https://gowers.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/elsevierstatementfinal.pdf>>.

<sup>56</sup> Tingnan ang mga sumusunod na artikulo: David Matthews, “German Universities Plan for Life Without Elsevier,” in *Times Higher Education* (5 September 2017), <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/german-universities-plan-life-without-elsevier>>; Ashley Yeager, “Sweden Cancels Agreement With Elsevier Over Open Access,” in *The Scientist* (16 May 2018), <<https://www.the-scientist.com/the-nutshell/sweden-cancels-agreement-with-elsevier-over-open-access-64405>>; Diana Kwon, “North American Universities Increasingly Cancel Publisher Packages,” *The Scientist* (11 June 2018), <<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/north-american-universities-increasingly-cancel-publisher-packages-64324>>; Lindsay MacKenzie, “University of California Drops Elsevier,” in *Inside Higher Ed* (1 March 2019), <<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/03/01/university-california-cancels-deal-elsevier-after-months-negotiations>>.

<sup>57</sup> See Martin Enserink, “European Funders Seek to End Reign of Paywalled Journals,” in *Science*, 361:6406 (September 2018).

<sup>58</sup> “The Open Access Movement has fought valiantly to ensure that scientists do not sign their copyrights away but instead ensure their work is published on the Internet, under terms that allow anyone to access it. But even under the best scenarios, their work will only apply to things published in the future.” Aaron Swartz, “Guerilla Open Access Manifesto” (July 2008), accessed 27 December 2021, <<http://ia800605.us.archive.org/15/items/GuerillaOpenAccessManifesto/Goamjuly2008.pdf>>

mauunlad na bansa. Nakahanda silang makipag-ayós sa mga malalaking korporasyon kung magkakasundo sila sa halagá. Hindi naman naisasaalang-alang na ang presyong katanggap-tanggap sa isang unibersidad sa Estados Unidos o Gran Britanya ay presyong hindi maaabot ng isang pangkaraniwang unibersidad sa Ethiopia o Guatemala.<sup>59</sup> At ang presyong katanggap-tanggap sa mga unibersidad sa Filipinas tulad ng Ateneo de Manila University at Unibersidad ng Santo Tomas ay presyong hindi maaabot ng maliliit na kolehiyo sa mga probinsiya. Sa madali't sabi, pumapabor lang sa mauunlad na lipunan at mayayamang unibersidad ang pangunahing mithiin ng mga protesta at boykot. Ikatlo, ang sistemang *open access* ay muling nagbukas ng panibagong oportunidad upang pagkakitaan, lalo na ng tinatawag na *predatory journals*. Dahil dito bago pa man makapagpundar ng tiwala sa mundo ng akademiko ang sistemang ito, nabahiran na agad ng pagdududa ang marami at pinatibay pang lalo ang pangangailangan sa sistema ng mga higitang manlilimbag.<sup>60</sup> Ika-apat, maaaring pagdudahan ang bisà ng mga anyo ng pagtutol na binanggit sa itaas sapagkat pagkatapos ng halos 20 taóng protesta, boykot at iba pang mga pagkilos, animo'y hindi natitinag ang industriya ng akademikong paglilimbag.<sup>61</sup> Marahil nagagawa pa ring paglaruan at lusután ng malalaking korporasyon ang sistema kapag sinasaklaw ng mga kumbensiyonal na batas ang mga anyo ng pagtutol.

Dito pumapasok ang anyo ng pagtutol ng Sci-Hub – isang pagsuwáy sa mga batas ng kopirait na pumapabor sa mga higitang korporasyon. Ipinapakita ng praktis ng Sci-Hub na epektibong natitinag at nababahala ang industriya ng paglilimbag sa gawain ng "pamimirata."<sup>62</sup> Ebidensiya rito ang

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<sup>59</sup> "...widespread subscription access remains restricted to institutions, such as universities or medical centers. Smaller institutions or those in the developing world often have poor access to scholarly literature." Daniel Himmelstein, Ariel Romero, Jacob Levernier, Thomas Munro, Stephen McLaughlin, Bastian Tzovaras, and Casey Greene, "Sci-hub Provides Access to Nearly All Scholarly Literature," in *ELife*, 7:e32822 (2018); Kevin Smith, "Some Radical Thoughts About Sci-Hub," in *Scholarly Communications at Duke* (3 March 2016), <<https://blogs.library.duke.edu/scholcomm/2016/03/03/some-radical-thoughts-about-scihub/>>.

<sup>60</sup> See Martin Weller, *The Battle for Open: How Openness Won and Why It Doesn't Feel Like Victory* (London: Ubiquity Press, 2014), 46-47.

<sup>61</sup> "As the potential opening for universalizing access to culture and knowledge created by digital networks is now closing, attempts at private legal reform such as Creative Commons licenses have had only a very limited effect. Attempts at institutional reform such as Open Access publishing are struggling to go beyond a niche." Marcell Mars and Tomislav Medak, "System of a Takedown: Control and De-commodification in the Circuits of Academic Publishing," in *Archives*, ed. by Andrew Lison, Marcell Mars, and Tomislav Medak (Lüneburg: Meson Press, 2019), 65.

<sup>62</sup> "Sci-Hub is undeniably a permanent disruption of the traditional model of scholarly publication. The unsustainable model that these publishers were operating under has not been working for academic libraries, thus Sci-Hub has hastened an evolution that will lead to a new model of academic publishing." Holly Marple, "Parasite, Pirate, and Robin Hood: Sci-Hub is Disrupting the World

mga kasong isinampa laban sa Sci-Hub at Libgen. Ebidensiya rin ang patuloy na pagdami ng mga artikulong maaakses sa Sci-Hub at ang patuloy pang pagdami ng mga iskolar at pangkaraniwang mamamayang gumagamit nito. Subalit ang pagsuwáy ng Sci-Hub ay hindi maihahalintulad sa paglabag ng isang pangkaraniwang kriminal na tahasang binabalewala ang batas. Hindi pagwawalang-bahala sa kapangyarihan ng batas (*rule of law*) ang praktis ng Sci-Hub. Ang pamimirata nito ay isang pagtaliwas na bumubukal sa mas mataas na pagkilala sa mga batayang batas at sa mga mabubuting dahilan ng pagkakaroon nito.<sup>63</sup> Isa itong panawagan na magkaroon ng mga pundamental na pagbabago sa batás ng kopirait - mga pagbabagong pumapabor sa mamamayan at sa komunidad ng mga iskolar at mananaliksik.<sup>64</sup> Isa itong hamon na balikan ng isang lipunan ang kanilang mga pagpapahalaga, pag-isipang mulí ang tunay na diwa ng mga nililikhang batas, at patuloy na punahin ang mga namamayaning normatibo sa paglikha at pagpapatupad nito. Isa itong panawagan upang magkaroon ng malawakang sibíl na pagsuway (*civil disobedience*)<sup>65</sup> - ang karapatan ng mamamayan na mapayapang sumalungat at hindi makipagtulungan sa pagpapatupad ng isang di-makatarungang batas. Hindi natin kinondena, bagkus pinuri pa ang mga pagkilos nina Mahatma Gandhi at Martin Luther King, Jr. Ipinagmamalaki naman ng mga Pilipino ang EDSA Revolution noong 1986. "Marahil hindi na nga batás ang isang di-makatarungang batás," sabi nga ni San Agustin na sinang-ayunan naman ni Sto. Tomas de Aquino.<sup>66</sup>

Hindi mabubulabog ang mga nasa kapangyarihan kung puro pamumuná lang ang gagawin. Malaking tubó ang nakatayâ kaya hindi kagyat na magpapatínág sa puwersa ng pamumuná ang mga nakikinabang sa industriya ng paglilimbag.<sup>67</sup> Hindi naman basta-basta isinusuko ng nang-

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of Academic Publishing," in *TheiJournal*, 3:2 (2018), <<https://theijournal.ca/index.php/ijournal/article/view/29480>>.

<sup>63</sup> Sinabi ni Elbakyan na ang pagkukulong sa kaalaman ay isang seryosong paglabag sa Artikulo 27 ng Unibersal na Deklarasyon ng Karapatang Pantao na nagsasabing "Ang bawat tao'y may karapatang makilahok nang malaya sa buhay pangkalinangan ng pamayanan, upang tamasahin ang mga sining at makihati sa mga kaunlaran sa siyensiya at sa mga pakinabang dito."

<sup>64</sup> Mikhail Naumov, "Elsevier Inc. vs Sci-Hub: Some Aspects of Copyright Infringement in Digital Space," in *SHS Web of Conferences*, 109 (2021), <[https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2021/20/shsconf\\_lisid2021\\_01027.pdf](https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2021/20/shsconf_lisid2021_01027.pdf)>, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Marcus Banks, "What Sci-Hub Is and Why It Matters," in *American Libraries*, 47:6 (June 2016), 46; James, "Pirate Open Access as Electronic Civil Disobedience"; Aaron Swartz, "Guerilla Open Access Manifesto"; Mars and Medak, "System of a Takedown," 61ff; Richard Smith, "The Business of Academic Publishing: 'A Catastrophe'," in *The Lancet*, 392:10154 (October 2018), 1187.

<sup>66</sup> "...that which is not just seems to be no law at all." Binanggit sa Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II Q. 95 A. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Weller, *The Battle for Open*, 24.



aapi ang kanyang kapangyarihang mang-api.<sup>68</sup> Kaya nga, kailangang tumulúy sa mga kongkretong gawain ng pagtutol ang gawain ng pamumuná. Ngunit may mga praktis ng pagtutol na animo'y kinukurot lang ang mga higanteng korporasyon. Radikal na pagtutol ang kailangan upang sila'y mabulabog sa pananahimik. Ito ang ginagawa ni Elbakyan at ng Sci-Hub.<sup>69</sup> Ito ang isang mabisang paraan upang seryosohin ng mga higanteng manlilimbag ang mga anyo ng pagtutol. Hindi na maaari ang "business as usual." Sa isang panayam kay Heather Piwowar, isa sa mga tagapagtatag ng kumpanyang Impactstory, ganito ang kanyang sinabi: "*But we suspect and hope that Sci-Hub is currently filling toll-access publishers with roaring, existential panic. Because in many cases that's [piracy] the only thing that's going to make them actually do the right thing and move to open-access models.*"<sup>70</sup>

### Mga Panghuling Pagdalumat

Noong Hulyo 21, 2021, sinubukan kong i-type ang "*where is sci hub*" sa Google search engine. Agad na lumabas ang mga sumusunod na *autocomplete prediction*: "*where is sci hub now*," "*where is sci hub now 2021*," "*where is sci hub reddit*," at "*where is sci hub twitter*." Habang pinagbabawalan ng batas, mukhang dumaraming lalo ang naghahanap sa Sci-Hub. Matatandaang iniutos ng hukuman na i-block ng mga *internet service provider* (ISP) ang Sci-Hub.<sup>71</sup> At siyempre, may naghahintay na kaparusahan sa mga hindi susunod. Bilang sagot naman ng isang dismayadong kumpanyang ISP sa Sweden, binlock din nila ang Elsevier.<sup>72</sup> May mga lugar sa mundo kung saan bina-block ang Sci-Hub, pero laging may mga mungkahing *unblocking instructions* na

<sup>68</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> "...we are clearly in a time of ferment with respect to the evolution of scholarly publishing. If nothing else, Sci-Hub has hastened the speed and vigor of this conversation." Banks, "What Sci-Hub Is and Why It Matters," 48.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Van Noorden, "Ten People Who Mattered This Year - Alexandra Elbakyan: Paper Pirate," in *Nature* (19 December 2016), <<https://doi.org/10.1038/540507a>>.

<sup>71</sup> Diana Kwon, "Judge recommends ruling to block internet access to Sci-Hub," in *TheScientist* (3 October 2017), <<https://www.the-scientist.com/daily-news/judge-recommends-ruling-to-block-internet-access-to-sci-hub-30793>>; Dalmeet Singh Chawla, "Court Demands Search Engines and Internet Service Providers Block Sci-Hub," in *Science* (6 November 2017), <<https://www.science.org/content/article/court-demands-search-engines-and-internet-service-providers-block-sci-hub>>; Ernesto Van Der Sar, "French ISPs Ordered to Block Sci-Hub and Libgen," in *TF* (31 March 2019), <<https://torrentfreak.com/court-orders-french-isps-to-block-sci-hub-and-libgen-190331/>>.

<sup>72</sup> See Zack Whitaker, "A Swedish ISP Has Blocked Elsevier's Website in Protest for Forcing It to Block Sci-Hub," in *TechCrunch* (6 November 2018), <<https://techcrunch.com/2018/11/05/swedish-internet-provider-bahnhof-protest-injunction-elsevier-website>>.

madali ring makita at sundan.<sup>73</sup> Ikinukumpara nga sa laróng *whac-a-mole* ang ugnayan ng Sci-Hub at ng batas na kapag pinupukpok ng martilyo ay lalabas lang ulit sa kung saanman ang una.<sup>74</sup> Itinayp ko naman ang salitang "thank" sa Google Scholar. Isa sa lumabas sa autocomplete prediction ang "thank Alexandra Elbakyan" na nagpakita ng 22 resulta. Noong Disyembre 17, 2021, 462 resulta na ang lumabas. Dumarami ang mga iskolar na tahasang nagpapasalamat kay Elbakyan at sa tulong na naihatid ng Sci-Hub sa kanilang mga isinasagawang pananaliksik. Hindi naman napatigil ang operasyon ng Sci-Hub ng mga kasong isinampa ng Elsevier at American Chemical Society. Mas lalo pa ngang nakilala ang Sci-Hub at lumakas lalo ang simpatiya ng mga mananaliksik.<sup>75</sup> Wala ring gaanong puwersa ang mga galamay ng batas sa kakaibang katangian ng laro ng modernong teknolohiya. Kakampi man ng mga makapangyarihang korporasyon ang batas at ang hukuman, makikita namang halos wala itong magawa upang maipatupad ang kaukulang parusa.<sup>76</sup>

Kaya nga sa bandang huli ng pagdalumat na ito, babanggitin ko ang lengguwahe ng posibilidad at pag-asa na nilikha rin ni Henry Giroux sa liwanag ng pilosopiya ni Paulo Freire. Tumutukoy ang lengguwahe ng posibilidad sa kakayahan ng tao na baguhin ang penomenon ng pang-aapi at pananakop. Nakikita ni Giroux kay Freire ang isang anyo ng pedagohiya na hindi lang pumupuná kundi nagtataguyod din ng mga anyo ng pakikibaka upang labanan ang iba't ibang uri ng kaapihan.<sup>77</sup> Kaya nga, hindi damdamin o estado ng emosyon ang pag-asa. Meron itong aspektong politikal na nagtutulak upang gumawa ng mga kongkretong hakbang at hindi malugmok

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<sup>73</sup> "Despite being involved in several high-profile legal cases, Sci-Hub has never been shut down. Sometimes its domains get seized, but it always manages to move to a new location. You can see the latest sci-hub links on this page." <<https://sci-hub.41610.org/>> (n.d.), accessed 18 July 2021; Tingnan din ang Citationsy, "Download Research Papers and Scientific Articles for Free," accessed 29 November 2021, <<https://citationsy.com/blog/download-research-papers-scientific-articles-free-scihub-library-genesis/>>.

<sup>74</sup> See Banks, "What Sci-Hub Is and Why It Matters," 4.

<sup>75</sup> See Sneha Kulkarni, "Latest Data Shows That Sci-Hub Thrives Despite Infrastructure Losses," in *Editage Insights*, (27 February 2018), <<https://www.editage.com/insights/latest-data-shows-that-sci-hub-thrives-despite-infrastructure-losses/1519713287>>.

<sup>76</sup> "...the cases demonstrate how the use of litigation to resolve scholarly publishing disputes often appears – at least at this stage and in these cases – ineffective and unsatisfactory. Sometimes legal cases and legislation struggle to keep up with technological developments. At other times, business solutions overtake the slow-moving legal process. And in some instances, even when a court seems to reach an effective resolution, the judgment cannot be enforced. The shift over the past decades to online publishing, the low cost and ease with which digital content can be produced, copied, and disseminated, and changing expectations over the sharing of this content appear to be contributing to this ineffectiveness." Stewart Manley, "On the Limitations of Recent Lawsuits against Sci-Hub, OMICS, ResearchGate, and Georgia State University," in *Learned Publishing*, 32 (2019), 375–381.

<sup>77</sup> See Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals*, 294.

sa kawalang-pag-asa.<sup>78</sup> Ganito ang pagkakasabi ni Henry Giroux tungkol sa kahulugan ng pag-asang sabay na kumikilos: "*the attempt to make a difference by being able to imagine otherwise in order to act in other ways.*"<sup>79</sup> Hindi maaaring tumunganga at ngumanga na lamang habang nagpapakasasa ang iilan sa mga di-makatarungang kalakaran. Ipinapakita ng praktis ng Sci-Hub ang pagkapit sa lengguwahe ng pag-asa na tumututol sa ideyolohiya ng *There Is No Alternative* (TINA).<sup>80</sup> Kahit mukhang natural at hindi na mababago ang isang reyalidad, hindi ibig sabihin ay natural at hindi na ito mababago. Bagkus nagpipilit kahit namimilipit sa paghahanap ng maliliit na puwang upang maghain ng mga mabisang alternatibo sa pangkasalukuyang kaayusan o kawalan nito. Hindi kaisa-isang posibilidad ng buhay ang inihahain ng mga higitang manlilimbag. Kahit na wala pang mas mabuting alternatibo ang maaaring ilahad, hindi ito dahilan upang malugmok sa kultura ng pananahimik at tanggapin nang buong-buo ang namamayaning rehimen. Ang totoo, ipinapakita ng Sci-Hub na merong alternatibo. Na sa panahon ng makabagong teknolohiya, maaari nang muling mangarap ng pagsasanib ng teorya at kilos, ng abstraksiyon at kongkretong protesta.<sup>81</sup>

Hangga't hindi dumarating sa punto na magiging patas at makatarungan ang industriya ng paglilimbag ng mga akademikong pananaliksik, hindi mamamatay ang mga pagkilos na katulad ng ginagawa ng Sci-Hub. Bagama't mamatay o magpakamatay ang nagsimula ng ideya, patuloy na nabubuhay at nagpupumiglas ang ideyang kanilang sinimulan. Ito ang lengguwahe ng pag-asa at posibilidad. Nang hatulan ng kamatayan at piliing magpakamatay ni Socrates, hindi namatay ang mithiing palayain ang katotohanan. Nang hatulang mabilanggo at piliing magpakamatay ni Aaron Swartz, hindi rin mamamatay ang mithiing palayain ang kaalaman.<sup>82</sup>

Marahil kuntento na ang ilan sa atin sa pagtutol na inilulunsad ng Open Access Movement. Kahit higit na mas mainam ang sistemang open access kaysa rehimen ng mga industriya ng paglilimbag ngayon, hindi tayo pinipigilang pangarapin ang isang rehimeng magiging legal ang "pamimirata" na ginagawa ng Sci-Hub at maging katanggap-tanggap ang paggamit ng mga ganitong website sa lahat ng dako ng mundo. Kapag

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<sup>78</sup> See Michalinos Zembylas, *Five Pedagogies, A Thousand Possibilities: Struggling for Hope and Transformation in Education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2007), ix.

<sup>79</sup> Henry Giroux, *The Giroux Reader*, ed. by Christopher G. Robbins (London: Routledge, c2016), 270.

<sup>80</sup> See Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009).

<sup>81</sup> Mike Watson, *The Memeing of Mark Fisher: How the Frankfurt School Foresaw Capitalist Realism and What to Do About It* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2021), 23.

<sup>82</sup> See Elizabeth Day, "Aaron Swartz: Hacker, Genius...Martyr?" in *The Guardian* (2 June 2013), <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/jun/02/aaron-swartz-hacker-genius-martyr-girlfriend-interview>>.

nangyari ito, maaaring ito na rin nga ang katapusan ng industriya ng paglilimbag ng mga akademikong papel. Hindi dapat ipagluksa ng sangkatauhan ang kamatayan nito sapagkat nakasentro naman sa paghahangad sa tubó ang industriyang ito - tubó na nanggagaling sa isang bagay na pag-aari ng publiko at hindi dapat ginagawang kalakal sa merkado. Sinabi nga ni Ryan Moffitt, tagapagtatág ng Florida Pirate Party, “*An industry that has to suspend civil liberties to make money is an industry the world needs to be without.*”<sup>83</sup> Kapag inilibing natin ang industriyang ito, muling isisilang ang isang rehimeng orihinal nang pinangarap at isinakatuparan ng mga tagatangkilik ng kaalaman at siyensiya.<sup>84</sup>

Kaya nga sa susunod na hinarangan ka ng paywall, isipin si Alexandra Elbakyan at ang Sci-Hub. At umaasa tayo na darating nga ang panahon na ang paywall ng mga akademikong pananaliksik ay mga labí na lang ng kasaysayan. Kapag dumating ang araw na ito, baka nga ang Sci-Hub ay maging bakás na rin lang ng kasaysayan ng pamumuná, pagtutol at pag-asa. Na sa bandang huli, ang parating pinararatangang pirata ay siyang matitirá pala.

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<sup>83</sup> Binanggit sa Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne, *The Pirate Organization: Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013), 178.

<sup>84</sup> “Scientific journals, published mainly by small scientific societies, sprouted up alongside the printing industry in the 17th century as a way to disseminate science and information about scientific meetings.” Brian Resnick and Julia Belluz, “The War to Free Science,” in *Vox* (10 July 2019), <<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/6/3/18271538/open-access-elsevier-california-sci-hub-academic-paywalls>>.

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# Neo-fascism as the Apparatus of Neoliberalism's Assault on Philippine Higher Education: Towards an Anti-Fascist Pedagogy

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**Gerardo M. Lanuza**

**Abstract:** The neoliberal restructuring of the global economy as a response to the crisis of capitalist accumulation has led inevitably to the reform of higher education on the global scale. The neoliberal assaults on higher education pushed for vigorous marketization and corporatization of colleges and universities. In the Philippine context, the impact of neoliberal reform of education transpired primarily in the enactment of the K+12 reform. Such reform aligned Philippine basic education to the international division of labor. But under the Duterte regime, the neoliberal reform of the Philippine educational system coincided with the neo-fascist character of the state. It is the main thesis of this paper that the neo-fascist assault against higher education serves as a guarantee to push for unhampered neoliberal restructuring of Philippine education. In the face of this challenge, this paper will propose the development and practice of anti-fascist pedagogy among educators and education workers.

**Keywords:** neoliberalism, neo-fascism, critical pedagogy, corporatization

## Technology-powered Neoliberal Restructuring of Education

Neoliberal economic order has been cascading around the world ever since the crisis of capitalist global accumulation in the seventies.<sup>1</sup> Neoliberalism is both a specifically economic process as well as a

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<sup>1</sup> See Gerald Dumenil and Dominique Levy, *Capital Resurgent: Roots of Neoliberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).



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broader reconfiguration of society.<sup>2</sup> In the first instance, it can be described as a political-economic doctrine arguing that social progress can be furthered most effectively by “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.”<sup>3</sup> Globally, it has restructured the educational systems around the globe for further capital accumulation.

Bonaventura de Sousa Santos points out that “[n]eoliberalism is the political form of globalization resulting from a U.S. type of capitalism, a type that bases competitiveness on technological innovation coupled with low levels of social protection.”<sup>4</sup> With its drive to squeeze more profits from geographical areas not yet colonized by capital, the neoliberal economic order has given birth to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. According to Nancy Gleason:

The first industrial revolution emerged in the 1780s with steam power, making humans more productive. Then in the 1870s the second industrial revolution emerged with the development of mass production and electrical energy. The third industrial revolution emerged with the development of IT and electronics, which enabled more efficient production. We are now in a new phase where the fusion of several technologies is not only automating production, but also knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

The world today is riding the crest of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It has also driven educational systems around the world to capitalize on this technology-driven revolution. Sadly, our nation still lags behind. While the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education were proudly advertising—even before the pandemic came—that our educational system is as globally competitive in keeping up with the neoliberal restructuring of higher education worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic starkly exposed the impoverished condition of our educational system in the era of the 4IR. “The Philippines lags behind its peers in terms of affordability, availability and speed of internet access,” according to the

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<sup>2</sup> See Noah De Lissovoy, *Education and Emancipation in the Neoliberal Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (New York: Polity Press, 1989), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Peter Mayo, *Hegemony and Education under Neoliberalism: Insights from Gramsci* (London: Routledge, 2015), 18.

<sup>5</sup> Nancy W. Gleason, “Introduction,” in *Higher Education in The Era of The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1.

2017 National Broadband Plan of the Department of Information Communications and Technology (DICT), the latest uploaded on its website.<sup>6</sup>

But this Revolution is only made possible worldwide by the class struggle under the crisis-ridden monopoly capitalism.<sup>7</sup> Technological innovations are mostly responses to the crisis of capitalist profit accumulation.<sup>8</sup> But such a technological revolution is also a determinant of the restructuring of global capitalism. Technology-driven innovations allow corporate conglomerates to transfer their operation to the South for more profitability while maintaining their satellite operations in the North.<sup>9</sup>

### The Disjunct between the Economy and Knowledge Production

The Philippine economy is primarily based on the export of labor power.<sup>10</sup> The Philippines is the 4th largest remittance destination in the world with \$34 billion of inflows in 2018. In the study by the Asian Development Bank, “the Philippines received remittances roughly 12% of its gross domestic product in 2008. Remittances have become the single most important source of foreign exchange to the economy and a significant source of income for recipient families.<sup>11</sup> Because the country is dependent on imported capital goods and finished commodities, and production is oriented towards the export of cheap raw materials and low-value-added semi-processed goods, the Philippines suffers from a chronic trade deficit.<sup>12</sup> To compensate for this unsustainable economic foundation, the Philippines relies strongly on the export of labor power.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, during the “great lockdown” the economy contracted by 10% in the first three quarters of the year, worse than

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<sup>6</sup> See Anna Bueno and Jessamine Pacis, “As COVID-19 Forces Life to Move Online, Who Is Left Behind?” in *CNN Philippines* (20 May 2020), <<https://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/2020/5/20/internet-access-pandemic.html>>.

<sup>7</sup> See Christian Fuchs, “Critique of the Political Economy of Informational Capitalism and Social Media,” in *Critique, Social Media and the Information Society*, ed. by Christian Fuchs and Marisol Sandoval (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> See Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 160.

<sup>9</sup> See Immanuel Ness, *Southern Insurgency: The Coming of The Global Working Class* (New York: Pluto Press, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> See IBON Foundation, “IBON Praymer: Di Maubos-ubos na Sapin-saping Krisis” (Quezon City: IBON, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> See Ralf Rivas, “OFW Remittances Hit All-time High, but Families Still Run Out of Cash – Study,” in *Rappler* (16 December 2019), <<https://www.rappler.com/business/uniteller-study-ofw-remittances-hit-all-time-high-families-still-run-out-cash>>.

<sup>12</sup> IBON Foundation, “IBON Praymer.”

<sup>13</sup> See E. San Juan, *Toward Filipino Self-determination: Beyond Transnational Globalization* (New York: State University of New York, 2009); Ligaya Lindio-McGovern, “Labor Export in the Context of Globalization: *The Experience of Filipino Domestic Workers in Rome*,” in *International Sociology*, 1, (2003).

the 7.3% contraction in 1984-85. This economic contraction only worsened the pre-existing economic crisis we had before the pandemic.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Great Lockdown and the Greater Digital Divide**

Given the economic recession during the COVID-19 pandemic, the unequal access to technological resources also exacerbated the digital divide in distance education during the lockdown. According to Isy Faingold, chief of education at UNICEF Philippines, the lockdown and closure of schools that affected 28 million Filipino learners is bad news for a country where “there was an education crisis even before [the pandemic].”<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, in the 2021 budget, only P15 billion was allocated for the printing of learning modules for the distance learning system. But the think tank Institute for Leadership, Empowerment, and Democracy (iLEAD) estimated that about P67 billion is needed for the production of modules for over 20 million public school students this school year.<sup>16</sup> This means our students and teachers will be relying more on online resources despite the digital divide. The government’s actual education budget in recent decades never reached 4% of the GDP, while the global standard is pegged at 6% of the GDP.<sup>17</sup>

Years before the pandemic, our educational system was restructured along the neoliberal orientation. The K+12 program enacted through Republic Act 10533, redirects the educational direction of the Philippine educational system towards the neoliberal agenda.<sup>18</sup> In the deliberations in Congress with regard to the K to 12 program on October 17, 2012, the real agenda of the K+12 is all the more exposed: turn young Filipinos into workers for developed countries, instead of molding and training them to serve their country.<sup>19</sup>

The aim of education is less to train students to critically evaluate the government policies and actions but to confine learning to purely academic

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<sup>14</sup> See IBON Foundation, “IBON Prayer.”

<sup>15</sup> Ana P. Santos, “In the Philippines, Distance Learning Reveals the Digital Divide,” in *Heinrich Boll Stiftung* (6 October 2020), <<https://eu.boell.org/en/2020/10/06/philippines-distance-learning-reveals-digital-divide>>.

<sup>16</sup> See Bonz Magzambol, “Fast Facts: Deped’s Distance Learning,” in *Rappler* (1 June 2020), <<https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/things-to-know-department-education-distance-learning>>.

<sup>17</sup> See Santos, “In the Philippines, Distance Learning Reveals the Digital Divide.”

<sup>18</sup> See David Michael M. San Juan, “Neoliberal Restructuring of Education in the Philippines: Dependency, Labor, Privatization, Critical Pedagogy, and the K to 12 System,” in *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, 16:1 (2016).

<sup>19</sup> See David Michael M. San Juan, “Nationalist Critique of the K to 12 (K+12/K-12): Program: Issues, Implications, and Alternatives” (unpublished paper, 2012); Arthur S. Abulencia, “The Unraveling of K-12 Program as an Education Reform in the Philippines,” in *South-East Asian Journal for Youth, Sports & Health Education*, 1 (October 2015).

excellence and compete with other privatized schools for branding.<sup>20</sup> Officially, every graduate of the K+12 program is supposed have:

1. Information, media, and technology skills,
2. Learning and innovation skills,
3. Effective communication skills, and
4. Life and career skills.

Omitted in these competencies are the social outcomes: to become critical citizens of our nation.<sup>21</sup> For Neil Manaog, a public elementary school principal, K+12 “has been designed to align our country’s basic education curriculum to that of global standards, by adding two years of senior high school to the four-year secondary education and another year for mandated kindergarten.”<sup>22</sup> More than providing longer education for Filipino youth, the K+12 program aims to prepare the youth for immediate employment upon graduation. This is consistent with the education of neoliberal subjects:

Human capital learning views students as self-interested entrepreneurs seeking to maximize fiscal return on their investment. From this perspective, a “quality” education provides students with the necessary skills and knowledge for economic success within the prevailing labour market. Educational goals are determined by labour market conditions and, as part of the naturalizing thrust of neo-liberal ideology, critical reflection on structural issues is correspondingly eliminated.<sup>23</sup>

For Peter Kennedy, the “rationale for expanding post-compulsory education is defined increasingly in terms of its mediating role in harnessing social need to value production.”<sup>24</sup> In this situation, “students are not so much educated as caught within a discursive web ‘positioning’ them as future

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<sup>20</sup> See Maria Teresa F. Calderon, “A Critique of K-12 Philippine Education System,” in *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2 (2014).

<sup>21</sup> See “What Is K+12 Program?” in *The Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, <<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/k-12/>>.

<sup>22</sup> Neil Romano S. Manaog, “Notes on the K to 12 Curriculum,” in *The Manila Times* (30 January 2020), <<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/01/30/campus-press/notes-on-the-k-to-12-curriculum/678242>>.

<sup>23</sup> Mery J. Hyslop-Margison and Alan M. Sears, *Neo-Liberalism, Globalization and Human Capital Learning: Reclaiming Education for Democratic Citizenship* (Netherlands: Springer, 2006), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Kennedy, “The Knowledge Economy and Labour Power in Late Capitalism,” in *Critical Sociology*, 36 (2010), 834.

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employees or sellers of labour power.”<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, once graduates of K+12 education enter our universities, their basic education inculcated them the faith to become good and docile workers. They expect larger monetary returns in exchange for shorter education or much higher return for lengthier time spend in college. In a society of scarce resources and limited social mobility, education is often seen as the magic key to getting out of the vicious cycle of poverty.<sup>26</sup>

### Post-truth Society and Fragmentation of the Learning Self

These millennial students who are under the duress of K+12 education are products of the fourth Industrial Revolution.<sup>27</sup> They spend more time on the net; they subscribe to Spotify; they watch movies and series on Netflix; they do their own Vlogs and express their latest gigs on TikTok. They get their news through online sources and cable televisions. YouTube, Twitter, and other platforms are also the sources of their knowledge and current information.<sup>28</sup> These neoliberal platforms induce young people to make every aspect of their lives public.<sup>29</sup> These social network sites become the essential platform for shaping the identities of young Filipinos.<sup>30</sup>

The *We Are Social* and *Hootsuite* released their annual digital report, which gives a global overview of the number of online users, social media users, the amount of time people spend online, and the most popular social apps people use. In the Philippines, time spent online daily soared from 9 hours and 29 minutes last year to 10 hours and 2 minutes this year, the highest in the world.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> See Masayoshi Okabe, “The K to 12 Program as a National HRD for the Workforce,” in *Philippine Journal of Labor and Industrial Relations*, 35 (2018).

<sup>27</sup> See Kaveri Subrahmanyam and David Šmahel, *Digital Youth: The Role of Media in Development* (New Zealand: Springer, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> See Gelzalis Duque, Diosah Nina San Antonio, and Leonora Brazil, “A Correlational Study on Social Media Involvement and Parental Relationship among Students of Asia Pacific College,” paper presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2017, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, 20 – 22 June 2017.

<sup>29</sup> See Henry A. Giroux, “Selfie Culture in the Age of Corporate and State Surveillance,” in *Third Text*, 29 (2015).

<sup>30</sup> Janette Hughes, Laura Morrison, and Stephanie Thompson, “Who Do You Think You Are? Examining the Off/Online Identities of Adolescents Using a Social Networking Site,” in *Social Media And Adolescence Connecting, Sharing And Empowering*, ed. by Michel Walrave, Koen Ponnet, Ellen Vanderhoven, Jacques Haers, and Barbara Segaert (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> See Gelo Gonzales, “Filipinos Spend Most Time Online, on Social Media Worldwide – Report,” in *Rappler online news* (31 January 2019), <<https://www.rappler.com/technology/philippines-online-use-2019-hootsuite-we-are-social-report>>.

Even with one of the slowest internet speeds in the world, the Philippines tops the world, in so-called “knowledge society,” in terms of internet usage in front of a desktop or laptop computer, clocking in at 5 hours and 4 minutes daily, far from the global average of 3 hours and 28 minutes.<sup>32</sup>

The advent of “knowledge society,” undermined and pluralized the sources of traditional authority.<sup>33</sup> Universities are no longer the only or even the dominant producers of knowledge. “What this adds up to,” according to Roland Barnett, “is an assault on the implicit right of the academic community to legislate over knowledge as such. In the knowledge society, knowledge legislators are everywhere. Under these circumstances, the question has to be asked: what, if anything, is special about academic knowledge?”<sup>34</sup> Experts and authorities today are in competition with knowledge claims sprawling on the worldwide web like Wikipedia and other free online sources.<sup>35</sup> As Marc Prensky poignantly observes, “the teachers are no longer the fountain of knowledge; the Internet is.”<sup>36</sup>

Alarming, these “informal educational apparatuses,”<sup>37</sup> as Giroux calls them, are more and more hijacked by neo-fascist groups and individuals to spew conservative and militaristic ideologies extolling the silencing, if not the killings of critics of the government. Under such a situation, “[t]ruth is confused with opinions, and lies have become normalized at the highest level of government.”<sup>38</sup>

Political ideologues and leaders have also hijacked the new social media to propagate their own image and subjective interpretations of reality like Donald Trump<sup>39</sup> and Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.<sup>40</sup> This is the “post-truth society” where feelings are more important than facts.<sup>41</sup> “Truthiness” (the quality of stating concepts or facts one wishes or believes to be true, rather

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<sup>32</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 4.

<sup>34</sup> Ronald Barnett, “Universities in a Fluid Age,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*, ed. by Randall Curren (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 563.

<sup>35</sup> See Thomas Leitch, *Wikipedia U: Knowledge, Authority, and Liberal Education in the Digital Age* (Maryland: John Hopkins University, 2014).

<sup>36</sup> Quoted and cited in Bryant Griffith, *NextGeners: Pedagogical Considerations* (London: Sense Publishers, 2016), 83.

<sup>37</sup> Henry A. Giroux, *The Public in Peril: Trump and the Menace of American Authoritarianism* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 88.

<sup>38</sup> Henry A. Giroux, *The Terror of the Unforeseen: Rethinking the Normalization of Fascism in the Post-Truth Era* (California: LA Review of Books, 2019), 12.

<sup>39</sup> See Darrell M. West, *Divided Politics, Divided Nation: Hyperconflict in Trump Era* (Washington, D. C. Brookings Institute, 2019).

<sup>40</sup> See Mu Sochua, “Disinformation Poses a Grave Threat to Democracy in the Philippines,” in *The Diplomat* (4 May 2022), <<https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/disinformation-poses-a-grave-threat-to-democracy-in-the-philippines/>>.

<sup>41</sup> See Lee C. McIntyre, *Post-truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018).



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than concepts or facts known to be true) of politicians and social media influencers have eclipsed truthfulness.<sup>42</sup> As Giroux rightly observes:

Politicians endlessly lie knowing that the public is addicted to exhortation, emotional outbursts, and sensationalism, all of which mimics celebrity culture. Image selling now entails lying on principle, making it easier for politics to dissolve into entertainment, pathology, and a unique brand of criminality.<sup>43</sup>

True enough, our people continue to be entertained by this political circus, especially by President Duterte. Our lawmakers made education free in our state colleges and universities, but there is also the proliferation of private takeover of schools. Such a takeover transformed education as public good to a private commodity. Students are no longer considered primarily as learners but as customers and clients with specific needs and demands.<sup>44</sup> State colleges and universities are forced to commercialize as state funds become scarce. With dwindling funds and budgets, the universities become obsessed with producing research outputs to justify more funding.<sup>45</sup>

Surprisingly, the Media and Information Literacy fails to provide students the critical skills on how to analyze information and come up with their own conclusion. Sadly, exposure to a vast array of information, entertainment or otherwise, has not made our youth, the “digital natives,” more critical and deeply discerning about social and political issues. Being adept technologically does not translate naturally to criticality in the use of information, data, and technology itself to mine and synthesize these data for political ends.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, in the DepEd Module on Media and Information Literacy for Grade 12 students, one of the guide questions reads: “If given the chance, will you join this rally? Why or why not?” The answer, as written in the module, was: “No, because the government has really doing their best for all the

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<sup>42</sup> See The neologism “truthiness” was coined by Stephen Colbert in his October 17, 2005, segment of “The Word” on *The Colbert Report* on the cable TV network Comedy Central. See Michael C. Munger, “Blogging and Political Information: Truth or Truthiness?” *Public Choice*, 134:1/2 (2008).

<sup>43</sup> Giroux, *Terror of the Unforeseen*, 115.

<sup>44</sup> Trevor Hussey and Patrick Smith, *The Trouble with Higher Education: A Critical Examination of Our Universities* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> David L. Stocum, *Killing Public Higher Education: The Arms Race for Research Prestige* (Oxford: Academic Press, 2013); Simon Critchley, “What Is the Institutional Form of Thinking?” in *Derrida and the Future of the Liberal Arts: Professions of Faith*, ed. by Mary Caputi and Vincent J. Del Casino (London: Bloomsbury Studies in Continental Philosophy, 2013).

<sup>46</sup> Giroux, *Terror of the Unforeseen*, 116.

Filipino people and their constituents.”<sup>47</sup> (sic) This is simply “truthiness” in post-truth society, not being truthful, notwithstanding the syntactical error in the formulation of the statement itself.<sup>48</sup>

## Corporatized Humanities

This restructuring of media literacy is consistent with the corporatization of liberal arts education. Henry Steck defines the corporate university “as an institution that is characterized by processes, decisional criteria, expectations, organizational culture, and operating practices that are taken from, and have their origins in, the modern business corporation.”<sup>49</sup> Humanities and liberal arts education, in general, are geared towards preparing students how to be successful in climbing the corporate ladder. And climbing the corporate ladder entails peaceful détente in the workplace. For Giroux and Giroux, “corporate culture becomes an all-encompassing source of market identities, values, and practices. The good life, in this discourse, “is construed in terms of our identities as consumers— we are what we buy.”<sup>50</sup> And Jeffrey Di Leo explains the logic of this marketization of the ivory tower:

The paradigmatic neoliberal academic is a docile one. He is the product of an academic culture dominated by the recording and measurement of performance, rather than the pursuit of academic freedom or critical exchange— an academic climate that renders him risk averse and compliant. Neoliberal managerialism constructs and functions through manageable and accommodating subjects. These docile neoliberal subjects excel when they “follow the rules” regarding say “outcomes-based curricula” and the “culture of continuous improvement,” but risk failure when they begin to

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<sup>47</sup> Llanesca T. Panti, “Blind Obedience Is Not Love of Country, CHR Says amid Deped Module Discouraging Protests,” in *GMA News Online* (16 October 2020), <<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/760215/blind-obedience-is-not-love-of-country-says-amid-deped-module-discouraging-protests/story/>>.

<sup>48</sup> Sharon Rider, “On Knowing How to Tell the Truth,” in *Post-Truth, Fake News: Viral Modernity and Higher Education*, ed. by Michael A. Peters, Sharon Rider, Mats Hyvönen, and Tina Besley (Singapore: Springer, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Henry Steck, “Corporatization of the University: Seeking Conceptual Clarity,” in *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science*, 585 (2003), 75.

<sup>50</sup> Henry A. Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth, and the Crisis of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 252.

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question the neoliberal academic practices to which they are subjected.<sup>51</sup>

In the neo-liberal fantasy of individualism, everyone is supposed to be an entrepreneur, retraining, and repackaging himself or herself in a dynamic economy, perpetually alert to the latter's technological revolutions. In this sense, neoliberal restructuring of education has replaced pedagogical language with the language of the market and corporate management. Literate graduates are turned "illiterate":

Illiteracy has become a political weapon and form of political repression that works to render critical agency inoperable and restages power as a mode of domination. Illiteracy serves to depoliticize people because it becomes difficult for individuals to develop informed judgments, analyze complex relationships, and draw upon a range of sources to understand how power works and how they might be able to shape the forces that bear down on their lives. Illiteracy provides the foundation for being governed rather than how to govern.<sup>52</sup>

### **Erosion of Criticality under the Neoliberal Restructuring of Schooling**

The dwindling of liberal arts education in higher education has been further reinforced by the reduction in courses that constitute the General Education Program of universities and colleges. In response to the K+12 restructuring of basic education, the liberal arts component of higher learning education has been watered down. Further, the enactment of CHED Memo No. 20, Series of 2013 which has trimmed down the college General Education Curriculum (GEC), and eventually cascaded subjects from college to senior high school, has led to the removal of vital subjects such as Filipino, Literature, and Philippine Government and Constitution at the tertiary level.<sup>53</sup> Since 2014, many educators and organizations have advocated for the

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<sup>51</sup> Jeffrey R. Di Leo, *Higher Education under Late Capitalism: Identity, Conduct, and the Neoliberal Condition* (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2017), ix.

<sup>52</sup> Henry A. Giroux, "Literacy, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference," in *College Literature*, 19 (1992), 5.

<sup>53</sup> See Noel Christian A. Moratilla, "Revisiting Paulo: Critical Pedagogy and Testimonial Narratives as Liberative Spaces in the Philippines' K-12 Curriculum," in *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 17 (2019).

return of Philippine History to high school. This was brought about by Department of Education (DepEd) Order 20, 2014 which effectively removed Philippine History as a dedicated course in high school. Such removal further erodes the analytic skills of students in deciphering the historical ramifications of the current national issues like Marcos martial law and the EDSA Uprising.<sup>54</sup>

The erosion of liberal arts came from critics who want to reduce it to mere appendage in the production of happy workers:

Over the last several years, however, we have seen a new sort of criticism directed at the academy. These contemporary critics no longer claim to be in search of “true liberal learning,” but instead they call for an education that simply equips people to play an appropriate role in the economy. Education, from this perspective, is something you purchase; it should be thought of either as an investment or as an “experience” you pay someone else to provide you.<sup>55</sup>

Liberal arts education is supposed to create spaces of learning where students can voice out their ideas without the fear of political repression. In this way, spaces of learning enabled under liberal arts education train students how to argue, assess arguments, and counter arguments. Contrary to the fear that such relentless questioning of everything may lead to cynicism or unprincipled skepticism, it must be remembered that in this situation students also begin to make their own minds, and create their own points of view.<sup>56</sup> And these points of view are sometimes parallel to groups existing in campus or outside society and so students join these organizations freely. As Di Leo expresses it well:

The freedom to question and to explore subjects wherever they may lead is the heart of a healthy academy—and the soul of academic freedom. The reinforcement of faculty and student subjectivities that are passive, docile, compliant, and submissive may be

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<sup>54</sup> See Jamaica D. Ignacio, “[Opinion] The Slow Death of Philippine History in High School, *Rappler* (26 October 2019), <<https://www.rappler.com/moveph/243058-opinion-slow-death-philippine-history-high-school/>>.

<sup>55</sup> Michael S. Roth, *Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2014), 107.

<sup>56</sup> See Harold T. Shapiro, *A Larger Sense of Purpose: Higher Education and Society* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 2005).

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suitable for vocational training centers—which seem to be the telos of neoliberal academe—but are not acceptable in a vision of higher education wherein dialogue and critique are championed. The ability to challenge authority and to think critically about all aspects of society and culture, including academic culture, is absolutely necessary for higher education to flourish—without this ability, higher education flounders.<sup>57</sup>

However, liberal arts education does not only teach students how to earn and make a living or become professionals. In its classical sense, it teaches students how to live the good life.<sup>58</sup> And living is not just living alone as a hermit or an atom but one's self-making occurs in the polis or community. It is democratizing. For as Wendy Brown points out, "extending such an education to the masses draws a utopian vision in which freedom from toil is generalized and political rule is widely shared."<sup>59</sup> Hence liberal arts education is a civic education in action. Or, in the words of Giroux and Giroux, "Critical citizens aren't born, they're made, and unless citizens are critically educated and well-informed, democracy is doomed to failure."<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, in its classic formulation, and defended by traditionalists, liberal arts can display a conservative bias since it has the tendency to emphasize the teaching of the liberation of the mind for its own sake.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, while it rejects the neoliberal attempt to reformulate the aim of education along the utilitarian line, this objective which is commendable in itself, is not sufficient to form engaged citizens. Neither is it powerful enough to thwart the marketization and commercialization of education. The corporate takeover of the universities will only weaken further the classical definition of liberal arts education. In such corporatized pedagogical spaces, the utopian thinking to create a better or alternative future is eclipsed by the market imperative to hone one's skills to be saleable in the labor market.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Di Leo, *Higher Education under Late Capitalism*, x.

<sup>58</sup> Edward G. Ballard, *Philosophy and the Liberal Arts* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989); Alexander S. Rosenthal-Pubul, *The Theoretic Life - A Classical Ideal and Its Modern Fate: Reflections on the Liberal Arts* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018).

<sup>59</sup> Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2015), 188.

<sup>60</sup> Giroux and Searls Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education*, 257.

<sup>61</sup> See Rosenthal-Pubul, *The Theoretic Life*.

<sup>62</sup> See Jakob Claus, Thomas Meckel, and Farina Pätz, "The New Spirit of Capitalism in European Liberal Arts programs," in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50 (2018).

## Neoliberal Fascism: Smuggling Back the State from the Backdoor

Paradoxically, the neoliberal ideology that seeks to minimize state intervention in the operation of the market utilizes the state to achieve this end. The merging of neoliberal ethos and fascist outlook is not a contradiction. As Noah Lissovoy points out, “neoliberalism unites an individualist ethos (that obscures the unequal positions of differently raced and classed actors) with an authoritarian and bellicose political culture.”<sup>63</sup> In short, the strong arm of the state does the disciplinary work that capital requires. And neoliberal economics achieves this through neo-fascist ideology.

I use the term fascism which is quite controversial and a hotly contested concept today among social scientists. But I follow the lead of Roger Griffin who employs the Weberian notion of ideal type to avoid an absolutist definition of fascism. The most telling symptom of fascist politics is social division. It aims to separate a population into an “us” and a “them.” A second generic component of fascism is its foundations in irrational drives. As Griffin states, “Despite rationalizations of the fascist world-view by appeals to historical, cultural, religious or scientific ‘facts,’ its affective power is rooted in irrational drives and mythical assumptions.”<sup>64</sup> This explains the rabidity of many supporters of the current administration who see in Duterte a mythic father-authority figure who can finally save Philippine society from further deterioration. Neo-fascism is rooted in the regenerative mythic narrative which asserts that things will be reborn, and all past sins will be excised through mass mobilization. Today, neo-fascism creates not just a cult of the leader, just like in classical European fascism, but also the worship of the market.<sup>65</sup>

Second is the creation of a mythic past that distorts the present and rewrites the past so that those who disapprove of their revisions are attacked viciously like in the case of universities and progressive scholars. Academics who defend “truthfulness” in history are red-tagged and vilified as communists. Thus, Enzo Traverso is right when he writes, “anti-communism characterized fascism from the beginning to the end of its historical trajectory. It was a militant, radical, aggressive anti-communism that transformed the nationalist ‘civil religion’ into a ‘crusade’ against the enemy.”<sup>66</sup> And for Jason Stanley, “eventually, with these techniques, fascist politics creates a state of

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<sup>63</sup> De Lissovoy, *Education and Emancipation*, 56.

<sup>64</sup> Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 15.

<sup>65</sup> See John Bellamy Foster, “Neofascism in the White House,” in *Monthly Review* (1 April 2017), <[Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.https://monthlyreview.org/2017/04/01/neofascism-in-the-white-house/](https://monthlyreview.org/2017/04/01/neofascism-in-the-white-house/)>.

<sup>66</sup> Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism* (London: Verso, 2019).



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unreality, in which conspiracy theories and fake news replace reasoned debate.”<sup>67</sup>

Henry Giroux, writing about Trump’s neo-fascism, summarizes Paxton’s classic study of fascism by enumerating its characteristics:

an open assault on democracy, the call for a strongman, a contempt for human weakness, an obsession with hypermasculinity, an aggressive militarism, an appeal to national greatness, a disdain for the feminine, an investment in the language of cultural decline, the disparaging of human rights, the suppression of dissent, a propensity for violence, disdain for intellectuals, a hatred of reason, and fantasies of racial superiority and eliminationist policies aimed at social cleansing.<sup>68</sup>

In the Philippine context, these characteristics, while may not necessarily apply fully, are reflected in the political leadership style of President Duterte.<sup>69</sup> We have an authoritarian President that is part of the global trend towards the rise of the far Right and the populist authoritarianism. Fascism today might not look exactly as it did in the Marcos era (1965-1986), but the same repressive conditions are present, such as, the rule of the military, the strong anti-communist drive of the state, mass killings, arrests, human rights violations, and selective martial law, the passage of Anti-terrorism Law, and repression of press freedom.<sup>70</sup>

In the Philippine context, the communists are considered the outsiders, the “terrorists,” who obstruct the progress and development of the nation. Fascism is not the problem, rather, the threat of the obsolete ideology of communism is. Lumped with the “communists” are all individuals and groups who dream of an alternative future beyond the current system. The fascist arm of the state reaches out to the “ivory tower” through red-tagging and surveillance of progressive organizations.<sup>71</sup> The unilateral abrogation of

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<sup>67</sup> Jason Stanley, *How Fascism Works* (New York: Random House, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> Giroux, *Terror of the Unforeseen*, 68.

<sup>69</sup> Walden Bello, “Neoliberalism, Contentious Politics, and the Rise of Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia,” in *The Global Rise of Authoritarianism in the 21st Century: Crisis of Neoliberal Globalization and the Nationalist Response*, ed. by Berch Berberoglu (New York: Routledge, 2021); Jose Maria Sison, “Struggle against Fascism Continues,” in *Upsurge of People’s Resistance in the Philippines and the World: Selected Works 2020* (Utrecht: International Network for Philippine Studies, 2021).

<sup>70</sup> See Sison, “Struggle against Fascism Continues.”

<sup>71</sup> Rappler, “Top Universities Denounce Red-Tagging Of Schools,” in *Rappler* (24 January 2021), <<https://www.rappler.com/nation/top-philippine-universities-denounce-red-tagging-schools>>.

the University of the Philippines and the Department of National Defense Accord of 1989 is a case in point.<sup>72</sup>

Various forms of fascist movements are woven together by the anti-communist drive. Authoritarian leaders today are not tyrants. Tyrants are hated by people. Neo-fascists try to win over people through the control of media and information and dissemination of fake news.<sup>73</sup>

### Teaching to Defy towards Anti-fascist Education

How does a university education provide alternative ways of envisioning different forms of life to create an imagined future without violence and oppression in such corporatized and hypermilitarized spaces? Giroux answers rather poignantly, "One of the challenges facing the current generation of educators, students, and others is the need to address the question of what education should accomplish in a society at a historical moment when it is about to slip into the dark night of authoritarianism."<sup>74</sup> Considering that liberal arts education is necessary but not sufficient to create critical and engaged citizens, we have to turn to the social reconstructionist movement in education to find a complementary position yet advance beyond the orthodox liberal arts philosophy.<sup>75</sup> With profit motive as the overriding concern of neoliberal education, defending education as a public good is bound to fail. This is all truer if we accept the fact that even liberal arts education has been used to enhance the neoliberal curriculum.<sup>76</sup> Under the shadow of neoliberal ideology, "the student is educated and subjectivized for a job market that demands flexibility, creativity, autonomy and responsibility as well as a specific personality and the desire for self-fulfillment."<sup>77</sup> In some instances, criticality is equated with constant

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<sup>72</sup> See CNN Philippines Staff, "UP Accord Terminated to Protect Filipinos vs 'Enemies of the State' – Lorenzana," in *CNN Philippines* (19 January 2021) <<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/1/19/UP-DND-accord-police-military-Duterte-red-tag.html?fbclid=IwAR06EKG8IKDv4l4NTO1B7IsttoggFvuEkOfnPTsdHDlnVE8cvy3B-w5EqDg>>.

<sup>73</sup> See Madeleine Albright, *Fascism: A Warning* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2018).

<sup>74</sup> Giroux, *Terror of the Unforeseen*, 120.

<sup>75</sup> See Susan Roberts and Darrol Bussler, eds., *Introducing Educational Reconstruction: The Philosophy and Practice of Transforming Society through Education* (San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press, 2010).

<sup>76</sup> See Insung Jung, Sarah Sanderson, and Jennifer Christine C. Fajardo, "The Core Curriculum: An Analysis of Liberal Arts Colleges in Asia, North America, and Europe," in *Doing Liberal Arts Education: The Global Case Studies*, ed. by Mikiko Nishimura and Toshiaki Sasao (Singapore: Springer, 2019).

<sup>77</sup> Claus, Meckel, and Pätz, "The New Spirit of Capitalism," 7.

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questioning without the benefits of being anchored on certain social vision of an alternative society.

To give a radical twist to liberal arts education, its Deweyan intent should be fused with the social reconstructionist sensibilities elaborated by George Counts. Liberal arts as an anti-fascist pedagogical tool, following George Counts' explosive pamphlet in 1932, embraces full indoctrination and partisanship that are inimical to dominant university ethos of liberalism. Indoctrination of course is inimical to liberal arts education but is unavoidable according to Counts. Neither can we argue for universal neutrality and objectivity. In a situation where the market stomps everything, where the political system controls and regulates all areas of our lives, neutrality is dangerous. As Counts argues,

If Progressive education is to be truly progressive, it must emancipate itself from the influence of this class, face squarely and courageously every social issue, come to grips with life in all of its stark reality, establish an organic relation with the community, develop a realistic and comprehensive theory of welfare, fashion a compelling and challenging vision of human destiny, and become less frightened that it is today of the bogies of imposition and indoctrination.<sup>78</sup>

Liberal education must be tempered with the social reconstructionist philosophy of education that sees education as a tool for social transformation. As a tool for social transformation, education is necessarily situated in history. It must provide powerful criticisms of banking education while providing reasoned alternatives to the received wisdom of the past. It is the only way to neutralize the proclivity of neoliberalism to reduce all social problems, especially educational crises, to individual responsibility. This means the university should encourage the organizing of students and faculty for unions and social civic organizations to provide alternative visions of the future. In this sense, education is necessarily partisan. As Giroux points out, "liberal educators committed to simply raising questions have no language for linking learning to forms of public scholarship that would enable students to consider the important relationship between democratic public life and education, politics and learning."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> George S. Counts, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), 7.

<sup>79</sup> Henry A. Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 169.

Universities must practice community engagement in order to become socially relevant.<sup>80</sup> Because it is a way to expand the horizon of public spaces especially when universities are the only places where the right to dissent is still preserved while contested. As Badiou argues, what we need are “intellectuals who can have [a] significant and organic link with the ordinary masses to arouse them, educate them in a mutual situation of dialogical pedagogy.”<sup>81</sup> And Peter McLaren suggests:

Revolutionary critical pedagogy questions the official, hegemonic view of ahistorical educational change, isolated from the capitalist social and productive relationships. As revolutionary critical educators, we need to understand how the dynamics of the capitalist system—its movement from global capitalism to transnational capital, for instance—has guided the meaning and purpose of educational reform and has impacted institutions and approaches with respect to what counts as educational change.<sup>82</sup>

### **Towards an Anti-fascist Citizenship Education**

The purpose of university education is to prepare the young to become engaged citizens who will fully participate critically in democratic processes.<sup>83</sup> In this way, education cannot escape inculcating to learner citizens the values antithetical to fascism and authoritarianism. Education for democratic citizenship necessarily involves the development of the agency of individuals, that is to say, their ability to be actors in the political sphere, to be active rather than passive.<sup>84</sup> Our aim must be to help students grow in intellect and character so that they are well able to engage in the most serious issues we face as men and women and as citizens: What is the best way of life? What is the best political regime? Anti-fascist pedagogy openly challenges the authoritarian claim of neoliberal reason to dictate and impose its ethos among academics and the rest of society. Universities do not just

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<sup>80</sup> See Tara Fenwick, “Futures for Community Engagement: A Sociomaterial Perspective,” in *Thinking about Higher Education*, ed. by Paul Gibbs and Ronald Barnett (Switzerland: Springer Cham, 2014).

<sup>81</sup> Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 60.

<sup>82</sup> Peter McLaren, “Radical Negativity: Music Education for Social Justice,” in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 10:1 (2011), 186.

<sup>83</sup> See Shapiro, *A Larger Sense of Purpose*, 89.

<sup>84</sup> Gert J.J. Biesta, *Learning Democracy in School and Society: Education, Lifelong Learning, and the Politics of Citizenship* (London: Sense Publishers, 2011).

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teach socially just pedagogy but pedagogy of justice.<sup>85</sup> It does not entail of course wholesale acceptance of the “indoctrination” that Counts mentioned. It simply means that indoctrination or the imposition and transmission of values and knowledge is an unavoidable process in education. But the question is: are these values and knowledge imposed by force so that learners accept them without question, or do the learners embrace them through self-reflection and public argumentation?

Our schools today have given too much emphasis on outputs, on quantitative measurement, preparation for careers, money, and return on investments.<sup>86</sup> Our students today invest in education because they want to be on top of the ladder, while others would want to use their careers to pull their families out of the quagmire of economic deprivation.<sup>87</sup> And so, our educational institutions are dead serious about inculcating skills necessary for our youth to become productive workers.<sup>88</sup> We confuse job training and university education. If there is a perfect example of indoctrination, it is this kind of accepted university training that we have right now.

Education is of course not a simple detachment from the world and a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. A liberal arts education is necessary if we want the youth not only to become proficient and happy workers. They need to be engaged with their work equipped with concepts of human dignity and workers’ rights.<sup>89</sup> Above all, they will also have to be engaged with social activities. For most of the things we do in our work, as Ivan Illich argued a long time ago, are not learned in schools. Learning and knowledge acquisition should also be enriched by teachers by joining unions and bringing their students to neighborhood associations, so they make use of their liberal arts training to help people better and improve society.<sup>90</sup> Anti-fascist citizenship education moves away from defining citizenship as the end product of education. Such instrumentalist citizenship education neglects the fact that young people are already enmeshed in a struggle for building

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<sup>85</sup> See Elizabeth Birr Moje, “Developing Socially Just Subject-Matter Instruction: A Review of The Literature on Disciplinary Literacy Teaching,” in *Review of Research in Education*, 31:1 (2007).

<sup>86</sup> See Ed Villegas, “Neoliberalism and the Rise of Consumerist Education,” in *Mula Tore Tungo Palengke: Neoliberal Education in the Philippines*, ed. by Bievenido Lumbera, Ramon Guillermo, and Arnold Alamon (Quezon City: IBON Foundation, 2007).

<sup>87</sup> See Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo, “Economics of Philippine Education: Serving the Global Market,” in *Mula Tore Tungo Palengke: Neoliberal Education in the Philippines*, ed. by Bievenido Lumbera, Ramon Guillermo, and Arnold Alamon (Quezon City: IBON Foundation, 2007).

<sup>88</sup> See D. San Juan, “Neoliberal Restructuring of Education in the Philippines.”

<sup>89</sup> See Henry A. Giroux, “Liberal Arts, Public Philosophy, and the Politics of Civic Courage,” *Curriculum Inquiry*, 17 (1987).

<sup>90</sup> See Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York Harper, 1973).

democratic institutions.<sup>91</sup> Pursuing knowledge collectively to transform the existing state of affairs, in contrast to the mere pursuit of one's illusive dream of success, debating difficult and controversial social issues wherever it may lead us, will threaten those who want to maintain the social order.

Today, Giroux asks the educators, "[i]n a world in which there is an increasing abandonment of egalitarian and democratic impulses, what will it take to educate young people and the broader polity to challenge authority hold power accountable?"<sup>92</sup> In our case, in a society where people are shocked by the vulgar language of an authoritarian President, where people are silenced through militaristic clampdown, how do we teach our young people to become critically-minded? "Critical" here means not only using skills to assess arguments but exploring alternative democratic lifestyles and ways of life. Today, electronic-mediated learning technologies have replaced the fire and passion to learn. We believe that new technologies are ends themselves rather than as means to learn more and learn how to learn.

How do we arrest the growing "illiteracy" in the midst of technological adeptness? What can we do to challenge the reduction of social problems to individual responsibility and psychological resiliency? Giroux provides interesting answers on what anti-fascist pedagogy would look like:

Pedagogy is a mode of critical intervention, one that endows teachers with a responsibility to prepare students not merely for jobs but for being in the world in ways that allow them to influence the larger political, ideological, and economic forces that bear down on their lives. Schooling is an eminently political and moral practice because it is directive of and also actively legitimates what counts as knowledge, sanctions particular values, and constructs particular forms of agency.<sup>93</sup>

In the wake of the weakening of authority in the neoliberal era of capitalism, the state bureaucrats and chief media influencers have gone berserk in attacking students and academics who criticize the government. Attacking what they see as the "culture of complaint," they warn sternly young people just to be dutiful citizens and mind their own private education. But Zygmunt Bauman is right in reminding us, "if there is no room

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<sup>91</sup> See Biesta, *Learning Democracy in School and Society*.

<sup>92</sup> Henry A. Giroux, "Authoritarianism and the Challenge of Higher Education in the Age of Trump," in *Action, Theory, and Criticism for Music Education*, 18:1 (2019), 3.

<sup>93</sup> Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Heymarket, 2014), 53.



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for the idea of a wrong society, there is hardly much chance for the idea of a good society to be born, let alone make waves.”<sup>94</sup>

Education has a significant role to play in combating the spread of anti-scientific consciousness during the pandemic, dispelling the mythical consciousness that idolizes neo-fascist political leaders and their enablers among social media influencers. It has a major role to play in creating a community of critical inquirers that expose the dumbing influence of trolling on social media. Pedagogical practices that go beyond the classroom debates aim at weaponizing the minds of students and arming them with ammunitions on how to detect and demolish idolatrous worship of state-manufactured fake truths in the public sphere. Schools have become the targets of orchestrated fascist assaults because the government suspects communists have infiltrated the spaces of universities and colleges including high schools. The state repressive forces suspect that communists are sowing seeds of discord and providing alternative truths that undermine state-created falsehoods.

We must build a radical culture in schools that would be hostile to the development of fascist thought and neoliberal culture of fragmentation. The capacity to challenge authority comes from academic subjects that are active and engaged. The docility of the neoliberal academic subject has at its source an authoritarian ideology that is the scourge of both the liberal arts in particular and the academy in general.<sup>95</sup> We have to train students who are not adaptive to the system but maladjusted to the current norms, such as extrajudicial killings (EJK), human rights violations, etc.<sup>96</sup> It is not just teaching students but allowing them to engage in the here-and-now in creating viable institutions to defend our democratic institutions against authoritarianism. The role of university education is not to sanctify or consecrate the ~~powers-that-be~~ but to interrogate them and expose their precarious foundations. What we need is to promote a culture of questioning. And while this culture of questioning is under siege from neo-fascist bureaucrats and neoliberal prophets, Ramin Farahmandpur reminds us that “its message only becomes more urgent and important in these troubled and dangerous times.”<sup>97</sup> Critical pedagogy today finds its strongest expression in anti-fascist education.

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<sup>94</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Society under Siege* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 170.

<sup>95</sup> See Di Leo, *Higher Education under Late Capitalism*.

<sup>96</sup> See Peter McLaren and Ramin Farahmandpur, *Teaching against Global Capitalism and the New Imperialism: A Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 317.

<sup>97</sup> Ramin Farahmandpur, “A Critical Pedagogy of Hope in Times of Despair: Teaching against Global Capitalism and the New Imperialism,” in *Social Change*, 36 (2006), 90.

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## Ontological Emptiness as Reflected by the Basque *Huts*: An Ontolinguistics of *Śūnyatā*?

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*Xabier Renteria-Uriarte*

**Abstract:** Ontological emptiness, as the “active vacuity or emptiness” that acts as the hypostasis of existence, is at the core of relevant world philosophies. The emptiness ontology based on such an assumption, mostly developed in Eastern philosophies and their empiricism, was almost completely lost in Europe, especially after the so-called “scientific revolution.” However, Basque, an old pre-Indo-European language of Western Europe, keeps the term *Huts* or “emptiness” to define “nature, identity, purity” of things and beings, in what seems to be a good example of it. This paper discusses such a possibility. After recalling the ontological emptiness and one of its most precise formulations, the Buddhist *Śūnyatā* and the *Heart Sutra*, it presents the Basque *Huts* as an “emptiness/identity” contronym. A cognitive bridge and an ontolinguistic test are carried out to verify that it is not a casual homonym, but a correlated polysemy and a meaningful contronym. Accordingly, whether *Śūnyatā* and *Huts* are actually commensurable or not is discussed. And finally, *Huts* as an appropriate ontolinguistics of *Śūnyatā* and as an emptiness ontology is concluded.

**Keywords:** ontological emptiness, *Śūnyatā*, non-identity logic, intra-subjective empiricism

**O**ntological emptiness, as the “active vacuity or emptiness” that acts as the verifiable hypostasis of the “daily, ordinary, or manifest” world, is at the core of relevant world philosophies, being explored through different approaches almost everywhere, namely, by the Ancient Chinese Lao

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Tzu,<sup>1</sup> the medieval German Meister Eckhart,<sup>2</sup> or the contemporary Basque Orixe,<sup>3</sup> who lived in very different socio-cultural and historical environments. Almost absolutely lost in the modern Western knowledge after the so-called Scientific Revolution, it maintains force and dynamism in Eastern societies, where it has been consciously systematized and empirically tested using its own parameters over millennia.

The hypothesis of an ontological and “active” emptiness challenges the human rational and logical mind, and a number of formulas have been offered to help address it. Some of them involve “negative” arguments, in the sense that all that can be thought or expressed about it is not this “active vacuity” itself (the best known in the West is the first verse of the *Tao Te Ching*). However, when it comes to approaching it from the viewpoint of the “ordinary” or “phenomenal” world, the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* or *Heart Sutra* puts it in a synthetic linguistic form, i.e., with an aphorism and its framework: “whatever is form, sensation, perception, memory or consciousness is emptiness; and whatever is emptiness is form, sensation, perception, memory or consciousness.”<sup>4</sup>

Consider now the polysemy of the word *Huts* or “empty” in the Basque language:

- (1) *Bihotz hori hutsa da* or “This heart is empty” means that “This heart is empty.”
- (2) *Hori bihotz hutsa da* or “This is empty heart” means that “This is merely a heart, just a heart, only a heart.”
- (3) *Hori bihotz hutsa da* or “This is empty heart” means that “This is pure love, an absolutely good person or being, a pure heart.”

Imagine that you go to a coffee shop and order an “empty coffee,” but they do not bring you an empty cup of coffee, but a “black coffee,” that is, “pure coffee.” That’s what happens daily among speakers of the Basque language, or *euskara*, in the area known as *Euskal Herria* or Basque Country in Europe (in northern Spain and southwestern France, in the Western Pyrenees of Europe). The Basque language is widely accepted as an isolated, or unrelated to any other extant language, and an old pre-Indo-European

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<sup>1</sup> Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching: The Poetry of Nature*, ed. by Kari Hohne (Carnelian Bay: Way of Tao Books, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Meister Eckhart, *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos* (Madrid: Siruela, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Ormaetxea Nicolás Orixe, *Barne-muinetan* (Zarautz: Itxaropena, 1934).

<sup>4</sup> For a critical edition, see Edward Conze, *The Prajnaparamita Literature* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2000). For modern explanations, see Gueshe Kelsang Gyatso, *The New Heart of Wisdom: Profound Teachings from Buddha’s Heart* (Ulverston: Tharpa, 2012).

language.<sup>5</sup> It is still spoken by around 600,000 out of a total of nearly three million people living in the area.

Cases (1) to (3) are some of the meanings of the Basque word *Huts* or “empty.” Emptiness, the concept that *Huts* names, is used to refer to “nature, identity, purity” of things; in other words, emptiness defines existence in this language. The nature of beings and reality are defined as “empty” or “void” in an apparently absolute nonsense. Is it another example of causality of the numerous polysemies of languages, or might it be a philosophically meaningful lexical form? A serious answer requires a cross-disciplinary effort whose main pillar stands on comparative and interdisciplinary philosophy.

In fact, defining the identity and purity of something as its literal nothingness is not the only contradiction of *Huts*. Depending on the context, *Huts* has a very contradictory polysemy, as with the meanings of “void” or “empty/full” or “pure,” “nothing/all,” “total absence/total presence,” “lack/absoluteness,” etc. Existence or being cannot be based on its nothingness or emptiness, so the term and its linguistic forms seem to imply an oxymoron due to some linguistic coincidence. However, *Huts* seems to naturally reflect the hypothesis of ontological emptiness, without any conflict, and through a short linguistic form (a contronym with its grammatical contexts), as in the *Heart Sutra* (an aphorism with its framework).

This essay is devoted to testing and discussing both implications. The tenet of Emptiness as the nature of existence and the specific formulation of *Śūnyatā* are recalled (section 1). The Basque *Huts* is presented as an “Emptiness/Identity” contronym, argued as a well-founded polysemy with a cognitive bridge, and supported as an “ontolinguistic operator” that reflects an emptiness ontology (section 2). Could *Huts* be understood as a reflection of *Śūnyatā* and as its linguistic expression, as is the case with the *Heart Sutra*? Previous approaches are outlined, and new focused arguments are developed (section 3). In the conclusions, I affirm *Huts* as an appropriate ontolinguistics of *Śūnyatā* and as an emptiness ontology and point to some interdisciplinary implications.

## Ontological Emptiness and *Śūnyatā*

### *Emptiness as the Nature of Existence*

*Ontological emptiness* names here the “active vacuity or emptiness” that acts as the hypostasis of existence, according to relevant philosophies in the world and their intra-subjective empiricism. And *emptiness ontology* would be

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<sup>5</sup> Joseba Intxausti, *Euskera, la lengua de los vascos* (Donostia: Elkar, 1992), 231.

this assumption that the “daily or ordinary” world, with all of its existences and processes, is a manifestation of such “active or ontological emptiness.” In such ontology, reality or existence is a nonconceptual mystery that can be known only by direct experience or “realization.” This implies that it cannot be understood or known by the conceptual mind (in fact, mind conceptualization works by establishing differences between distinct types of existences). This “whatever is” is approached or referred to with different terms in Asian philosophy, such as *Nirguṇa Brahman*, *Nirvāṇa*, *Tao*, *Śūnyatā*, *Saguṇa Brahman*, *the Mother*, *Satcitānanda*, *Dharmakāya*, *One Taste*, *Pure Consciousness*, and so on, and also in Western translations with words like *Emptiness*, *Vacuity*, *Voidness* or *Nothingness*.

The wide range of terms referring to this hypostasis is outstanding, and one can get into endless dissertations on whether they indicate analogous or corresponding concepts. In fact, they indicate nuances in the approaches to this “whatever is,” or to a certain side of it, but their primary core or reference is always the same: an “active vacuity” of all existence. For example, Gautama Buddha used to resist requests to explain this essence of reality and used to call it *Nibbāna* or “when the last flame of desire goes extinct,” but he once tried to describe it as follows in *Paṭhamanibbānasuttaṃ*:

[It is] where there is no earth, no water, no fire, no air; no base consisting of the infinity of space, no base consisting of the infinity of consciousness, no base consisting of nothingness, no base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; neither this world nor another world nor both; neither sun nor moon. Here ... there is no coming, no going, no staying, no deceasing, no uprising. Not fixed, not movable, it has no support. Just this is the end of suffering.<sup>6</sup>

Some Eastern philosophical schools focus on this principle. For example, Nagarjuna, the founder of the *Mādhyamaka* school and considered to be the great fourteenth Zen patriarch, focused on *Śūnyatā* as the absolute inexistence of a being of any substance.<sup>7</sup> Other schools focus more on pragmatic techniques to realize *Śūnyatā* and not on discussions about it, because, as it is widely known even in the West, “the *Tao* that can be

<sup>6</sup> Gautama Buddha, *The Udāna: Inspired Utterances of the Buddha* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> See Tirupattur Ramaseshayer Venkatachala Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System* (London: Routledge, 2013). See also Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti, “Śūnyatāsaptati the Seventy Kārikās on Voidness (according to the Svavtti) of Nāgārjuna,” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 15:1 (1987).

expressed is not the enduring and unchanging *Tao*.<sup>8</sup> In any case, although Asian philosophies propose a number of techniques, gathered as *Dhyāna* or *Jhāna* or “meditation,” by which this “supreme voidness” as “the self-character of all the manifest elements ... in absence of any living being and intention ... should be made bright,”<sup>9</sup> in the final stage:

True Dhamma [in this case, true learning], no matter what part, topic, level or kind, must be one with emptiness, completely void of its self. Therefore, we must look for emptiness in all things, or as we call them, for short, dhammas ... [T]here is nothing apart from our empty nature.<sup>10</sup>

Alongside traditional Eastern studies,<sup>11</sup> and as often understood in comparative exercises,<sup>12</sup> Western philosophical approaches to Emptiness are continuously increasing.<sup>13</sup> Implications for cross-cultural psychology,<sup>14</sup> worldly life,<sup>15</sup> and psychoclinical perspectives<sup>16</sup> are also rising progressively.

In any case, the “ultimate nature,” seen as *Emptiness*, *Vacuity*, or *Voidness*, can be assessed as the underlying background and ultimate reference of different Asian philosophies, since all approaches share “the

<sup>8</sup> We choose for this universal thought summit a mixture of two English translations: Lao Tzu, *Tao Te King: A tentative translation from the Chinese*, trans. by Isabella Mears (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1922) and Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, ed. by James Legge (Mineola: Ixia, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Words of the Pali author Nagasena in N. A. Sastri, “Sunyata and Its Significance in Buddhism,” in *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 2:12 (1975).

<sup>10</sup> Ajahn Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree: The Buddha’s Teaching on Voidness* (New York: Wisdom Publications, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Like, in Tibetan tradition, Khedrup Gelek Pelzang, “The Great Seal of Voidness: The Root Text for the Ge-lug Ka-gyu Tradition of Mahamudra (by 1st Panchen Lama),” in *Tibet Journal*, 38:2 (1976).

<sup>12</sup> See James W. Heisig, *Nothingness and Desire: An East-West Philosophical Antiphony* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> See Donald S. Lopez, *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sutra* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1998) and Frederick J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967).

<sup>14</sup> See Robert Walker Gunn, “The Experience of Emptiness in the Process of Self-Transformation in Zen Buddhism, Christianity and Depth Psychology as Represented by Dogen Kigen, Thomas Merton and Carl Jung, with Donald Winnicott and Heinz Kohut,” in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 58:5 (1997). Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Roshi Otani Tetsuo and Ingrid Shugetsu Appels, “Why Dogen Now?” in *Another State of Mind: Perspectives from Wisdom Traditions on Management and Business*, ed. by Robert J. Blomme and Bertine van Hoof (New York: Springer, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Mark Epstein, “Forms of Emptiness: Psychodynamic, Meditative and Clinical Perspectives,” in *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 21:1 (1989).

insight that, in order to explain both the great mysteries and mundane facts about our experience, ideas of nothingness must play a primary role.”<sup>17</sup> In short, this mystery or “whatever is” refers to a “deepest dimension of” or “uniquely true and certain” reality from which every being and mind “come into existence” or “merge” hypostatically. Being probably the most widely used term in modern Western writings, hereinafter it will be referred mainly with the English term of *Emptiness*. However, for Asian terms, and considering the focus here, another term is vital: *Śūnyatā*.

### *Śūnyatā and Its Ontological Side*

The Buddha preferred to approach and explain the realization of the ultimate nature in “negative” terms, mainly *anattā* in Pāli and *anātman* in Sanskrit or no-self. For instance, in the *Suñña Sutta* or *Empty Sutra*, his attendant Ānanda asked him “[i]n what respect is it said that the world is empty?” and he replied, “[i]nsofar as it is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self.”<sup>18</sup> This option is materialized in Western mysticism as well, as “apophatic or negative theology,”<sup>19</sup> but it is a common place in Asian philosophies, as when Bhāviveka describes reality with “[i]ts character is neither existent, nor nonexistent; nor both existent and nonexistent, nor neither ... [T]rue reality ... is free from these four possibilities.”<sup>20</sup>

Alongside the focus of Siddhārtha Gautama on *anattā* the concept of *Śūnyatā* in Sanskrit and *suññatā* in Pāli or “emptiness” was related, in early Buddhism, to this concept.<sup>21</sup> However, as early as in the sources of the Pali Canon, like in the *Maha-suññata Sutta*,<sup>22</sup> *Śūnyatā* was more widely understood as “a meditative dwelling,” as “an attribute of objects,” and as “a type of awareness-release.”<sup>23</sup> In the case of *Śūnyatā* as “attribute of objects,” a widely-assumed formulation is the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* or *Heart Sutra*:

<sup>17</sup> JeeLoo Liu and Douglas L. Berger, *Nothingness in Asian Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), xi.

<sup>18</sup> “Suñña Sutta: Empty (SN 35.85),” trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, in *Access to Insight*, last revised 30 November 2013, <<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn35/sn35.085.than.html>>.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Karl Brunnhölzl, *Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition* (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2004), 84.

<sup>21</sup> See Sue Hamilton, *Early Buddhism: A New Approach* (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> “Maha-suññata Sutta: The Greater Discourse on Emptiness (MN 122),” trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, in *Access to Insight*, last revised 30 November 2013, November 2013, <<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.122.than.html>>.

<sup>23</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “Translator’s Introduction to Maha-suññata Sutta: The Great Discourse on Emptiness,” in *Access to Insight*, last revised 30 November 2013, <<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.122.than.html>>.



[F]orm is emptiness, emptiness is form; emptiness is not separate from form, form is not separate from emptiness; whatever is form is emptiness, whatever is emptiness is form. The same holds for sensation and perception, memory and consciousness.<sup>24</sup>

The importance given here to this *sūtra* is due to its focus of attention. Unlike the “negative” approaches that try to motivate knowledge by explaining the ultimate nature through pointing to what is not, and unlike the awareness and meditation approaches that try to motivate the practice by explaining the path to realization through pointing to its main key, the meaning of *Śūnyatā* as “attribute of objects” puts the focus on attention in (external) realities themselves, to ascertain their (inner and common) nature. This sutra acts in fact as an “ontological operator,” that is, as a brief conceptual and linguistic structure by which the world is interpreted.

## The Basque *Huts*

### *Huts* as an “Emptiness/Identity” Contronym

*Huts* is a term in the Basque language largely attested since the first historical writings of this language.<sup>25</sup> It means “zero” when it acts as a number and “nothingness” or “emptiness” when it acts as substantive (case (1) described earlier). However, it also means “pure,” “absolute,” “full of” when it acts as an adjective (cases (2) and (3)). Consequently, *Huts* is an absolute contradiction meaning “emptiness” or “nothingness” (1) and “fullness” or “completeness” (2). However, the contradictory nuance increases with (3), where it implicitly acts as the implementation, embodiment, or concretization of the concept of “identity,” “existence,” “being,” and “essence” of the object referred. In this sense, *Huts* implies a direct and forthright ontology about the things of existence and, generally speaking, about the “Existence.”

In the Basque language, or Euskara—or in modern Euskara at least—the main or prototypical meaning seems to be that of “empty,” or “nothing in or inside this thing” (1). *Zakua hutsa dago*, for example, means “the bag is empty.” However, when an existence, in the sense of its essence, purity, or wholeness, has to be referred to, it uses this concept of “empty/nothing” as in (2) and (3). In (2) and (3), *Zaku hutsa da* means “it is just a bag, nothing but a bag, absolutely a bag and nothing else” or “a bag in itself, a bag in its own

<sup>24</sup> Pine Red, trans., *The Heart Sutra: The Womb of Buddhas* (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> OEI, *Orotariko Euskal Hiztegia* (Bilbo: Euskaltzaindia, 2015).

nature." More examples are *txirotasun hutsa* or "empty misery" as "total misery"; *egia hutsa* or "the empty true" as "the absolute true"; and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is, in Basque, *Arrazoimen hutsaren Kritika* or "Critique of Empty Reason."

Overall, the concept of *Huts* or "Emptiness" indicates *Izatea* or the "nature," "being," "identity," or "essence" of the Universe and life, including their objects, beings, and phenomena. In short, *zerbait bere hutsean* is literally "something in its emptiness," but semantically, "in itself" or "in its nature or essence."

The philosophical implication might be that *Huts*, by such meanings, reflects the same emptiness ontology as *Śūnyatā*, and/or shows it in the same way, that is, through short linguistic forms. "Reflection" would mean then that *Huts* and *Śūnyatā* share a similar or analogous view of ontological emptiness. And the "short linguistic forms" would be an aphorism and its framework in the case of *Śūnyatā* and the *Heart Sutra*, and a significant contronym in the case of *Huts*.

### *Problem: Huts Might Be a Casual Homonym*

A *polysemy* is "a single linguistic expression having multiple related senses,"<sup>26</sup> and a *homonym* is when the senses or meanings are not related, as they were a causality or by chance. The extreme case of polysemies or homonyms are *enantiosemy*, *contronyms*, or *auto-antonyms*, when "inherently oppositional meanings"<sup>27</sup> occur "designat[ing] both an idea and the idea's antithesis."<sup>28</sup> The Basque *Huts* or "empty" implies, as (1)–(3) show, a clear enantiosemy or contronym, and the question is that it may be a philosophically meaningful polysemy or merely a homonym without any significance.

First of all, when must a lexical form be understood as a homonym or as a polysemy? A number of responses have been given,<sup>29</sup> but the first key is always some "cognitive bridge." Many polysemies and contronyms, perhaps most of them, may be cognitively explained through some object or action of existence that relates the meanings. For instance, the Italian word *feria* has the meaning "holiday, day off," as well as the meaning "workdays"

<sup>26</sup> Robyn Carston, "Polysemy: Pragmatics and Sense Conventions," in *Mind & Language*, 36:1 (2021), 108.

<sup>27</sup> N. I. Murodova and J. Sh. Djumabaeva, "Conceptual Enantiosemy," in *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 2:7 (2019), 75.

<sup>28</sup> Luke Howie, *Witnesses to Terror: Understanding the Meanings and Consequences of Terrorism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 159.

<sup>29</sup> Salvador Valera, "Polysemy versus Homonymy," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. by Mark Aronoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

in informal speech. In this case, *feria* is a serious workday for a number of sellers, but a joyful day off for a number of buyers and curious people. The *feria* itself is the bridge. And the Basque *lumatu* means “to pluck” and “to steal,” in a convincing polysemy that refers to the action of taking something out; this is the cognitive bridge.

However, some cognitive bridge seems to be impossible in the case of *Huts*, since the primary reference is the “spatial emptiness” or “inexistence” itself. The discussion begins, consequently, with the elucidation of such possibility. Although cognitive bridges seem to be impossible in the case of a contronym whose primary reference is “spatial emptiness” or “inexistence,” they are present in a spatial sense: in the case of the Basque *Huts*, the term *betea* and its cognitive approach by the concept of volume operate as such.

Basque *bete* or “full, to fill”<sup>30</sup> may be understood in this sense without too much difficulty, since in English some polysemy relates meanings with the same logic, like in “full time.” For example, Basque *udaberri bete* or *negu bete* are “full spring” or “full winter,” as in English. Another close case is *kargua bete* or “to fill a position,” which means “to hold a position.” In this image, *kargua hutsik dago* or “the position is void” means that some position (e.g., in a company) is not occupied (it is *betea* or “full” when it is occupied). Accordingly, *betea* or “full” is the synonym of *osoa* or “total,” “full,” “complete,” “whole,” “perfect” and means analogously “perfection,” “abundance,” “fullness.” In sum, facing *Huts* or emptiness, the mental image of *zerbait bete* or “to fill something” is the metaphor of “take form into perceivable existence,” and *betea izan* or “to be full” is the visualization of existence versus the *Huts* as “voidness.”

### *Huts as an Ontolinguistic Operator of an Emptiness Ontology*

Beyond cognitive bridges, *ontolinguistics* studies “ontological structure[s] reflected in ... linguistic regularities,” accompanied by a “network of cross-connected conceptualizations that the mind uses in coping with the world.”<sup>31</sup> In this sense, an *ontolinguistic operator* is proposed here as a lexical form and a grammatical structure that reflects some worldview through its semantic range, semantic fields, and sociolinguistic reflections. If it is so, it would be considered an ontological and linguistic notion that reflects or proposes, in an extensive and balanced way, a certain special dimension of existence. Let us check whether *Huts* would fit the requirements.

<sup>30</sup> OEH, *Orotariko Euskal Hiztegia* (Bilbo: Euskaltzaindia, 2015).

<sup>31</sup> Andrea C. Schalley and Dietmar Zaefferer, *Ontolinguistics: How Ontological Status Shapes the Linguistic Coding of Concepts* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

First, *Huts* has a very wide semantic range. Second, the extension of the semantic field (or the lexical set of equivalent words grouped semantically or by meaning that refers to a specific subject). *Huts* has an extensive one with *Soil* or “mere,” “simple,” “pure” and *Xahu* or “cleansed,” “pure.” They are, as *Huts*, used to indicate “totality,” “unity,” “purity,” but under the same dialectic of “nothing,” “only” / “total,” “pure.” Thirdly, a network of related metaphors points out a number of sociocultural reflections of the importance of the notion of *Huts*. Basque language and culture have, among others, *Beltz*, *Ilun*, *Circle*, and *Mari* (as sociocultural mirrors), *Harrespil* and *Hilarri* (as physical materializations), and a “*lack of a concept of Identity*” (as philosophical reflection). They provide a consistent framework to exclude again the random factor in the origin of the linguistic occurrence of *Huts*. Altogether, *Huts* and its linguistic and sociocultural peers support a well-defined ontological view in which “vacuum nourishes nature and existence.”

### **Might *Sūnyatā* Be the Ontology of *Huts*?**

#### *Emptiness-style and Asian-style Reflections of Huts*

When different authors like Barañano,<sup>32</sup> in a study on Oteiza, are able to define *Huts* as “empty activity, active quiescence,” workshops with Asian knowledge seem inevitable; for example, with the well-known concept of *wu-wei*.<sup>33</sup> And perhaps it is not merely a matter of mere philosophical speculation. Compare, for example, the following responses. Once Oteiza was asked why, in his sculptures of Arantzazu Basilica, he had left the place between the Virgin and the Apostles so empty, without anything else. He answered that he did not leave it “without anything else,” but “with nothing.”<sup>34</sup> On the other side of the world, a Tantrika guru was asked what a void container had within, that is, “if the inside of [an empty] jar was empty or full.” She responded that “it was full of emptiness.”<sup>35</sup> From an emptiness onto-epistemology, they are not some casual coincidences, but a type of response that is characteristic of people who explore existence through an ontological feeling of Emptiness.

Unfortunately, even after acknowledgements of the positive meaning of “purity” of *Huts* (as Goenaga) and of the importance of some concrecences of Basque ontology with Eastern philosophies, referring additionally to *Huts*

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<sup>32</sup> Kosme Maria Barañano, “El concepto de espacio en la filosofía y la plástica del siglo XX,” in *Kobie*, 1 (1983), 159.

<sup>33</sup> See David Loy, “Wei-Wu-Wei: Nondual Action,” in *Philosophy East & West*, 35:1 (1985).

<sup>34</sup> EITB, “Jorge Oteizari buruz Bertsosaio batean kontatua,” in *Hitzetik hortzera*, 2-4 (2010)

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Odier, *Tantric Quest: An Encounter with Absolute Love* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1997).

(in the line of discussion of Oteiza, Ortiz-Osés, and Zulaika), and even “feelings of the void” in an Eastern sense (like in this analogy between Oteiza and a Tantrika), the ontolinguistic performance of *Huts* (as “void in nature”) here outlined has continued to be absent in the debate. No one has detailed and itemized the “empty/nature” contradiction of *Huts* as the core of a particular ontology. The Asian-style core of Basque ontology has not been brought to the fore so far.

This lack can be attributed to foci of interest that are distant, at least without the necessary closeness, from these nuances of philosophy and its Eastern formulations. Hartsuaga is theoretically interested in mythology and etymology and did not develop this core of interest even in a contribution to the subject.<sup>36</sup> Goenaga had shown interest earlier in onomasiology and intuited the philosophical wideness of *Huts*,<sup>37</sup> but he did not develop it perhaps because of his Christian creationist conceptual framework as a Jesuit. Oteiza,<sup>38</sup> Ortiz-Osés,<sup>39</sup> and Zulaika<sup>40</sup> acknowledged the importance and some philosophical implications of the concept, and the last two have extensive scholarly backgrounds but did not identify this implication as a key source of ontology, perhaps due to their theoretical profiles.

In this latter group, some comments are so close to the *Huts-Śūnyatā* commitment that absence of the final direct reference seems difficult to understand. On the one hand, it seems that they knew that Asian philosophy talks about Emptiness, but not how it hypostatically puts Emptiness, in the first instance, as the unavoidable genesis and ultimate goal of knowledge. Perhaps they developed their insights from introductions or handbooks, and not from focused readings like the *Udanna* or the *Heart Sutra* mentioned above; or they did not practice the Eastern “inner-mind empiria” with this focus on warning about the depth of the matter.<sup>41</sup> One symptom is that their ontological sources include, for example and above all, Heidegger, and even Goethe’s *Faust*; but not any canonical Emptiness or Asian philosophical source. On the other hand, on that of Basque language, perhaps they accustomed themselves to working mainly with dictionaries, or grammar at

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<sup>36</sup> Juan Inazio Hartsuaga, “Ontologia euskal mitologian,” in *Auñamendi eusko entziklopedia*, ed by. Bernardo Estornes Lasa Funtsa (Donostia: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> In the last comments of Angel Goenaga, *Uts: La negatividad vasca* (Durango: Leopoldo Zugaza, 1975).

<sup>38</sup> Jorge Oteiza, *Quousque tandem! Ensayo de interpretación estética del alma vasca, su origen en el cromlech neolítico y su restablecimiento por el arte contemporáneo*, Vol. 2 (Donostia: Auñamendi, 1963).

<sup>39</sup> Andrés Ortiz-Osés, *Los mitos vascos: Aproximación hermenéutica* (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Joseba Zulaika, *Tratado estético-ritual vasco* (San Sebastián: Baroja, 1987).

<sup>41</sup> See Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness* (Zhyisil Chokyi Ghatsal Publications, 2001).

most, but not from the “feelings” and the *Weltanschauung* of the Basque language, or what Mokoroa named the “genius” of a language.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, in the case of Ortiz-Osés, the issue was addressed through a hermeneutics based on mythology, and the work was not done by applying a systematic structure of onto-epistemic questions, as it is here, which could condition the lack. In fact, in the debate between Goenaga and Oteiza,<sup>43</sup> Goenaga actually seems like Schopenhauer, that is, someone who can foresee the depth of an issue, but whose negative view prevents him from seeing more.

Additionally, and more generally, “[m]etaphors of endangered languages,” as the Basque language, may unveil “conceptualisations that are deeply entrenched in the language” and that may be “overshadowed by a globalised and ethnocentric viewpoint.”<sup>44</sup> The lack of concern about *Huts* as semantic and grammatical performance of the “emptiness/existence ontology” may be in relation to this because, outside of Asian philosophical parameters, the idea that something is “merely this thing and at the same time not this thing” seems absurd, an absolute nonsense; and these kinds of unsurmountable oppositions tend to be shelved in a modern Western worldview. For instance, for Ortiz-Osés, *Huts* or “void” would primarily be (“before” any manifestation) “that void,” that is, beyond any phenomenal form; but Ortiz-Osés says on his own theory that “our understanding [is] the ‘void’ as the ‘otherness’ (grave, death, demonic-feminine mystery) of life.”<sup>45</sup>

More recently, Segurola has explicitly stated the existence of concomitances between the Basque worldview and Eastern philosophies, and what is more interesting, with a specific focus on ontology.<sup>46</sup> His aim is to disentangle the ontological worldview that Basque language shows, and he finds that both Basque and Eastern worldviews share the same background. However, unfortunately, he ends like a number of Western authors who match Asian ontological principles with any subject (like in the extreme cases of “the *tao* of sales,” “the *tao* of coaching,” or “the *tao* of corporate finances”) without specifying the necessary chain of reasoning, often because they accept or consider which is an empirical proposal, to be tested and contrasted, just in a conceptual level, without practicing and deeply understanding it. In this case, Segurola matches Eastern ontology with the Basque pair

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<sup>42</sup> See Justo María Mokoroa, *Genio y lengua* (Tolosa: Mocoeroa Hermanos, 1936).

<sup>43</sup> See Miguel Pelay Orozco, *Oteiza: Su vida, su obra, su pensamiento, su palabra* (Bilbao: La Gran Enciclopedia Vasca, 1978).

<sup>44</sup> Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano, “The Importance of Unveiling Conceptual Metaphors in a Minority Language,” in *Endangered Metaphors*, 2 (2012), 253.

<sup>45</sup> Andrés Ortiz-Osés, “Mitología de nuestra cultura (hermenéutica vasca),” in *Los cuadernos del norte*, 2:5 (1981).

<sup>46</sup> See Iñaki Segurola, *Sed quia sua* (Donostia: Erein, 2020).



*Dena/ezDena* or “which is and which is not” forgetting that, whatever is “which is not,” is always considered not absolutely independent but as a hypostasis of “which is.” And he matches the principle of *Yin-Yang* with this *Dena-ezDena*, when this Taoist principle concerns the core of the performance of the phenomenal processes, and not their relationship with the hypostasis.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, a speaker of the Basque language might say that the parallelism between *Huts* and *Śūnyatā* is excessive, because *Huts* is not usually used in a general ontological and philosophical sense, but rather in reference to particular existences. However, it is precisely so in Eastern languages, as when Bhikkhu Analayo comments on the Pāli canon that “the adjective *suñña* occurs much more frequently than the corresponding noun *suññatā*” and “emphasizes seeing phenomena as ‘being empty’ instead of an abstract idea of ‘emptiness.’”<sup>48</sup>

### *Are Śūnyatā and Huts Actually Commensurable?*

After bringing important notions of Eastern philosophies to Western countries, various Asian scholars began to notice the importance of understanding concepts correctly, and perhaps the most vulnerable is the concept called here as *ontological emptiness*. Earlier Western authors, as for example Schopenhauer,<sup>49</sup> tend to interpret intra-subjective philosophies in negative terms: “Christian missionaries criticized [Buddhism] for its ‘pessimism’ while [Schopenhauer] saw this as its strength, realistically assessing the presence of suffering in the world,”<sup>50</sup> but he assumed that Buddha taught “the negation of the will to live,” and “nothing is further from the correct understanding of Buddhism than this negativism.”<sup>51</sup>

Buddhist scholars, *inter alia*, remark that the ontological emptiness is not some “spatial emptiness,” but an “active vacuity” that acts as hypostasis, as stated above. *Śūnyatā* and the *Heart Sutra* are one the most accurate formulations and a good example, because they do mean that things are “actively empty” but not non-existent, just that they do not have a stable, inherent nature or essence. In this approach, ontological emptiness is not supposed to be understood as negation and should be understood as a state

<sup>47</sup> Which is in fact the case with other Eastern principles, like the Shakti-Shiva of the aghori in India; see for example Vimalananda in Robert Svoboda, *Aghora: At the Left Hand of God* (Las Vegas: Brotherhood of Life, Inc., 2007), Ch. 1–3.

<sup>48</sup> Bhikkhu Analayo, *Excursions into the Thought-World of the Pali Discourses* (Onalaska, WA: Pariyatti Publishing, 2012), 272.

<sup>49</sup> See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. by E. F. J. Payne (New York: Falcon’s Wing Press, 1958).

<sup>50</sup> Peter Harvey, “Buddhist Reflections on ‘Consumer’ and ‘Consumerism,’” in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 20 (2013) 302, 334.

<sup>51</sup> Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London: Souvenir Press, 2011), 172.



of being beyond opposites (which, by the way, entails the core of intra-subjective empiricism, that is, crossing dualities and intra-subjectively embracing the “active emptiness”). And the same goes for related tenets like *anatta* (in Buddhism), the *four great sayings* of the Upanishads (in Hinduism), or for *reality* itself, as described by Bhāviveka above.

When a practitioner repeatedly delves into the ordinary mind and transcends its conceptuality, and experiences the existence from within, understands that “inexistence” of the everyday world is not that “it does not exist” or “it is nothing.” It is not “(spatially) empty”; this term refers only to the form manifested by our ordinary mind (“things,” “self,” and “the world” as real non-empty forms). Things are “no-things,” the self is a “no-self,” and world is “no-world,” but they are not “nothingness” as understood by the ordinary mind; they are “active vacuity manifestations.”

In this sense, when the concept of “emptiness” appears as a simple negation, it should be understood just as one of the viewpoints from which the nature of things can be approached. “Emptiness is the nature of things” appears as a contradictory statement or experience for the ordinary mind, so all kinds of viewpoints are welcome to make it approachable and understandable by such a level of mind. This is the reason why both the theoretical and the empirical proposals must be understood as a multidimensional approach. Neither of them is totally valid in itself, as they show the *catuṣkoṭi* logics of the Madhyamaka school or the *anekāntavāda* conditions of the Jain doctrine; they imply a “teamwork.” The interest of the *Heart Sutra* is that it synthesizes the core of it all in words, that is, such experience of the “active vacuity”; but it should not be read from its “negative” side with some concept of “spatial or conceptual negative emptiness.”

What then is the *Huts* case? As tested above, *Huts* reflects an emptiness ontology, since it is not a casual homonym. Would it be in an “apophatic or negative” way without referring to the “positive” viewpoints? “Not at all,” a Basque speaker would reply, because *Huts* is “empty” and “full” and “the nature of something” to the same extent. Indeed, *Huts* encapsulates the *Heart Sutra*’s axiom that whatever is form, sensation, perception, memory or consciousness is emptiness; and whatever is emptiness is form, sensation, perception, memory or consciousness in an absolute contranym that means that the nature of something is to be empty and full of its nature at the same time. Consequently, the original question of this essay can be answered in the affirmative. Is the ontological emptiness reflected in the Basque *Huts*? Indeed, the polysemy of *Huts*, supported by a cognitive bridge, linguistic networks, and a sociocultural matrix, strongly suggests an emptiness ontology and even a precise ontolinguistics of the ontological emptiness in its formulation of *Śūnyatā*.

## Conclusion

The Basque term *Huts*, with its absolutely contradictory meanings, is in all likelihood to be assigned to the basket of whims or curiosities of the language without further importance, as a casual homonym and contronym. It seems to radically breach the basic Aristotelian laws of logic without any cognitive bridge, and the possibility to have reflections or analogies in other areas of the Basque culture is almost completely denied. With its performance to define the innermost nature of things as emptiness or nothingness, in the context of more logical languages of Western Europe that do not have contradictory terms in this topic, any ontological performance of *Huts* is on cards to be considered no more than an anomaly and forgotten, like it has been so far. Conversely, *Huts* is argued here as a logical tenet, with an operative cognitive bridge, that works as a wide and deep ontolinguistic operator and, as a consequence, assessed as a (very) significant contronym. And the best condition to reach such assessment is to understand its apparent contradiction from the ontological core of the Emptiness philosophies.

Tested cognitively and ontolinguistically, the Basque *Huts* appears as an excellent ontolinguistic operator of the notion of “active Emptiness is the nature of all beings,” in a definitely special semantic and grammatical case in Western Europe and unparalleled nearby. That way, it implies a reflection of the philosophy of *Śūnyatā* and its ontology concerning phenomenal world, and it describes it just as the *Heart Sutra* does. Overall, the grammatical reflection of *Huts* and its network materialize an answer to an everlasting question of World ontology through a correspondence between a philosophical and empirical issue, language expressions, and social reflections.

If correct, this proposal of the Basque *Huts* points to a faithful sociolinguistic and philosophic reflection of the emptiness ontology and its Asian formulations, which may be meaningful both as the systematization of the Basque *Weltanschauung*, where it acts as the “primal hollow or *womb* [to] the *ten thousand beings* that Taoists tell us,”<sup>52</sup> and as a direct conceptual reflection and proposal of the empiricism towards the hypostatic nature of existence by Emptiness philosophies. Finally, the methodology proposed here would be useful to understand philosophic, linguistic, and social reflections of Emptiness philosophies in Western societies, and to sound common backgrounds in world philosophies and languages.

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<sup>52</sup> Jon Baltza, *Un escorpión en su madriguera (indoeuropeo y euskara: mito e identidad)* [A scorpion in its burrow (Indo-European and Euskara: myth and identity)] (Alegia: Hiria Liburuak, 2000), 202. Italics from the original.

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Book Review

## Latour, Bruno, *After Lockdown: A Metamorphosis*<sup>1</sup>

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**Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland**

Published originally in French as *Où suis-je? Leçons du confinement à l'usage des terrestres*, *After Lockdown: A Metamorphosis* is Bruno Latour's latest translated book which, as the English title suggests, provides musings on the experience of metamorphosis during the pandemic, suggesting our own metamorphosis after an experience of confinement. Both French and English publications came in the same year, however, if one juxtaposes this book with other works on the pandemic such as Žižek's *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World* and *PANDEMIC! 2 Chronicles of Time Lost* or, rather disappointing, Ben Bramble's *Pandemic Ethics: 8 Big Questions of COVID-19*,<sup>2</sup> one would notice what makes Latour's work of particular interest. Žižek offers a philosophic reflection of the current situation by raising the question "What is wrong with our system that we were caught unprepared by the catastrophe despite scientists warning us about it for years?" while Bramble raises this query in a more simplistic sense of "what to do, how to feel, and who to be."<sup>3</sup> Latour writes from a different perspective evident in the French title, *Where am I?*, and offers a "philosophical fable"<sup>4</sup> in 14 chapters on the theme of his writings on Gaia politics and the Critical Zone but from the standpoint of confinement. The English title of this book is a play on a metamorphosis ideally realized *after* lockdown, signifying two things: (1) a direct reference to Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and (2) an inquiry into our own conversion during the lockdown. Whereas there was a flurry in revisiting Camus or Foucault during the pandemic, Latour provides a rereading of Kafka's novel to challenge our normative assumptions of where we are and how we got here; as Latour wishes to provide a different reading

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. by Julie Rose, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021, 248pp., EPUB.

<sup>2</sup> See Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World* (New York and London: OR Books, 2020); Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! 2 Chronicles of Time Lost* (New York and London: OR Books, 2020); and Ben Bramble, *Pandemic Ethics: 8 Big Questions of COVID-19* (Bartleby Books, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Žižek, *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World*, 4 and Bramble, *Pandemic Ethics*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Bruno Latour, *After Lockdown: A Metamorphosis*, trans. by Julie Rose (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021), XIV, EPUB.



of Gregor's Kafkaesque world, we are left to reckon with this pandemic's Kafkaesque experience that ought to weigh on all of us either as readers or writers.

Latour extols Gregor as our pandemic figure, confined to the solitary life of having been transformed. However, the folly is not his but his family's for failing to experience a metamorphosis in opting to relate to Gregor simply from their human perspective. Gregor's ludicrous metamorphosis only seems such to his relatives who have not metamorphosized themselves. It is not just them becoming inhumane in treating their relative but resisting a rejuvenated approach to life that Gregor's metamorphosis ought to have offered.<sup>5</sup> The conflict in the Samsa family is due to the difference of the world that they live in—Gregor, an insect, while his relatives, human. This difference uncovers to us a dissimilarity in vistas, which Latour tries to let his readers peer through by numerous changes in tone and perspective: the inhabitant and the city, the cell and the body, the ant and the anthill, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, the creature and the whole of the 'environment.' This constant transformation of perspectives is deliberate to challenge our sense of security. This constant change signifies for Latour a realization of the world's artificiality since nothing is naturally independent of anything else just as "termites couldn't live for a moment outside the termite mound, which is to their survival what the city is to city-dwellers."<sup>6</sup> We are who we are because of our world; Gregor's relatives are who they are because it is clear to them what and where they are not—Gregor's metamorphosized world.

Before pondering on where we are vis-à-vis the perspective from where we are not, the first realization under lockdown is freedom. This takes two forms according to Latour: "On the one hand, freedom is frustrated by lockdown, on the other, we finally free ourselves of the infinite."<sup>7</sup> He argues that the lockdown serves as a metamorphosis stage, (a) impeding the typical way we understand freedom while (b) releasing us from the identity of what the neoliberal enterprise has set. Concerning (a), we see politics' inability to hinder the virus's transmission especially abroad since no amount of isolation totally thwarted the spread from country to country. This shows a lack in our current grammar of expression; politics, Latour maintains, ought to be not just a focus on the human agenda but a realization of our interconnection, the effect we have on other life forms and vice versa. Concerning (b), Latour warns that the pain of our current lockdown presents us with the "growing uncertainty about the notion of a limit."<sup>8</sup> The dire situation of the pandemic

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III and see *Ibid.*, XIII.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, V.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, V.

made us question limits either echoing eschatological preaching or asserting constitutional freedom over stay-at-home orders.<sup>9</sup> However, Latour points to the question of the limits provided by the Economy (the superstructure) over the daily interactions among people (economy). The pandemic made such a superstructure, with the sudden realization of ‘essential workers’ and the crash of stock markets, turn on its head; the *Homo oeconomicus* was freed from the Economy’s dictates.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, initial efforts toward a post-lockdown landscape—currently evident in recovery packages worldwide—still emphasize our *domestic* affairs that translate to economic priority. The Economy once more will take prominence, and while we soon must grapple with the effects of climate change, the extinction of wildlife, and the loss of flora and fauna, the tendency to gauge everything based on national interest, i.e., domestic product, shows the Economy’s great reach—but should it just be like this?

To realize a metamorphosized landscape requires mapping one’s territory.<sup>11</sup> This should make us question the glamor of globalization and force us to reckon precisely with our locality.<sup>12</sup> Through such questioning, we become strangers to ourselves, to our places, just as how terrified we at times are at the mask-wearing stranger standing two meters from us; a spin off the title of another book of Latour: from *we have never been modern* to *we have never been home*.<sup>13</sup> This means that to re-understand one’s domestic affairs requires

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<sup>9</sup> This may be seen through how the Pope offered prayers and instructed fasting for the end of the pandemic (See Devin Watkins, “Covid-19: Pope offers prayer to Virgin Mary for protection,” in *Vatican News* [11 March 2020], <<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/pope-francis-prayer-our-lady-protection-coronavirus.html>> and Hannah Brockhaus, “Hope for the future: Pope Francis asks Mary to intercede for end to pandemic,” in *Catholic News Agency* [1 May 2021], <<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/247494/hope-for-the-future-pope-francis-asks-mary-to-intercede-for-end-to-pandemic>>). This was also locally evident through the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines’ admonitions (See Christina Hermoso, “‘Pray, fast to end COVID-19 pandemic’ – CBCP,” in *Manila Bulletin* [15 March 2020], <<https://mb.com.ph/2020/03/15/pray-fast-to-end-covid-19-pandemic-cbcp/>> and CBCP News, “Manila clergy to lead fasting, ‘penitential walk’ for end of pandemic,” in *CBCP News* [25 May 2021], <<https://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/manila-clergy-to-lead-fasting-penitential-walk-for-end-of-covid-19/>>). This may even be taken in a political sense as through the refusal of confinement of some religious groups in the United States (Cf. Jaweed Kaleem, “Megachurch pastors defy coronavirus pandemic, insisting on right to worship,” in *Los Angeles Times* [31 March 2020], <<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-03-31/coronavirus-megachurches-meeting-pastors>> and Matthew Gabriele, “Christian Groups That Resist Public-Health Guidelines Are Forgetting a Key Part of the Religion’s History,” in *Time* [20 April 2020], <<https://time.com/5824128/early-christian-caritas-coronavirus/>>).

<sup>10</sup> See Latour, *After Lockdown*, VII.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII.

<sup>12</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) and *Ibid.*, VII.

one re-understand one's home, *domus*. Latour posits our penchant for a misidentification of what we really mean by home.<sup>14</sup> Usually or perhaps ideally, we associate it with freedom whereas one is bounded by social norms outside. We ask the question, where is this home of the human species? The earth, but, Latour presents, the *Earth* is a proper noun that encompasses all the relations within. Domestic affairs should firstly redirect our attention to our territory, making us uncover the entire web of relations among various species and creatures, from migration patterns to wind directions, and how no sense of something truly "local" can be independent of anything not local. Mapping one's territory makes one redefine oneself and truly assume the role of Gregor in this oblique Earth that we cannot know completely, contrary to the Economy's simplification.<sup>15</sup>

Considering this unravels the tensions between where we are and where we are not. This makes us untangle the dialectics projected onto this Earth—here/there, material/spiritual, below/above, secular/religious, artificial/natural—and realize what is left is a plurality of spheres that envelop our existence, something neither of the two extremes but "*formed with other bodies*" that impel us "*to live at home but in a different way.*"<sup>16</sup> This plural reality of Earth metamorphosizes the human person from the master of nature to an insect surrounded by these great bodies of nature. As Latour puts it "The issue is not whether the 'world of tomorrow' will replace the 'world of before', but whether the surface world couldn't finally give up its seat for the world of ordinary depth."<sup>17</sup> Taking this step forward, he offers not simply an elaboration of political or ethical conflicts but rather a cosmological conflict in that we are in a state of constant oscillation between the worlds we inhabit, not just in a neoliberal sense but with due reference to the Critical Zone in which all of life thrives.<sup>18</sup>

Latour though mentions how "*it's high time we delved further down, by becoming more realistic, more pragmatic, more materialistic.*"<sup>19</sup> Such observation is something that can be said of the book, especially amidst the pandemic's social impact upon millions who lost their jobs and, ultimately, lives. While this book points to the Earth's incalculability, it, unfortunately, gives the impression that the death of millions, which could have been averted, was just part of a metamorphosis. Such an admission, if deliberate, reaffirms the position that we are fortunate enough not to have succumbed to the natural eugenic cleansing as being merely onlookers to this

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<sup>14</sup> See Latour, *After Lockdown*, VI.

<sup>15</sup> See *Ibid.*, VIII and IX.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, VII.

<sup>18</sup> See *Ibid.*, XIII.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, VII.

phenomenon.<sup>20</sup> My use of eugenics is intentional to raise a serious alarm about how complacent such a language can become, especially from people fortunate enough to work from home, have essentials delivered, and experience “dead time”<sup>21</sup> to revitalize ourselves, whereas inadequate political measures—evidenced by the throngs of corruption charges now raised against government officials tasked with the pandemic response—have hastened the demise of people. What we have seen is a survival of the fittest, of the richest, and at times also of the bravest; a recognition of a cosmological crisis definitely does not give a full account of any metamorphosis that the pandemic provides for we must remember, and Latour rightly observes, that “The antonym for ‘body’ is not ‘soul, or ‘mind’, or ‘consciousness’, or ‘thought’; it is ‘death[.]’”<sup>22</sup> I affirm his point concerning this that lived experience should be understood not just as a subjective element contrasted with an objective account, but rather its transvaluation to account for the totality; one’s lived experience reflects the tensions that arise in everyday life, not just socially but also biologically. Precisely for this first point, this critical observation is raised.

Another criticism, albeit to a lesser degree, that may be raised especially by practitioners of philosophy is Latour’s narrative, which he admits takes the form of a philosophical fable rather than a scholarly discourse. This, however, reflects the fact that no amount of academic experience is really able to prepare one to fully confront the pandemic. On the other hand, those who found such a style enjoyable, especially the themes this book raised, may wish to consider Latour’s other works, notably *Down to Earth* and *We Have Never Been Modern*.<sup>23</sup>

Overall, this book provides a mix of the pandemic experience and a renewed consciousness of what it means to live in this place we have grown accustomed to calling both ‘home’ and ‘earth’. Perhaps the pandemic is just a foretaste of more tragic things to come especially if we continue to live ignorant of the decentered role the human species has on Earth.<sup>24</sup> What we ultimately get from Latour’s musings is a re-questioning of our place not as one in charge of this territory but in the middle of things. Better said, what he does is to remind us how we are fundamentally *just* in the middle of a vast network happening simultaneously, a reterritorialization not simply with respect to an epistemic reference but a biological one. We are Gregors, insects to a foreign environment, with the opportunity to see life anew and to be

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<sup>20</sup> See Bramble, *Pandemic Ethics*, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Žižek, *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World*, 57.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, IX.

<sup>23</sup> See Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018) and Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

<sup>24</sup> See *Ibid*, XII.

sensitive to the movement of nature—although without committing the same error of understanding “nature” as a homogenized whole. This book provides an introduction to Gaia politics and a different take on cosmology, grounded not on a distant analysis but rather on a lived experience of envelopment.<sup>25</sup> With such a perspective, after lockdown to be metamorphosed or not to be is *not* the question; to remain ignorant of the metamorphosis or not is.

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<sup>25</sup> See Latour, *After Lockdown*, XIII.

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Book Review

## Hirschfeld, Mary L. *Aquinas and the Market: Towards a Humane Economy*<sup>1</sup>

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**Jovito V. Cariño**

**A** *Aquinas and the Market* is Hirschfeld's first book and if I may say, the first written by a female Thomist scholar on the subject matter. The list of the names of woman Thomists is getting longer and longer in recent years and with her maiden work, Hirschfeld becomes the latest addition to a fine company of the likes of Mary T. Clark (*An Aquinas Reader*, 1972), Eleonore Stump (*Aquinas*, 2003), Mary M. Keys (*Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good*, 2006), Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey & Christina Van Dyke (*Aquinas's Ethics: Metaphysical Foundations, Moral Theory, and Theological Context*, 2009), all of whom have proven that scholarly mastery of Aquinas is not a gendered domain.

The attempt to bring Aquinas to a field of study uncommonly associated with his name is yet another incentive why researchers, academics or students on the lookout for something current in the field of Thomistic studies would find in Hirschfeld's work an opportunity to re-acquaint themselves with the teachings of the medieval master pegged on the state of play of the market no less.

Readers (Thomists and non-Thomists alike) will probably be surprised by the unusual pairing of Aquinas and the market. Ordinarily, Aquinas' name is often invoked alongside terms like *being*, *essence*, *truth* or *ultimate good* and only with extreme rarity can one read him in tandem with GDP, stock trade, market efficiency or fluctuation of currencies. That this is so, as one may read from Hirschfeld, is a consequence of a cultural climate propagated by the market itself so it can seal itself away from any sort of infringement from various external fronts such as politics, ethics, and theological discourse. Critics of the market economy from the Marxist and the Neo-Marxist camps have been exemplary in calling out the excesses of the capitalist regime but their harsh tirades notwithstanding, deep down, they

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018, 268pp.



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too share in the market's marginalization of either theology or religion. In recent history, theorists like Max Weber and Robert Tawney did try to repair this chasm although their tact was really to theorize religion thru the vista of economists like they were. What their efforts amount to is a reduction of religion to the grammar of economics and as such may be construed as an extension of the modern religious or theological pacification. The approach needed involves not so much a reversal to pre-modern disciplinary pre-eminence of theology but the cultivation of a worldview that would recognize both theology and economics as distinct domains albeit with contiguous borders. Hirschfeld called this endeavor "theological economics", and she acknowledged the lead she got from the works of contemporary Thomists like Bernard Dempsey, Alasdair MacIntyre, and John Milbank who all found in Thomas Aquinas a framework that allows for an integrative appreciation of human flourishing and economic life. As Hirschfeld amplified: "What is needed is not a theological economics that simply rejects mainstream economics but rather a theological economics confident enough in its own voice, and knowledgeable enough about economics, to offer a more nuanced evaluation about what we can and cannot learn from economists."<sup>2</sup>

In a way, one may consider *Aquinas and the Market* and Hirschfeld's proposal for a theological economics as a midway between the economists' unilateral appeal to value-neutrality (read: neutrality to values other than its own) and the theologians' messianic injunctions even on issues that are within the economists' expert purview. The former is represented by economists like Adam Smith, John Maynard Keynes, and Milton Friedman who thought of the market as an insular continuum; the latter, by liberation theologians whose knowledge of the Gospel and how the economic system works went no further than the prohibition against serving both God and mammon.

To her advantage, Hirschfeld was proficient in both languages: the language of economics and the language of theology. She got first a Ph.D. in Economics at Harvard University before migrating to Ph.D. in Theology at the University of Notre Dame. The decision, as she admitted, was more existential than professional and its outcome is a statement on the organic interplay between theology and economics which she thematized substantively in this book. Such a statement is personal because it emerged from her own experience; it is also nonetheless global because it resonates with the experiences of the multitudes caught up within and without the seemingly impenetrable walls of the market.

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<sup>2</sup> Mary L. Hirschfeld, *Aquinas and the Market: Towards a Humane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 18.

As suggested earlier, the key really is not to impose theology on economics but to unmask the metaphysical presuppositions which undergird the economists' campaign to preserve the autonomy of the market. Such metaphysical presuppositions were embedded in what Hirschfeld described as the "rational choice model." The adoption of the rational choice model as the economists' favored paradigm is crucial given the market's propensity to reckon happiness as mere utility or maximum gain, as subjectively determined, as consumable, and as the economists see it, insatiable. By restricting the practice of rational choice to the mere calculation of risks and benefits or losses and gains, economists are able to project the pattern of consumers' behavior to ensure the market will remain in an upbeat mood.

The task of theological economics proposed by Hirschfeld is really to engage the market at the roots, that is, at the level of these metaphysical claims that are either unspoken or understated. Only by disclosing such foundational assumptions can one dispute the assertion averted to earlier concerning the self-declared value-neutrality of the market and its championing of unabated consumption as the be-all and end-all of human flourishing. This is also the reason why Aquinas' moral vision serves as a suitable counterpoint that could bring the market closer to the aims of a more humane economy. Notable economic theorists like Michael Sandel and Amartya Sen, including the Austrian School of Economics have long shown the inadequacy of the calculative bent of the rational choice model. To their voices, Hirschfeld added hers in showing how moral perfection can still have a room in a secularized environment where the market always seems to have the last word.

Readers, either from theology or economics, will surely benefit from Hirschfeld's masterful attempt to provide classic and recent economic perspectives vis a vis her coherent and clear presentation of the intersecting metaphysical, theological and ethical insights of Thomas Aquinas. In the end, what proves surprising is not that Thomas Aquinas might have something to say about the market but that we did not give it a hearing sooner than we should.

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Hirschfeld, Mary L., *Aquinas and the Market: Towards a Humane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

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