

EDITOR'S NOTES

In this issue, we have seven insightful articles, a critical essay, and three thought-provoking book reviews. The articles cover a wide range of philosophical issues and topics – African philosophy, philosophy of pregnancy, theory of persistence, philosophy of education, empathy and phenomenology, postmodernism and existentialism, and Chan Buddhism.

In the first article *Yoruba Philosophy of Existence, Iwa (Character) and Contemporary Socio-Political Order*, Olatunji A. Oyeshile discusses the role of *iwa* or character in Yoruba philosophy of existence and how it provides a solution to the challenges of contemporary socio-political order, both in Africa and across the world. According to Oyeshile, the foundation of Yoruba philosophy of existence is predicated mainly on the moral pivot called *iwa*. The meaning of life is based on the ontological and ethical etymologies of *iwa*. *Iwa* regulates the social relations among people, and adherence to it within the Yoruba cultural matrix provides answers to complex questions of existence. According to Oyeshile, the defining elements of *iwa* amply showcase a communally oriented philosophy without sacrificing an individual's freedom. Individual freedom is exercised in relative, mitigated, and moderated form and not in absolute terms since the individual is a social being who co-exists with others. Oyeshile however, notes that *iwa*, though a necessary condition for socio-political order, is not a sufficient condition for such order. Morality or moral character, in particular, must still be supported by social policies, law, social structures, welfarist government, and a viable economic system to be effective.

In the article *Beyond the Bump: Reconceiving the Philosophy of Pregnancy*, Hazel T. Biana, Leni dIR. Garcia and Ninotchka Mumtaz B. Albano tackles one of the critical and unique moments in a woman's life – pregnancy. They discuss that while pregnancy is an experience unique to women, it has been misinterpreted by patriarchal structures throughout the years. They stress that there is more to the pregnancy bump than just evidence of the uterus stretching to accommodate the fetus; it symbolizes a woman's triumphs and struggles throughout conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. Their article shows that women have already gone beyond the bump and challenged existing patriarchal systems through different means. They further stress that the philosophy of pregnancy be reconceived to escape existing boundaries that constrict the discourse to ethical issues of rape, abortion, and medical interventions and to face issues that surround women's experience of pregnancy and deeper meanings the pregnant body itself represents. They conclude that the more women write about pregnancy through their beautiful experiences constructed by their own image, the more women write about pregnancy through their own beautiful experiences constructed by their own image, women would be able to dismantle the structures that hinder their progress and demands for change.

Time is perhaps one of the most enigmatic concepts in philosophy. In the article *Terdurantism: A viable Theory of Persistence?* Francis Kenneth P. Raterta tackles one

theory related to time – persistence. In his article, Raterta focuses on what he calls the problems of persistence: change, cohabitation, and vagueness. He claims that any theory of persistence should be able to account for these problems. Any theory of persistence which fails to do so should be rejected or, at the very least, be seen as unsatisfactory; any theory of persistence ought to give us a complete and coherent picture of persistence. The picture will be incomplete if the theory fails to account for even one of these three problems. Raterta argues that terdurantism is not a plausible theory of persistence because it fails to give a viable account of the three problems. By showing the importance of accounting for the three problems — and how a terdurantist position fails to accomplish this, he shows that not only is terdurantism an unattractive persistence theory, but any plausible theory of persistence that fails to account for the problems.

Philosophy is often challenged as to its significance in the social and political sphere. In the article *On Arendt, Education and Service-Learning*, Bernardo N. Caslib, Jr. takes on the chasm between thought and action in education. According to Caslib, philosophy and political action are often irreconcilable spheres of thought—that the space for contemplation is nowhere near the space for action. Hence, he asks how philosophy courses can cross the chasm brought about by disciplinal borders, and philosophy classes can help produce active and more engaged citizens. To answer these questions, he first disputes Arendt's claim about the irreconcilability of philosophy and political action, providing a philosophical analysis that underlines Arendt's political position and most important ideas in her greatest works, "The Human Condition." He then discusses how Arendt's notions inspire some practices in education and pedagogy, thus paving the way for a genuine application of a philosophical theory to society. By employing social reconstructionist education and its corollary pedagogical tool, service-learning, he argues for a reconsideration of philosophy as a relevant discipline in society that inspires action, particularly in education.

In the article, *The Im/possibility of Empathy*, Charles Chukwuemeka Nweke and Stephen Chibuike Okeke investigate the impossibility and the possibility of empathy. The question of the impossibility or possibility of empathy finds expression in the question of the subject's access to the subjective conscious experiences of another. They evaluate the various positions emanating from the basic Husserlian/Steinian views and highlight the optimists' belief that in empathy, we touch others in a way that generates a compassionate concern that forms the foundation of morality; they also take on the pessimists' view that empathy merely blurs the distinction between oneself and others and yield self-interested motivation or preclude genuine altruism. They suggest that the problem of the impossibility or possibility of empathy would persist in so far as the definition of empathy involves 'feeling with' rather than 'feeling for.' According to them, empathy is a core relational structure bred into the human person that enables him to transcend beyond himself and engage in a conscious, empathetic fellowship of purpose with the other rational 'selves' in the world.

In the article *Releasement and Seduction: Heidegger and Baudrillard on the Preservation of Illusion in the epoch of Obscenity*, Marc Oliver D. Pasco relates the thoughts of Jean Baudrillard and Martin Heidegger. He discusses Baudrillardian ideas

to describe the historical happening of the so-called withdrawal of Being from man, which preoccupied much of Heidegger's body of work. He stresses that by re-visiting Baudrillard's idea of "seduction," a possible way of navigating the obscenity of the current epoch of Being can be found. Like Heidegger's idea of *Gelassenheit* or releasement, Baudrillard's concept of "seduction" invites one to let the real appear again, not by way of subjective representation, but by letting it appear in its very disappearance in hyperreality. According to Pasco, the key ideas of Heidegger and Baudrillard's historical-philosophical critiques can help us understand our standing in respective epochs of Being. Pasco establishes the relationship between these what he calls "saving powers," Heidegger's idea of *Gelassenheit*, of letting-be, in the epoch of the obscene, and Baudrillard's idea of "seduction."

In the article *The Possibility of Moral Cultivation in the Ontological Oblivion: A Re-exploration of Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism Through Guo Xiang*, Christine Abigail L. Tan tackles a controversial issue is Chan Buddhism – the radicalization of the approach to enlightenment, which resulted in antinomianism and stunting of moral and religious cultivation. Tan traces the development of Chan Buddhism to the Hongzhou school, founded by Mazu Daoyi. Huineng presented his iconoclastic approach to enlightenment as sudden rather than gradual, and his successor, Mazu, completed such radicalization. Mazu introduced a radicalized approach of collapsing substance (ti) and function (yong), as well as principle (li) and phenomena (shi), into a complete overlap. Because of this radicalization, the Hongzhou lineage was strongly criticized, the most important of which by Guifeng Zongmi, of the Heze lineage. Zongmi criticized Mazu for his supposed antinomianism, claiming that Mazu's approach completely stunts moral and religious cultivation. In the article, Tan utilizes Guo Xiang's philosophy to understand the implicit Hongzhou response to Zongmi. According to her, since Guo Xiang's philosophical enterprise shares the same ontology of absolute oblivion of Hongzhou, it is, therefore, a possible alternative to understanding what could have been the Hongzhou response to the alleged antinomianism.

In his critical essay *Education: Re-examined in Time of Pandemic*, Juan Rafael G. Macaranas shares his thoughts on education during the COVID-19 pandemic based on his existential angst as a learner, his awakened role as a teacher, his take on the phenomenal reality of information technology and his renewed resolve to educate. He concludes that through acting and re-appropriating all teaching practices, teachers will remain relevant even in this time of the pandemic.

There are three insightful book reviews on this issue. The first is Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland's review of Camila Vergara's *Systemic Corruption: Constitutional Ideas for an Anti-Oligarchic Republic*. Rennesland finds this book refreshing in reviewing fundamental concepts to political theory and positing a Plebian Council reminiscent of the great Roman empire and benefited from positive traits of English, French, and American setup. The second review is Beverly A. Sarza's piece *An Ugly Book Tasting*, a review of Jane Forsey & Lars Aagaard-Mogensen (Eds.) *On the Ugly: Aesthetic Exchanges*. According to Sarza, this sequel of an earlier book is an important contribution in aesthetics because it was published in a time when the world is overwhelmed by an ugly uncertainty; its relevance transcends its own field. The ugly

stretches itself from aesthetics to ethics to axiology – ugliness is everywhere. The third book review is Ivan Efreaim A. Gozum's review of Jove Jim Aguas's *The Good and Happy Life: An Introduction to Ethical Systems and Theories*. According to Gozum, this book provides profound explanations on ethics, ethical systems, and ethical theories. Such explanations are accessible even to those who are not philosophy enthusiasts, for it exemplifies a style of writing that communicates to different kinds of people.

We hope that these articles, essay, and reviews will awaken our readers' interest in philosophical discourses and find them worth reading.

Jove Jim S. Aguas
Editor