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EDITOR'S NOTES

The articles of this journal issue will show the global distribution of the contributors. Of the seven articles and a book review, one each comes from Nigeria, Malaysia, and Turkey; two from the United States; and three from the Philippines. With regard to topics, we have contributions on African philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Filipino philosophy, metaethics, political philosophy, religion and the self, and truth and culture. The book review pertains to Scheler's ethics.

In "Empiricist and feminist epistemology: An African experience," Bolatito A. Lanre-Abass argues that knowledge by cultural experience, that is, within the sociohistorical context, is far wider in scope than knowledge derived from empirical experience alone. Lanre-Abass tries to highlight this communal experience through an epistemological inquiry drawn from women's reproductive experiences.

John Thomson, in the paper "Cosmic body: Zhou Dunyi's understanding of *taiji*," examines a work of a neo-Confucian thinker and shows that underlying the practice of *taijiquan* is an anthropocosmic vision. The author contends that Zhou blends both the mystical aspect of Daoism and the moral aspect of Confucianism in his philosophy to achieve the proper cosmic balance.

Rolando M. Gripaldo explains in "The making of a Filipino philosopher" the necessity for one to become intellectually reliant by transforming oneself from a mere teacher or scholar of philosophy not only into a philosopher but, more importantly, into a world-class philosopher. To do this task of transformation, it is necessary for one to be creatively innovative within a given philosophical framework or perspective considering the fact that philosophy does not exist in a vacuum.

The article of Ulysses Araña entitled "How to bring back moral *gravitas*" argues that to strengthen our confidence in morality is to bring its moral *gravitas* back. This can be done by setting aside the representational moral perspective in order to restore in moral discourse the "human sentiments that make moral assertions more natural and authentic."

In "Hegel and Malaysia: Dialectics meets constitutional monarchy," Peter Gan Chong Beng attempts to interpret the Malaysian constitutional monarchy from the Hegelian metaphysical lens. He argues that such an interpretation will have critical ramifications to state-religion and the political structure that includes the crown and the three branches of government.

The self for Richard Curtis, in "*Homo religiosus* spinning a web of narrative self," is made up of words and deeds grounded on an "emotional appreciation of reality," that is to say, what reality for one really is, what it means for him or her to be human, and how he or she relates oneself to others socially and morally. Comparing the insights derived from the social sciences, religious history, and philosophy of mind, Curtis tries to show that each self has a tripartite component of "emotional, existential, and social."

Murat Baç, in "Cultural frameworks, Goldman's ontological wardrobe, and a new perspective over *veritas*," asserts that in light of emerging aspects of the neorealist approach to truth that rejects absolutism, Alvin Goldman's account of truth, despite some difficulties, is on the right direction insofar as propositional truth and its related ontological matters are concerned.

Finally, Mark Anthony Lazara Dacela reviews the book of Peter H. Spader titled *Scheler's ethical personalism: Its logic, development, and promise*. Dacela finds the book interesting and informative despite a minor disappointment regarding Spader's comparative analysis of Scheler's and Husserl's concepts of intersubjectivity. He feels that Spader should have used a later interpretation of Husserl's, such as the one by Dan Zahavi, since Schutz's interpretation, which Spader employed, has already been rejected by most Husserlian scholars.

Starting January 2008, we will be listing the philosophical conferences, seminars, conventions, or lectures of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines, the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society, and the Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao.

As the reader goes through this issue of *Φιλοσοφία*, he or she will notice how diverse and extensive philosophical topics can be. It is thereby hoped that this issue will generate more interest on philosophical issues from the readers.

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Quezon City

EMPIRICIST AND FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY: AN AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

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Current developments in feminist epistemology stem from the recognition that knowledge is socially constructed and therefore, must be seen in the context of the social relations in which its production occurs. This version of epistemology stresses the view that individual experiences and knowledge claims are possible only within a community.

The concern of this paper is to examine the empiricist account of knowledge. It questions the adequacy of the empiricist attempt to base knowledge on perceptual experience, pointing out that experience has a wider focus than what empiricists allow.

Feminist epistemology takes off as a critique of empiricist epistemology on the grounds that the empiricist conception of knowledge fails to acknowledge the fact that knowledge operates in sociohistorical contexts. This accounts for a major limitation in the empiricist conception of knowledge. In order to underscore the thesis of feminist epistemology, the Yoruba women's experience is used, drawing on such factors as women's reproductive experiences and how these experiences can bear upon epistemological inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

Empiricism is the doctrine in epistemology that sense experience is the sole source of knowledge. It is characterized, on the one hand, by an uncritical attitude towards the categories through which experience is grasped and, on the other, by the rejection of the significance of reason in acquiring knowledge. This is why, historically, empiricism could not answer the critique of rationalism and fell into skepticism. It is in order to avoid skepticism that this paper examines the empiricist interpretation of experience and its far-reaching consequences for feminist epistemology. It questions the empiricist account of experience particularly its conception of the experiencing subject. It stresses that in order to retain a feminist

epistemologist's understanding of "experience," experience should be understood as the practical activity of people changing the world which is the condition and source of knowledge.

This paper shows that "experience" is more complex than sensory states. Hence, the empiricist account of experience is not only limited but also rather narrow. Experience has a wider focus. The paper draws on the Yoruba conception of experience and the possibility of bringing this to bear upon epistemic inquiry. Knowledge arises in and through definite social relations; relations through which people produce the forms of activity under which experience can be grasped, but for the empiricists, experience is not a social activity, but simply a passive, sensual process (see Novack and Pillings, n.d.).

EMPIRICISM DEFINED

Empiricism is a broad tradition in Western philosophy. The basic thesis of empiricism is that legitimate human knowledge arises from what is provided to the mind by the senses or by introspective awareness through experience (Ward, n.d.). Hence, it stresses the fundamental role of experience.

Empiricism is distinguished from the philosophical tradition of rationalism, which holds that human reason apart from experience is a basis for some kind of knowledge. Knowledge attainable by reason alone, prior to experience, is called *a priori* knowledge; knowledge based upon experience is called *a posteriori* knowledge. For instance, "All bachelors are unmarried males" is an example of an *a priori* knowledge. It is a tautology, where denial would be self-contradictory. "Tables are brown" is an example of an *a posteriori* knowledge. It is not necessarily true unless all tables are by definition brown and to deny it would not be self-contradictory. There is need to refer to experience to settle the matter. As a doctrine in epistemology, empiricism holds that all knowledge is ultimately based on experience. One point that is common to empiricist philosophers, as pointed out by D. W. Hamlyn (1970, 35), is the idea that:

Perception is at some point or the other indubitable. It is free from the possibility of error, because error has no place in what is 'given', it is due to, say, the imagination or frailty of human judgement.

The point being made by Hamlyn is that what is immediately "given" at the point of perception cannot be mistaken, though our judgment or description of it might be mistaken. He explains why empiricists maintain a general empiricist thesis. According to him, maintaining that all knowledge is dependent on experience implies that we can have no ideas or concepts, which are not derived from experience, that is, that all concepts are *a posteriori* whether or not the truths, which can be asserted by means of these concepts, are themselves *a posteriori*. It may be that we know some

propositions without having to resort immediately to experience for their validation; for their truth may depend solely on the logical relations between the ideas involved. Yet these ideas may themselves be derived from experience.

If all our ideas are so derived, then knowledge of any sort must be dependent on sense experience in some ways. Hume stresses this empiricist standpoint. For him, all knowledge takes the form either of relations of ideas (analytic, necessary, *a priori*) or of matters of fact (synthetic, contingent, *a posteriori*). This rules out the possibility of something, which might claim the status of synthetic *a priori* knowledge: something important which is not known by reference to experience but which applies necessarily within the realm of experience.

Again, a major theory that characterizes the empiricist philosophers is their theory of meaning. The empiricist theory of meaning has traditionally been stated as a theory about the genesis of our ideas or concepts. Locke (see Firth 1997, 315) summarizes this theory by stating that “nothing is in the intellect that has not been previously in sensation.” Against the rationalist doctrine of innate ideas, Locke maintains that the mind at birth is like a blank sheet of paper, or *tabula rasa*, and every idea that it acquires must come from experience or from observing the operations of our own minds by means of what Locke calls “inner sense.” David Hume gives it a greater strength by drawing a distinction between ideas and impressions. All our ideas, he says, come from impressions, and impressions are defined to include sensations, passions, and emotions, as they occur in their original vividness.

In sum, while rationalists claim that knowledge can be deduced from certain *a priori* truths, empiricists claim that for human beings there is no pure reason and that all knowledge is *a posteriori* and inductively derived from sense experience (Firth 1993, 10:315). This became a major point in empiricist epistemology.

THE EMPIRICIST CONCEPTION OF EXPERIENCE AND ITS EPISTEMOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The empiricists emphasize the role of experience. But experience, as interpreted by them, is limited to perceptual experience rather than to phenomenal experience. Among the ancient philosophers, the Sophists were empiricists. Epicurus [341-270 B.C.] was a Greek philosopher who founded the system known as Epicureanism. Epicureans base their theory of knowledge on sense perception asserting that sensations are invariably good evidence of their causes. They work out a complex account of how objects produce sense impressions and explain error by positing the disruption of causal affluences in transit (Firth 1993, 10:315).

Similarly, Thomas Aquinas [1224 -1274] holds that intellectual knowledge is derived by way of abstraction (concept formation) from sense data. Francis Bacon (see Milton 1998, 1:629) also hails the primacy of experience, particularly over nature. For him, the human understanding

needed to be purged and cleansed and this had to be done not by any Cartesian detachment from the data of the senses but by an immersion into the world of experience in its full individuality and variety. British empiricists take their cue from Bacon. John Locke, for example, rejects the claim that ideas are innate. According to him (quoted by Ayer and Winch 1965, 35):

It is an established opinion among some men, that there are in the understanding certain innate principles... stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first beginning and brings into the world with it.

Locke calls this opinion a mistaken one, and denies that ideas are innate and that those who hold such view are wrong. All ideas according to him arise from experience and these experiential ideas provide us with two types of knowledge, namely, sensation and reflection.

In an attempt to establish the philosophical basis for his empiricist arguments, Locke explains that sensation, which is the first knowledge, is the process through which the mind receives different perceptions. Through this process, the mind becomes used to objects; from this the mind has the ideas of cold, yellow, hardness, taste, and other sensible qualities. The second type of knowledge furnished by experience is reflection. This is an activity of the mind, which produces ideas, but this production of ideas is based on the first set of ideas furnished by the senses. These mental activities include perception, thinking, doubting, reasoning, knowing, willing, and so on. It is this reflective power of the mind that works on the sensible ideas given to the mind by experience (see Ayer and Winch 1965, 47).

Continuing in the same vein, Berkeley explains that objects of human knowledge are ideas. There is something, which perceives these ideas or objects of knowledge. In line with this, Berkeley claims that to exist is to be perceived and to be perceived is to be perceived as an idea. On this claim he (see Ayer and Winch 1965, 178-79) argues that:

It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers and in a word all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding. But this opinion according to Berkeley involves a manifest contradiction: For what are the forementioned objects but... ideas or sensations; and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these or any combination of them should exist unperceived.

If what are perceived are ideas, it follows that an account of reality rests on what is perceived and not on what is not perceived. The implication of Berkeley's empiricist argument is that what is not perceived does not exist. Jonathan Bennett (1971, 139) gives an understanding of Berkeley's argument. He contends that Berkeley hopes to connect "what there is"

with “what is perceived.” Based on this, Bennett claims that it is inevitable for Berkeley to equate “X has an idea belonging to object O when X perceives O.” This equation is what yields Berkeley’s conclusion that no object can exist unless someone perceives it.

Another British empiricist also explains that all knowledge are derived from empirical impressions. According to Hume (see Baier 1998, 1:546):

All our ideas, the contents of our thought are derived from impressions the contents of our sense experience which are correspondent to them and which they exactly represent.

The above quotation is Hume’s meaning of empiricism, which is also his general epistemological principle. There are two arguments that Hume often defends in his meaning-of-empiricism thesis. The first is that whenever one has a simple idea, one also has impression(s), which correspond to the idea one has. For an idea to correspond to an impression it means that the idea resembles the impression and resemblance is not a matter of coincidence or chance. This is why Hume (1975, 56-60) himself argues that:

Such a constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances can never arise from chance, but clearly proves a dependence of the impression on the ideas and of the ideas on the impression.

Our simple ideas are, therefore, copies of our impressions. Given that these impressions are not innate, it follows that these impressions are derived from experience.

The second argument Hume has for this meaning of empiricism is that whoever does not have impressions due to a certain defect cannot have simple ideas. This is why Hume argues that “if due to defect of the organ, a man is not able to have sensation, we will realize that he also lacks the corresponding ideas.” For Hume, “...a blind man can form no notion of colours, a deaf man of sounds.” What we can deduce from this is that whoever does not have impressions cannot have simple ideas. This is to foreclose the possibility of simple ideas arising from sources different from impressions.

Apart from emphasizing the primacy of experience, empiricists commonly hold that the person who undergoes experience is in some sense the recipient of data that are imprinted upon his intelligence irrespective of his activity; the person brings nothing to experience, but gains everything from it. John Locke, for example, holds that knowledge is derived from sensation and that knowledge is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas. For him, the simple ideas that we get from sensation are the foundation of all our beliefs and from these simple ideas, all other complex ideas are derived.

In a similar vein, Berkeley’s account can be illustrated with an object (tomato). If there is a tomato on the table and there are two persons, if one

claims that he sees a red object called tomato and the other denies this, on Berkeley's account, this can be verified only by an examination of what is perceived. The first person who claims he perceives the object will show that he perceives the idea of color, the idea of figure, and the idea of size. All these happen because he stands in the sensory state of perception. The justification for the claim that the object, tomato, is on the table is based on experience. This object, however, exists only as an idea perceived.

Another characteristic of empiricism is that experience, according to empiricists, is intelligible in isolation, or atomistically, without reference to the nature of its subject. Hence an experience can be described without saying anything about the mind that has it, the thoughts that describe it or the world that contains it. This type of experience is pure and untainted, it is atomistic in nature. Feminist epistemologists reject this type of experience. Experience, according to them, should be perceived in a more inclusive manner to include all areas of human consciousness. They view the empiricist conception of knowledge as too narrow because it fails to recognize that the experience of a subject is mediated by the location in terms of time, place, culture, and environment.

Against this background, feminist epistemologists stress phenomenal experience rather than perceptual experience. This type of experience recognizes the concrete activities and contextual details of individual experiences particularly women. These experiences, for women, include pregnancy, childcare, and nursing. These are experiences that are felt and acknowledged only by the subject involved. They are subjective but real. Hence, they should be seen as epistemically significant.

Because empiricists reject attempts to decide issues on the basis of pure reason, they try to answer as many questions as possible by using information gathered by the senses. This is based on the assumption that all legitimate knowledge must be derivable from sense experience. Feminist epistemologists question the empiricist assumption. They opine that the empiricist emphasis on experience makes it difficult to give a clear analysis of the term "experience." In order to avoid defining empiricism by means of almost equally ambiguous term, it is necessary to examine the notion of experience in empiricist epistemology.

THE EMPIRICIST NOTION OF EXPERIENCE: A REVIEW

Different philosophers pick out different phenomena with the term "experience" and even when they seem to pick out the same phenomenon, they may have different views as to the structure of the phenomenon that they call "experience." Aristotle took experience as the yet unorganized product of sense perception and memory. Experience leads us to principles that are better known by nature; we also rely on it to test principles we have found (Irwin 1998, 1:416). This appears to be a common philosophical conception of the term. Memory is required so that what is perceived may

be retained in the mind or remembered. When we say that we have learned something from experience we mean that we have come to know of it by the use of our senses. We have experience when we are sufficiently aware of what we have discovered in this way.

Another connected sense of the term is the perception of feelings, sensations, and so on as sense experience. Awareness of these experiences is something that happens to us and it is in this sense passive. The statement that experience is the source of knowledge means that knowledge depends ultimately on the use of the senses and on what is discovered through them. Experience can also be defined as the accumulation of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation of events or activities.

Similarly, experience can be defined as an apprehended event. The empiricists explain experience and cognition merely from the facts of apprehension. No real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant; it is only the diluted juice of reason, a mere process of thought. Cognition seems to develop concepts such as the external world, time, substance, and cause from perception, imagination, and thought. But for Dilthey (see Rickman 1976, 62), going by the historical and psychological study of man, cognition is the power of man as a willing, feeling, and imagining being. He relates every constituent of present day, abstract scientific thought to the whole of human nature and sought to connect them. As a result the most important constituents of his picture and knowledge of reality—personal individuality, external world, other persons, their temporal life, and interaction—can be explained in terms of the whole of human nature in which willing, feeling, and thinking are only different aspects of the real process of life.

To the perceiving mind, the external world remains only a world of sensations or phenomena, but to the whole human being—who wills, feels, and imagines—this external reality (whatever its special characteristics) is something independent, immediately given, and certain as one's own self; it is part of life, not a mere idea. Thus the horizon of experience widens: at first it only seems to tell us about our own inner states but in knowing ourselves we also know about the external world and other people.

Knowledge of the human world develops, first of all, in everyday life. We come to know something of ourselves, the world, and other people because we are involved with our environment. We acquire knowledge of life from our encounters with things and people. We are part of life and the complexity of the knowing subject makes the complexity of our experience possible. We interact with the physical world because we are physical creatures. We evaluate things because we have feelings and purposes. We understand history because we are ourselves historical beings and are able to understand the expressions of others because we produce them ourselves.

Continuing in the same vein, Dilthey (Rickman 1976, 20-21) explains that life, as the sum of all our experiences, is the source of all our knowledge. He considers that most empiricists misconceive their starting-point in that they substitute an emasculated, metaphysical construction of experience

in terms of sense data for the experience of life. He insists that we must start from the richly varied experience of normal, mature observers who see trees in bloom, talk to other people, read newspapers, enjoy poetry and music, play chess, worry about the future, remember past holidays, and resent noisy neighbours, who are citizens of a state and members of a family, who tend their gardens and earn their living. This complex experience, which makes up life is the basis of all science and all study of the human world and provides the starting-point of all philosophizing.

For Dilthey, experience is not as it is for the main tradition of empiricism, the imprint of the external world on a passive mind. He rejects the conception of experience as the sense data received by the mind, and also the assumption of naïve realists that the complex world of things and events, which we encounter in experience, is a mirror image of objective reality. For him, experience itself is the product of the mind's activity, which shapes and structures the data it receives. Experience remains the starting-point but if we seek the criteria of knowledge, it must be epistemologically analyzed in terms of the structures of the knowing mind, which permeates it.

Following Dilthey's analysis, feminist epistemologists reject the empiricist definition of experience as inadequate. Experience for them is incomplete if it is only perceptual. Consequently, they emphasize phenomenal experience, which has to do with the concrete details and actualities of people's lives, particularly women. This experience differs from women to women and from culture to culture. In order to give an unambiguous account of experience, it is imperative to examine the Yoruba conception of experience as it relates to the experiences of Yoruba women.

YORUBA CONCEPTION OF EXPERIENCE

The Yorubas constitute a large and important ethnic group in the Western part of Nigeria, with a total population of about 19 million. It is one of the most densely populated areas on the continent. According to the 1991 census, population density in the area lies between 115 and 125 people per square kilometer. The Yorubas are spread around Oyo, Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, the Northern part of Edo state, and the Southern part of Kware State.

Yorubaland covers a vast area, and despite homogenizing factors like language and recent historical experiences, one can discern some significant institutional, cultural specificities in given locales. For example, Ondo and a number of polities in eastern Yorubaland manifest certain cultural specificities (Oyewumi 1997, xiii).

In Yoruba society, before the sustained infusion of Western categories, social positions of people shift constantly in relation to those with whom they are interacting; consequently, social identity is relational and is not essentialized. In many European societies in contrast, males and females have gender identities deriving from the anatomic types; therefore, man and woman are essentialized.

In the present Yoruba society, there are distinctive reproductive roles for men and women and it is possible to acknowledge these roles for women (*Obinrin*) and men (*Okunrin*) alike. The essential biological fact in Yoruba society is that the women (*Obinrin*) bears the baby. That women bear children calls for a distinctive assessment. She is distinctively assessed as having the experiences (*iriri, imo, ogbon*) associated with pregnancy. She is referred to as *Aboyun* (pregnant woman) who suffers certain physical and psychological changes in her mental make-up immediately after conception. These experiences are better captured by Patsy Turrini who describes the psychological crises in normal pregnancy. Taking certain experiences in pregnancy and the kinds of reactions they may provoke in the mother-to-be, Turrini (1977, 480) explains that:

The early weeks of pregnancy introduce certain changes such as breast tenderness and perhaps morning sickness. A terrible morning sickness brings anxiety about the reality of the child and its well-being. Then one copes with the reactions of friends and family to the impending new baby. Later in pregnancy, time may hang heavily as the woman enters the period of waiting. The uncertainty about when labour will begin, how it will feel (especially for the inexperienced mother-to-be), and the need to make preparations for being away and for the return with the baby are matters of concern for most women. Finally, the onset of labour and the obstetrical management of the birth itself, while usually normal and problem-free, are events that are fraught with high significance for the woman, such that it is not improper to call them crises.

Pointedly, all the listed experiential variables that affect Yoruba women's reactions to pregnancy suggest that it takes a lot of pain (*irora, edun, riri*) to deliver a baby. According to the Yorubas:

Tita riro l'an kola, to ba san tan a d'oge (Pain is often associated with giving tribal marks. It becomes beautiful when it heals).

This explains the pain associated with delivery which turns out to be a joyful thing immediately after delivery. Similarly, one cannot rule out *courage* (*ilaiya, ilokan, igboju igboiya, aiya-nini, ikiya*) in having a baby because:

Adie n'l'aagun iye re ni ko je k'a mo (The feather on a hen's body prevents people from knowing that the hen sweats).

Here, *adie* (hen) personifies women and the *aagun* (sweat) explains the experiences women go through in the child-bearing process. Again, *perseverance* (*iduro sinsin, iforiti, iteramo*) also goes along with having babies:

Eni t'o maa je oyin inu apata ko ni wo oju aake (whoever wants to achieve a goal must be determined and ready to persevere).

A woman who wants to have children of her own must be unmindful of all the risks and burdens associated with pregnancy and delivery because:

bi a ko ba sise bi eru a ko le jaye bi oba (whoever does not work like a slave cannot enjoy like a king).

A woman who fails to go through all these experiences cannot enjoy the benefit of being called a mother. Even women with well-developed ego functions (*obinrin to ni akinkonju*) will be challenged by these developmental tasks of pregnancy and less fortunate ones may experience great stress. These experiences are personal to each individual woman and are often associated with pain and discomfort (*irora, inira, aini-alafia, sise lala, sise apon*). The subjective assessment of pain and discomfort cannot be done by using some external criteria. This subjective knowing is like a certain feeling (*mo-lara*) that one has inside her. It is hard to explain because it is only the experiencing subject who feels it. This experience is in line with a popular Yoruba saying:

A kii gbe okeere mo didun obe (One cannot taste the sweetness of any soup from a distance).

This experience describes a certain level of empiricism, which serves to explain that one cannot experience anything from a distance. It requires getting involved in order to actually have the experience because "he that wears the shoe knows where it pinches."

The focus so far is on the centrality of Yoruba women's personal experience concerning childbearing. Since their experience is unique in some ways, no one has the right to speak for them or judge what they have to say. This experience is peculiar to all childbearing Yoruba women; hence, the Yorubas would say:

Arun tin se ogoji nii n s'odunrun, ohun t'o n s' Aboyade gbogbo oloya l' on se (Aboyade personifies one woman; hence, the experience of one woman regarding childbearing applies to all women).

Immediately after delivery (*bibi omo*), the mother is beset with a lot of nursing responsibilities (*itoju, olojojo omo*), which include having a built-in positive response to her infant. Here, she is seen as *Abiamo*, *Abiyamo* (a mother with a baby at the breast, one who has a child or many children to take care of). She is described as *Abiyamo otaagan* because she is seen as the enemy of a childless woman. The survival of an immature

human depends on her prolonged care based on intense attachments of the mother to the baby. Far from being a simple matter of responding to the infant's needs, mothering also includes a set of attitudes that underlie behavior and influence the kind of psychological environment the baby has.

Talking about the Role of the Mother (*ipa iya*) in mothering, Rudolph Schaffer and Charles Crook explain that mothering is a most varied, multi-faceted activity, and its analysis correspondingly complex. According to them (1985, 417):

Mutuality is the keynote in the relationship between the mother and even the very youngest infant. What one does is affected by what the other is doing; neither is acting upon an inert organism. Thus the mother's task in acting as a socializing agent is not to create something out of nothing—it is rather to slot her resources into the ongoing stream of the child's behavior, with due respect to its temporal and content characteristics in order thus to bring about a "smooth" interaction and a predictable outcome.

Here, we see two individuals, acting and reacting, each acting and reacting, each affecting and shaping the behavior of the other. The important factor is the mother's sensitivity (*nini iyara, ni imo, ni ifura, tete mo lara*) to her child's behavior, and her awareness of appropriate adjustments to it. The dependence (*igbara le, igbekele*) of infants and their reliance on such a bond have roots in the evolutionary history of our species that cannot be wished away. It suggests compassion (*anu*), mother-child mutuality (*alabapin nipa gbigba ati fifunni l'arin iya ati omo, pasiparo l'arin iya ati omo*), care (*ajo, abojuto, itoju*), love (*ife, feran*), kindness (*inu rere, ore*), and emotional attachment (*ifaramo, idapomo*). She displays love by protecting her child:

Abiyamo se owo ko to lu omo re (A mother is reluctant to beat her child).

Also she feels dissatisfied with the beating of her child by others:

Ba mi na omo mi ko de inu olomo (Beating a woman's child will always meet with such a woman's dissatisfaction).

All these are experiences (*iriri*) that are peculiar to women; hence, they exhibit them than men. They arise from the biological functions of pregnancy (*iloyun*) and mothering (*jije iya*). Only women can appreciate such experiences fully. This is why the Yorubas cherish the role of the mother (*iya*) by alluding to sayings like "*iya niwura*" (mother is gold) and *ola iya* (mother is wealth). They portray the role of the mother as favourable and also emphasize the importance of having children:

Omo yaj'owo / Omo laso
Bi a l'ogun eru
Bi a l'ogbon iwofa
Omo eni lere eni.

(A child is preferred to wealth
 if one has twenty slaves
 if one has thirty pawns
 one's children are one's gain.)

In fact, the Yorubas view a childless woman as destructive:

Eni a bi, ti ko bi eniyan, olori arungun ni (A person born of somebody who fails to produce a child of her own is heading towards destruction).

Even a woman who has just one child has played a crucial role in childbearing:

Egan ni Hee! Olomo—kan kuro ni "ki l'obi" (One should salute the courage of a woman with just one child).

CONCLUSION

The implication that can be drawn from the experiences of Yoruba women for the development of a feminist epistemology is that the ways women are perceived and come to know themselves should be seen as epistemically significant. Also, these are experiences, which are exclusively in the female consciousness. Yoruba women are enormously affected by pregnancy, they experience and suffer psychological, medical, social, physical, and aesthetic burdens as well as the risks of childbirth (*ewu ibimo*). Little wonder then that the Yorubas always congratulate the woman who has just delivered, having gone through the stress of child birth by saying *Ekue ewu omo* (congratulations for going through the risk of childbirth). Such experiences, according to feminist epistemologists, should be brought to bear upon epistemic inquiry.

What follows from the data so far is that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches herself from it. Knowledge comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. She sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks, and intuits all at the same time (Anyanwu 1984, 94). The subject then is perpetually involved. He or she is not only seeing and thinking, but also experiencing and discovering. For him/her no knowledge of an object is possible without the object entering into experience. The cognitive process is not complete without the experiential.

Consequently, every person has her/his own unique body of knowledge that has been given him or her through one's life experiences.

Realizing that a person's experience is as valid as the next person's, then everybody's knowledge is as important, real, and valuable as the other person's. Hence, each person's life experience gives a different view of reality from that of any other person.

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COSMIC BODY: ZHOU DUNYI'S UNDERSTANDING OF *TAIJI*

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In this article, the author examines the work of the Neo-Confucian thinker Zhou Dunyi (1017-73), particularly his seminal essay, "Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate" (Tajitu shuo), as a key articulation of the anthropocosmic vision that underlies the traditional Chinese practice of taijiquan. Although often associated with Daoism, the art of taiji actually draws on cosmological principles widely shared by followers of all Chinese schools of thought. Through a careful reading of Zhou's essay, it becomes apparent that Zhou is deeply versed in this very ancient pan-Chinese cosmic vision, giving his essay a decidedly mystical air. However, Zhou also takes pains to give his essay a distinctive Confucian flavor by stressing the necessity of human moral action in establishing proper cosmic balance. This marriage of the more mystical (Daoist) and practical/moral (Confucian) suggests that Zhou himself may have been a practitioner of some form of taijiquan, as that are functions by combining both aspects of Chinese philosophy. Whether this suggestion is true or not, however, Zhou's "Explanation" stands as perhaps the best articulation of the "essence" of taiji found in traditional sources.

Taijiquan is a deceptively simple body of practices promoting physical health as well as mental and emotional clarity. Superficially its benefits are similar to those derived from other exercise regimens (cardiovascular improvement, increased muscle tone and flexibility, etc.) but in its depths *taiji* is much more. *Taiji* combines assertive (*yang*) and receptive (*yin*) movements as a means of guiding and strengthening *qi* (matter-energy).¹ In the traditional Chinese worldview, these forces constitute the very basis of reality, thus it is not surprising that *taiji* often has profound effects. Indeed, even exploring the philosophy behind *taiji* can be beneficial, enabling us to perceive connections between our "selves" and the world that might otherwise remain obscure.

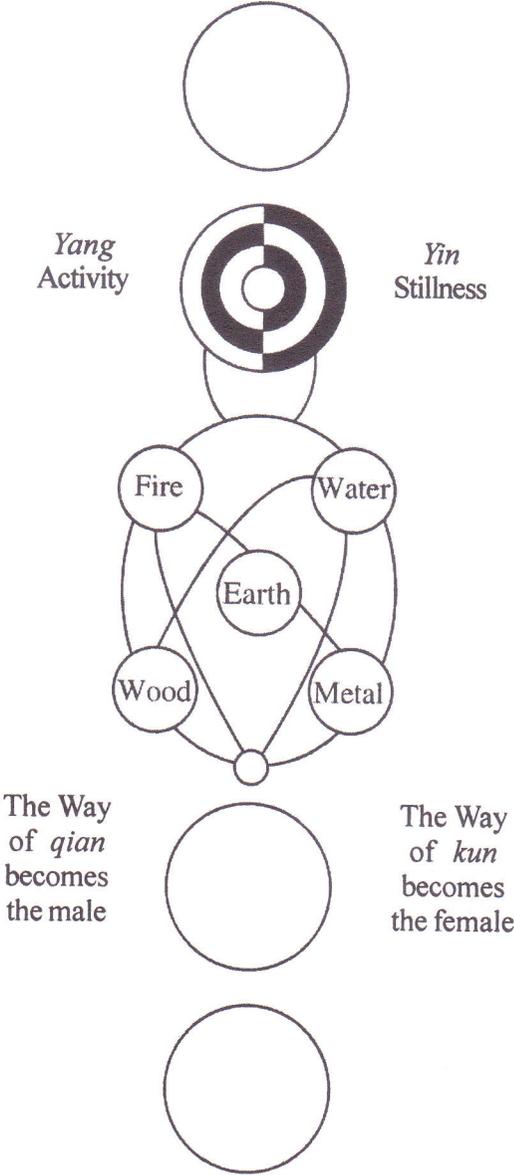
Although many people associate *taiji* with Daoism (a reasonable association given the legend of *taiji*'s invention by Zhang Sanfeng, a 14th century figure who lived in the Daoist center on Mount Wudang), one of the most insightful discussions of *taiji* principles comes from a Confucian thinker. Zhou Dunyi [1017-73] was the first of the so-called "Neo-Confucians," a group of thinkers from the Song dynasty [960-1279] who revitalized Confucianism, particularly in the areas of cosmology and spirituality. In his writings, Zhou combines a cosmic spirituality with the traditional Confucian emphasis on morality and politics to articulate an "anthropocosmic" vision wherein the forces of creation find their fullest expression in human beings. In speaking of such things, Zhou was following the lead of many earlier thinkers. However, unlike his predecessors, Zhou also drew upon the basic philosophy that underlies *taijiquan*, essentially making it the common metaphysical framework that has informed much of Chinese philosophy for nearly a millennium.²

According to great Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi [1130-1200], Zhou was the first sage since Mencius [385-312 BCE] and the founder of a "new transmission" of the Confucian Way (*Dao*). He transmitted the Way to the Cheng brothers (his nephews), who, in turn, transmitted the Way to Zhu himself.³ Despite his esteemed position in the Confucian lineage, however, Zhou was deeply influenced by Daoist ideas. This influence shows in his essay "Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate" (*Taijitu shuo*), a short treatise, as well as the accompanying "Diagram" itself (see next page), a depiction of the evolution of the cosmos.

The main theme of both works is simple: the human and cosmic realms are governed by the same norms; the microcosm and the macrocosm correspond perfectly. Much like earlier Chinese thinkers, Zhou proclaims that human life (including the socio-political realm) is rooted in the Way of Heaven, and that it is the duty of the Sage-ruler to ensure that the cosmic and human realms harmonize. Nonetheless, Zhou's "Explanation" presents this cosmology in a particularly powerful manner, prompting later thinkers to consider the work a true masterpiece.⁴

A close look at the "Explanation" yields some interesting insights. The treatise can be divided into six parts, each of which refers to several figures in the "Diagram." Part 1 begins with the "Non-Ultimate" (*wuji*), the primordial source of reality, which Zhou asserts to be essentially identical to the "Great Ultimate" (*taiji*), the core of all existence. The *taiji* gives rise to *yin* and *yang* by alternating from stillness to activity and back. Part 2 picks up on the alternating principles of *yin* and *yang*, speaking of how their alternation and combination produces the Five Phases (*wu xing*: water, fire, wood, metal, earth) which, in turn, form the basis for the cycles of nature (the Four Seasons). In Part 3 Zhou circles back to include the *wuji/taiji*, the "Two modes" (*yin* and *yang*) and the "Five phases," noting that the latter mutually interact with and stimulate one another, thereby constantly generating the myriad things of our world.

Diagram of the Great Ultimate (*Taiji tu*)⁵



Transformation and generation of the myriad things.

At this point Zhou has covered all figures of the Diagram yet the "Explanation" is only half-finished. He now shifts from the cosmic to human scale as he begins Part 4, although this shift does not mark an abrupt break since Part 4 is firmly rooted in the creative processes just outlined. Thus in Part 4 Zhou refers to both *yin* and *yang*, as well as our "five-fold nature" (an allusion to the Five Phases). In Part 5 Zhou then turns to the Sage, the great ideal of Chinese culture, one who more clearly perceives and embodies the cosmic forces than the majority of humankind. It is the Sage who addresses human affairs (mentioned at the end of Part 4) and "settles" them through Confucian virtues (centrality, correctness, humaneness, rightness). Yet despite such activity, the Sage abides in "stillness," mimicking the rhythm of the cosmos. Finally, in Part 6 Zhou turns to the *Yijing*, quoting two passages referring to the Sage's wisdom as embracing both cosmic and human truths. This last section ends Zhou's essay on a wonderful flourish, anchoring his work in one of the great scriptures of Chinese culture.

Zhou's use of language in the "Explanation" is especially intriguing, as even a brief examination shows. He begins with three simple words: *wuji erh taiji* ("The Non-Ultimate and yet Great Ultimate!").⁶ This most curious of lines is comprised of a negation and a positive affirmation linked by a conjunction. Grammatically, this phrase both distinguishes the *wuji* and *taiji* yet joins them together, suggesting an equivalence if not actual identity. Zhou continues in this same rhetorical mode, speaking of the incipient cosmos as both "still" and "active" in its functioning: "Activity and stillness alternate; each is the basis of the other." In Part 2 Zhou proclaims that the Five Phases are fundamentally one ("simply *yin* and *yang*; *yin* and *yang* are simply the *taiji*") while each has its own nature (Adler 1999, 1:675, with minor changes). Part 4 opens by declaring that humans have the "finest and most spiritually efficacious [*qi*]," thus singling us out for special consideration. Humans are distinct yet we are not fundamentally separate from other beings or from the processes of creation. Part 5 begins abruptly with the Sage appearing as if from nowhere. This Sage is a mysterious figure who, with little or no fanfare manages human (and cosmic?) affairs effortlessly, much like the working of nature.⁷ In the very last section of his treatise, after quoting the *Yijing*, Zhou concludes by stating "Great indeed is the *Yijing*! Herein lies its excellence!" (Adler 1999, 1:675, with minor changes). By closing on this note of awe, Zhou suggests that his treatise proffers us a glimpse of the Sage's cosmic vision.

Zhou's "Explanation" is, by turns, stirring, enlightening, yet maddeningly mysterious, and this air of mystery is a source of the text's power. The mystery manifests immediately in the text's opening line quoted above, a statement essentially equating a negation (*wuji*) with a positive affirmation (*taiji*). The mystery deepens as Zhou leads us through the Diagram, largely because although he describes the various figures, he never actually "explains" them. Indeed, Zhou is strangely silent on some of the Diagram's aspects.⁸ The essay, then, is *not* an explanation in the modern,

scientific sense but is more akin to a “theological” treatise, laying out basic teachings about reality (derived from “scripture,” i.e., the *Yijing*) and relating them to one another in a coherent way. In this regard, it resembles the Nicene Creed, a formal statement of core beliefs shared by all Christians. Like the Nicene Creed, Zhou’s “Explanation” assumes its readers are familiar with its ideas, presenting them as “articles of faith,” but never arguing *why* these things should be the case.

Invariably the “Explanation” prompts a host of questions while providing few definitive answers. One of the most vexing questions concerns the *taiji* itself: what exactly is it, and how is it related to the *wuji*? Both of these terms share the same root, *ji*, a term that primarily means “ridgepole of a house,” “utmost point,” or even “limit.” *Wuji* (“Non-Ultimate”) is a negative term, the prefix *wu* meaning “lack,” “nothing,” or perhaps more appropriately “un-.” Thus, we could translate it as “lacking an utmost point,” “limitless,” or more prosaically, “non-ridgepole.” The positive counterpart, *taiji*, begins with the prefix *tai* meaning “great,” “extreme,” or “furthest.” *Taiji* can thus be translated as “furthest point,” “extreme limit,” or even “great ridgepole.” A ridgepole is a central support of a structure, defining its limits by marking off its utmost boundaries. When constructing a house, one first erects the ridgepole, orienting everything else around it. Without the ridgepole, there can be no structure. Moreover, nothing in the rest of the edifice can extend beyond it; all household activities take place within the space the ridgepole defines. Such a structure, necessary for human habitation but always in the background, is ripe for deeper, more metaphorical meanings. Metaphysically, the ridgepole is what the late scholar of religion, Mircea Eliade, would call the *axis mundi* (world axis) around which reality revolves. This cosmic ridgepole marks the point of origin and orientation of the cosmos, as well as the limits of its order. The *taiji*, thus, is not a thing but is “nothing” (no thing), *wuji*. Yet it is through this “no thing” that *all* things come to be. The *taiji* sets up the basic parameters and guiding principles for the myriad things to arise and flourish.

The “Explanation” has other important features. In speaking of the *taiji* as the Ultimate Nothing from which all things come, Zhou is describing a process that is at once both temporal and atemporal. He outlines it in a “top-down” fashion, beginning with the *wuji/taiji* and progressing through stages in which *yin* and *yang* become differentiated, giving rise to the Five Phases and, through their mysterious combinations, produce the things of the world. However, despite Zhou’s step-by-step outline, the process is not a simple sequence but a continuous cycle in which none of the steps can be separated from the others. We are at the very limits of intelligibility here, where the meaning and referents of terms like “Nothing” and “Something” are neither clear nor distinct. Are they the same? Different? In what way? Zhou does not answer these questions but calls on us to intuit his meaning without analyzing it. In fact, his text graphically presents the process to us much as the “Diagram” does: it begins in “nothing” (*wuji*), erupts suddenly into “something” (*taiji*), and through a combination of stillness (*yin*) and

motion (*yang*) brings forth the structuring principles (Five Phases) that then produce the myriad things.

This stylistic point is important for understanding the text. The Classical Chinese in which Zhou writes is especially appropriate for such a treatise, as it is a highly literate and artificial language, rather telegraphic in nature. Lines of Chinese tend to be elliptical, lending themselves to various readings. Again, perhaps the best example is the treatise's first line, which is only three characters yet has sparked page after page of speculation by later interpreters. Textually speaking, this gives the essay an evocative style that encourages a play of associations within our minds. Reading Zhou's "Explanation" and the "Diagram" prompts us to explore various connections and shades of meaning that link the ideas and terms together, bringing them to our conscious awareness much as the subtle and hidden mechanisms of the *wuji/taiji* give rise to the world in which we dwell. Each reading invites new insights. Among other things, this revelatory quality may explain why three of the five figures in Zhou's "Diagram" are identical while the second and third are different: each of the figures shows the same cosmos yet the second and third reveal aspects of the world usually hidden from view.

As noted above, although Zhou was Confucian, both his "Explanation" and "Diagram" have Daoist roots. The term *taiji* has a host of Daoist meanings and associations. It appears, for instance, in the *Daode jing* (chap. 28), the *Zhuangzi* (chap. 6), the *Liezi* (chap. 5), and in many Daoist contexts refers to one of the many "heavens" or as an honorific title of various deities (Robinet 1990, 373-411). Moreover, scholars have discovered several Daoist diagrams remarkably similar to Zhou's that predate his. It seems likely that Zhou was inspired by such diagrams, but he "spins" them differently through the *human* focus of his cosmic discussion. He takes pains to single human beings out as having "the finest and most spiritually efficacious *qi*" (a feature that seems to refer to our intelligence) which Zhou links to our ability to distinguish "good" and "evil." It is here that Zhou shows his true Confucian colors, bringing his cosmic vision into focus on human moral cultivation and sagely rule. This idea of the Sage-ruler working in concert with the cosmos, of course, is not antithetical to Daoism; the *Daode jing*, for instance, explicitly addresses thirty-nine of its eighty-one chapters to the ruler.⁹ Zhou's "Explanation," however, displays a far more human-centered perspective, ultimately giving his essay a "Confucian" flavor despite its strong Daoist affinities.

Zhou Dunyi's "Explanation" is certainly a significant piece of Chinese literature but what does it have to do with *taijiquan*? It is not a training manual nor does it teach specific techniques. However, in his "Explanation," Zhou sheds new light on the art, even mirroring it in certain ways. For instance, the text begins with and constantly circles around the subject of the *taiji*, the core of reality, just as *taijiquan* taps into and circulates energy from our bodily cores. Reading and meditating upon the "Explanation" also calls upon our intuitive faculties, much as the practice of *taiji* does. The affinity between Zhou's "Explanation" and *taiji* practice becomes even

clearer when we reflect upon what *taiji* really entails. The forms of *taiji* are methods of getting in touch with the cosmic processes encompassing all things. In a real sense, the art of *taiji* is a process of reverting to the source and joining with it in a very deliberate way. As the *Daode jing* says, "Reversal is the movement of *Dao*."¹⁰ Through *taijiquan* one becomes the *taiji*, the cosmic ridgepole itself. *Taijiquan* is a form of recreation in which one directs one's body to reenact the evolution of all existence. This is why Zhou stresses humanity's special place within such a cosmos: we alone of all beings can realize (make "real") this creative process, bringing it into full self-awareness. As we become more aware of the process in which we participate, so we more clearly perceive our connections with all things. Perhaps even more tantalizing is Zhou's implicit suggestion that through such cosmic realization that we can intuit how to direct human affairs in their proper way; we, too, may become Sages.

There are several precedents for Zhou's anthropocosmic vision in earlier Chinese literature. Perhaps the most outstanding comes from the writings of Dong Zhongshu [195-105 BCE], a scholar-official of the early Han dynasty [202 BCE -220 CE]. Dong drew on various strands of thought, weaving them together into a complex tapestry with an overall Confucian design. At the center of his cosmic system stands the ruler of the realm, the *wang* (king). The *wang* is the model for all his subjects, uniting in his person Heaven, Earth, and Humanity. Significantly, the ruler in Imperial China was also known by the honorific title "Son of Heaven," implying an intimate, filial relationship between the model human being and the larger universe. Zhou Dunyi shares Dong's basic view but unlike his Han predecessor, Zhou does not confine the cosmic ideal only to the ruler. Rather, he opens it to *all* people. Much like Mencius, Zhou Dunyi maintained that all humans were at least potential Sages. Unlike Mencius, however, Zhou turns to the philosophy of *taijiquan* to elaborate on what our sagely potential means. Zhou's "Explanation" outlines how the practices of *taijiquan* bring us in line with the structure of the cosmos, allowing us to take our rightful position as the "children" of the universe. In this perspective, finding our proper place comes *not* from following a series of directives issued from on high (e.g., the "Ten Commandments") but by becoming aware of our connections with the world. This view contrasts strongly with modern Western views of humanity but strongly resonates with many of us who practice *taiji*.

It seems clear that Zhou Dunyi had a profound grasp of the philosophy of *taiji* but was he a practitioner? It is impossible to know for sure. Certainly, most forms of *taijiquan* were established long after Zhou's lifetime. However, *taiji* techniques are very ancient and have been practiced throughout Chinese history. In addition, Zhou had an abiding interest in spiritual cultivation, even being dubbed by one of his students a "poor Chan fellow." Like many Chinese, he found inspiration in nature, building his study by a stream at the foot of Mount Lu. He also was acutely

sensitive, feeling a kinship with all things. One story alleges that he even refused to cut the grass outside his window because he loved life so much. While this may be an exaggeration, it is fully in keeping with his view of human beings having the “finest” (hence most sensitive) *qi*. More importantly, Zhou writes in the voice of a true *taiji* master. His “Explanation” conveys a strikingly clear and awe-inspiring vision, opening up a religious perspective marked by a deep moral concern encompassing humanity and all existence. Such a mystical vision, in my experience, is shared by many *taiji* practitioners and may be the art’s most vital fruit.

In his “Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate” (and the “Diagram” itself) Zhou Dunyi integrates Confucian humanism and Daoist naturalism in a finely balanced way, much as the moves of *taijiquan* combine *yin* and *yang* into a graceful rhythm that is both fully natural and fully human. Even if Zhou did not practice *taiji*, he nonetheless succeeded in articulating its spirit in a manner few others have. We should regard him as the “Philosopher of *Taiji*” par excellence.

NOTES

1. For a simple explanation of *qi* and its place in Chinese cosmology see Ted J. Kaptchuk (1983, 35-41).

2. Zhou led a very Confucian life, holding various administrative positions and teaching several students before dying at the age of fifty-seven. Although praised for his service, Zhou never obtained the “Presented Scholar” (*jinsshi*) degree and never exerted much influence in Song society. Nonetheless, he was accorded great honors, being named “duke” (*gong*) in 1200 and eventually receiving sacrifices in the official Confucian temple in 1241. For details on Zhou’s life see Wing-tsit Chan (1963, 460-62) and Fung Yu-lan (1953, 2:434-35).

3. Most scholars agree that this “orthodox lineage” is actually Zhu’s attempt to lend an air of legitimacy to his particular school of thought. Such lineage construction, however, was a common and, indeed, essential practice in traditional China, where family pedigree was crucial for attaining social and political status.

4. Zhu Xi and his colleague Lu Zuqian [1137-1181] regarded Zhou’s “Explanation” so highly that they placed it at the beginning of their Neo-Confucian anthology, *Reflections on things at hand* (*Jinsi lu*) (see Chan 1967, 5-7). Note that Chan’s translation uses the older Wade-Giles instead of the more recent pinyin system of transliteration.

5. This version of the Diagram comes from Adler.

6. This and all quotations of Zhou’s text come from Adler (1999, 1:669-76). At various places I note where I make minor changes to Adler’s translation.

7. Zhou underscores the Sage’s “naturalness” by quoting a passage from the *Yijing* likening the Sage to Heaven and Earth, the sun and moon, and the four seasons (see Adler 1999, 1:675).

8. Zhou, for instance, does not explain the difference between the top circle and the bottom two circles; from a purely visual standpoint only their respective labels are different.

9. Ironically, Zhou returned the favor to his Daoist inspirers, as his "Explanation" eventually found its way into the Daoist Canon (*Daozang*).

10. *Daode jing* 40. Compare to hexagram 24 of the *Yijing*, *fu* ("return, reversal.")

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THE MAKING OF A FILIPINO PHILOSOPHER¹

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It is not only important for a Filipino teacher or scholar of philosophy to transform oneself into a Filipino philosopher by innovating within one's favorite philosopher (from Kantian, e.g., to neo-Kantian), by rejecting a philosophical position and formulating one's own (discarding Hegelianism, e.g., and formulating a neorealism), or by examining old philosophical questions and offering one's own novel perspectival solutions. It is more important to transform oneself into a world-class philosopher.

Last 28 December 2006, the paper entitled "The concept of the public good: A preliminary view from a Filipino philosopher" (2007a) was read during the conference of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in Washington, D. C. The author was then a Visiting Research Professor at the Catholic University of America from 20 September to 20 November 2006. He left the United States on 12 December 2006 because, beyond this date, all Northwest Airlines flights for Manila up to 31 December 2006 were fully booked. Professor John Abbarno (2007), president of the Conference of Philosophical Societies, who invited him to deliver a paper in an Asian panel of the APA conference, read the paper for him, and in an email, reported that the paper was "well received."² Another professor, Dr. Vincent Shen (2007), who teaches in Ontario, Canada and who also read a paper in the same panel, emailed the author that the participants' reactions to his paper were positive in that he succeeded in merging the private (business firms) and the public (government or the state) in his discussion of the public good.³ This incident is cited to bring to our attention the subject matter ("public good") and the author ("Filipino philosopher").

What, then, are the basic facts?

BASIC FACTS

Filipino Philosophy

First of all, it is a fact that there is Filipino philosophy. However, do not think that every Filipino teacher of philosophy agrees with this

statement. Even as late as 19 September 2006, during the meeting of the Commission on Higher Education Technical Committee on Philosophical Studies at Shangrila Hotel, Mandaluyong, the author's colleagues there had only a very hazy idea about the content of Filipino philosophy that he had to remark, "If you read my works, then you will know that there is such a thing as Filipino philosophy." This author is not even sure that every participant of the present PHAVISMINDA (Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao) Seminar has read his works on Filipino philosophy. He has written three books, an extensive bibliography, and several articles on the subject Filipino philosophy delivered in local and foreign philosophical conferences. Most of these are published.

When the author speaks of *Filipino philosophy*, he does not mean the approach used by Leonardo Mercado and Florentino Timbreza,⁴ which he calls the "cultural approach" (CA) in that they attempted to extract, as it were, the philosophical underpinnings or presuppositions of a people's culture as culled from their languages, folksongs, folk literature, folk sayings, and so on. Although this approach in itself is a significant contribution to the development of the philosophical landscape of the Philippines, it should not be confused with the *traditional* usage of the term "Filipino philosophy" (TA) as used by historians of philosophy. Open any book on a history of Western philosophy and you will "see" what the author means. We can also find a list of Eastern philosophers of India, China, Japan, and South Korea from the Internet.⁵ So it must go likewise for Filipino philosophers.

In the traditional approach, the early Filipino philosophers were Enlightenment thinkers in that they were influenced by the European Enlightenment. The Enlightenment movement of the 18th century in Central Europe traveled to Spain in the first half of the 19th century and reached the Philippines in the second half of that century. Jose Rizal, who bought all the works of Voltaire, was an Enlightenment thinker. He subscribed to the ideas of the Enlightenment: the dominance of *reason* with its capacity to emancipate mankind from its woes; the primacy of education as a tool for enlightenment; the inevitability of progress brought about by science and technology; the deistic belief that God created the universe with the laws of nature and left it perfectly working by itself, never to interfere with it again; the confidence that man can solve all his problems because these are humanly, not divinely, created; and the like. Emilio Jacinto was influenced by the Enlightenment idea of intellectual liberty as primary in a situation where volitional liberty is suppressed and debased while Andres Bonifacio, by the Enlightenment idea of the social contract and developed his own version. He converted the blood compact into a *kinship* contract between the Spaniards and the native Filipinos. He advocated the view that a revolution is justified when there is a breach of contract.

Filipino Philosopher

Second, it is a fact that there are Filipino philosophers. However, there are only a few of them. Most Filipinos engaged in philosophy are just *teachers* or *scholars* of philosophy. They have not yet graduated to become a genuine philosopher. They master a philosopher—say, Immanuel Kant, St. Thomas Aquinas, Friedrich Nietzsche, or Plato—or they specialize in a branch of philosophy—say, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of religion, or metaphysics. They try to learn a little of the other branches of philosophy to be able to relate those ideas with the ideas in their respective specializations. In other cases, they simply do not read some schools or traditions of philosophy, which they consider either as not genuine philosophy or are so technical for their understanding to fathom as in the philosophy of mathematics. But hardly if ever do they reflect or philosophize on their own.

To master a philosopher's philosophy or to master a field of specialization within a discipline is good, but Filipinos need to grow either outside or within that philosopher or that specialization. One ought not to be a Kantian forever, if by *Kantian* we mean we simply mouth Kant's ideas in our lectures and writings, that is to say, we do not innovate. We simply imitate Kant—we mimic his ideas and even probably also his mannerisms. We can quote or paraphrase from his three *Critiques* cover to cover, know the ins and outs of his life, and so on. We become an intellectual through him.

Many of the Filipinos are like this Kantian. They become Nietzschean or Heideggerian or Rortyan through and through. They forget about their own independence of mind. They forget that they can innovate or tread a new path. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1841) teaches that one should be an independent intellectual because to imitate is suicide. If all that one wants in life is just to become a Kantian, or to mimic Kant, then in effect he or she is an *intellectual suicide*. Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore were *young Hegelians* (White 1955, 13, 17) but eventually they rejected Hegel and formulated their own individual philosophies. Plotinus studied Plato but he did not end up just becoming a Platonist; he made a novel approach to Plato and became a neo-Platonist. It is said that Plato's immediate successor in the Academy was a Platonist⁶ but, unlike Aristotle, he was easily forgotten or taken for granted in history.

In contemporary times, we can cite Alfred North Whitehead, who became a neo-Heraclitean by affirming the reality of the Heraclitean flux while employing the results of modern physics, and Claro R. Ceniza, who became a neo-Parmenidean when he tried to reconcile the views of Parmenides on the One and those of Heraclitus on the Many.

Pythagoras—and many of the ancient Greeks—restudied the question that Thales earlier raised—“What is the universe made of?” or “What is the ultimate reality?”—and independently offered a solution.

In short, we have at least three ways to become a genuine philosopher: (1) we can innovate (from Kantian to neo-Kantian), (2) we can reject an old

philosophical thought and create a new path to philosophizing, and (3) we can review old philosophical questions and offer a new insight or philosophical reflection.

SUBJECT MATTER: CONTENTS OF FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY (TA)

What does it mean to relate philosophy to the Philippine setting? What does the theme “Doing Philosophy in the Philippine Context” signify?

Preliminaries

Philosophy and Culture

There is no denying that the Filipino has a cultural setting, and philosophy (TA) in this regard can contextually arise from culture. There is a symbiotic relationship between culture and philosophy. Culture influences philosophy as philosophy transforms culture (see Gripaldo 1994-95, 101-12). Perhaps, the same can be said with science and culture and speak about the scientific culture. The Philippines lags behind many countries, particularly South Korea, which was behind the former in the 1960s in developing a vibrant scientific and philosophical culture. The Philosophical Association of the Philippines was founded in 1973, far way ahead of South Korea, but South Korea has overtaken the former by becoming a member of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (the French acronym is FISP) and will now hold the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy in Seoul in August 2008. Where did the Filipinos fail?

Easy Contented Life

Generally, the Filipinos are a happy people. Surveys (see Shead 2001-2005 and Pascual Jr. 2003) have shown how they can easily manage to smile in the midst of suffering and difficulties or in spite of their poverty. This is said to be an admirable trait, but it can also be deleterious to the idea of progress or improvement. In a manner of speaking, *Mababaw ang kaligayahan ng Pinoy* (“Filipino happiness is shallow”). The Filipino is generally easily contented to be able to eat two or three times a day because in the world there are many people who hardly eat, or have eaten only once a day.⁷

The drive for excellence and professional growth is generally lacking among many Filipino professionals and academics. Once they become permanent and have sufficient financial security of employment, they tend to become lax and content with their situation. For many of them, the drive for excellence tapers and their careers plateau. Many of those with Master’s degrees seem not to have the zest anymore to finish their Ph.D.s. They attend to many activities other

than excellence in their respective professional careers. In philosophy, one can either be an excellent scholar or an excellent philosopher. Although one can be both, it is best not to stop at just being a scholar, but to become a philosopher himself or herself.

Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP)

The same situation can be said of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines. Established in the 1970s, it did not have the grand vision of regularly circulating as an association in philosophical activities outside of the country. It held national seminars but it did not even publish its proceedings nor did it publish a philosophical journal. Moreover, it did not aspire to become a member of the FISP, which demands of a prospective member that the philosophical association should have a regular minimum membership of one hundred, a tradition of scholarly publications, and an annual FISP membership of \$200.

The PAP was content with just holding an annual seminar and a midyear seminar. Its income is spent in monthly meetings rather than in financing publications. Year in and year out, PAP holds annual seminars and midyear philosophical seminars or conferences and spends the money in preparation for the following year's seminars. What for? It has an *absurd existence*, like that of Sisyphus rolling the rock up the hill without genuinely succeeding. The rock rolls down the hill and Sisyphus rolls it back again.

There is a need to revitalize the PAP and steps have been taken towards this direction. PAP has just published the second volume of its conference proceedings (2007, 1-154). It has adopted and participated in the publication and distribution of *Φιλοσοφία: International Journal of Philosophy*, which is abstracted in *The Philosopher's Index*, Bowling Green, Ohio. It has tied up with the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society (PNPRS) and the Philosophical Association of Northern Luzon (PANL). PAP will certainly be happy if the Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao, like PNPRS and PANL, will become an institutional member of PAP and will adopt *Φιλοσοφία* as its national journal. In this way, PAP's membership will be augmented. Soon it will apply for membership to FISP, and hopefully in five year's time, in 2013, PAP can bid to host the 24th World Congress of Philosophy for 2018.

Content of Filipino Philosophy (TA)

If the Filipinos go beyond being simply a scholar and aspire to become a philosopher worthy to be acknowledged as such in the world, then they need to recognize that, first and foremost, they are Filipinos whose nationality is defined in the Philippine Constitution and who have lived in a native cultural setting for a long time. Earlier, the analysis of the "concept of the public good" was cited as a subject of philosophizing. The

philosophical import of the argument here is that a philosophy is defined by the nationality of the philosopher regardless of the subject matter wherein he or she does his or her philosophizing. The important thing in philosophizing is not simply *tangential* philosophical reflections but *substantial* philosophical innovativeness that could have ramifications in the philosophical world.

Western Philosophical Orientation

The Filipinos need also to recognize that any cultural setting is rooted in history. Culture over time is history. If they look back in their history, it is not difficult to see the beginnings of their philosophical development as part of their cultural heritage. Its ferment occurred during the Propaganda Movement of the later part of the 19th century. This was the period of Filipino awakening, philosophically speaking. And that Movement was heavily influenced by the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. So necessarily, their philosophical beginnings and their developmental trajectory are influenced by a Western orientation. If we examine what is going on in philosophy in the Philippines today, it is basically Western in outlook with some occasional pockets of what is known as the Oriental outlook. The bibliography (see Gripaldo 2000, 2004d) gathered on Filipino philosophical writings from 1774 to the present will attest to this Western leaning.

Most, if not all, of the traditional and contemporary issues in Western philosophy are the issues and contents of Filipino philosophical writings. However, most of these writings are not innovative but basically expository with some reflections in them. What is needed are philosophical innovations that are distinctively the product of profound philosophical minds, something that will separate one's thoughts from the thoughts of others before him or her. And, I think, this is one of the great challenges of a would-be Filipino philosopher.

Philosophical Extractions from Filipino Culture

A cultural rethinking of Filipino philosophy is important, but it should be a philosophical reflection of their existing culture as a whole or a holistic evaluative reflection of Filipino individual cultural traits. Except probably one or two traits, many Filipino cultural traits are ambivalent: they can be used for good or for bad. At least two initial works on this trend of analysis can be mentioned. One was edited by Manuel Dy (1994) and the other edited by Gripaldo (2005). Both were published in America by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

What is objectionable is when a philosophy researcher simply studies Filipino works in literature, songs, and the like, and then extract philosophical ideas or themes therein, and then declare that *that* is "Filipino philosophy." Although this activity of philosophical extraction from culture

is in itself significant, it is *essentially* a social scientific activity, as done by anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, and the like. William Graham Sumner, an American sociologist, does this activity in his *Folkways* (1906, 1960). Filipino writers like Leonardo Mercado (1974, 1994), Florentino Timbreza (1982),⁸ Virgilio Enriquez (1988), and F. Landa Jocano (1997), among others, do this in their works. What is objectionable is the argument to the effect, “This is the way things are. This *is* the way Filipinos do behave. Therefore, this is the way Filipinos *ought* to behave, culturally speaking.” Sumner (1906; 1960, 45, 49) rejects philosophy in that it is counterfactual as if we philosophers cannot make innovations within the existing culture. Ethics, for example, is the study of what *ought* to be. Philosophers propose it as an alternative to the what *is*, that is, to the existing morality (the existing mores). Philosophers believe it is a better alternative. Headhunters should cut heads during the hunting season. This is part of the mores. Philosophers say it is bad and *ought* to be abandoned.⁹ *Pakikisama*, for example, is good in some situations, but it is bad in other situations when one is forced to go with the group’s unpleasant objectives at the expense of some noble objectives (see Leoncini 2004 and Quito 1988). And we have a number of cases where *pakikisama* is used for bad purposes and should be abandoned in those cases. This is the type of *philosophical analysis* that is *philosophically* productive, not the type of Sumnerian *descriptive analysis* that is, of course, *scientifically* productive, but may be interpreted in such a way as to become philosophically counterproductive.

Filipinos, however, need to graduate from this kind of piecemeal analysis. It is important to have a holistic philosophy of culture similar to the one done by Jean Ladriere (1994), a French philosopher, and Richard Taylor (2000), a Canadian philosopher. Ladriere discusses the symbiotic relationship between culture and philosophy while Taylor holds that culture is the ground of human existence.

The Shift to the Study of Filipino Philosophy

The author wants to reiterate and highlight some aspects in what he earlier said in the paper “My philosophical development.”

The author’s training and education in undergraduate philosophy was relatively exhaustive. Some of his philosophy teachers from 1965-69 at the Mindanao State University, Marawi City were American peace corps volunteers (David Wiley, Ross Kales, and Christine Kales) who introduced him to symbolic logic; aesthetics; a history of Western philosophy; and contemporary philosophy, such as the analytic tradition, existentialism, phenomenology, pragmatism, process philosophy, and Marxism, among others. The Filipino philosophy teachers he had (Leyol Moredo, Juvenal Lazaga, and Ambrosio Quiñonez) introduced him to ethics, logic and language, metaphysics, and the principles and methods of science. In his Master’s degree (Armando Bonifacio, Ramon Buenvenida, Noe Tuason,

Andresito Acuña, and Jose Espinosa), he concentrated on the study of the Philosophy of Language because that was the first philosophy of the analytic tradition in the 1970s and his philosophical temperament was attuned to this tradition. For almost a decade he taught varied philosophy subjects, including areas which he did not formally study in college but which he studied on his own, such as Japanese philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy, philosophy of education, philosophy of person, and philosophy of history, among others. He read works here and there of Filipino philosophy in the traditional sense: a few articles, books, and Master's theses. His exposure to nationalist ideas also helped him in forming a decision to concentrate on Filipino philosophy for a doctoral study. He was exposed to philosophical ideas from the outside. He thought it was high time that he look inward and study his own. He believed there is Filipino philosophy in the same sense as Greek, British, or French philosophy. Those who told him there was no such thing as Filipino philosophy were, to his mind, charlatans. When asked if they have done research on the subject matter, they readily admitted in the negative and, in an *argumentum-ad-ignorantiam* fashion, declared that it was not worth studying because there was no such thing. For almost three decades now the author has extensively written about this subject and produced four books (two on Filipino traditional philosophy, one on Jacinto, and one on Quezon), excluding a bibliography, and several articles. His background in Western philosophy and his studies in Oriental philosophy were enough training and materiel to know what to look for in the writings of Filipino thinkers. Moreover, a good working background on Western and Eastern thought is also *generally* important in becoming a world-class philosopher.

At this juncture, it might be argued that what he has been doing is still extractive in nature. That is true, but the philosophical ideas or systems of thought that a historian of philosophy extracts come from the works of an individual thinker, not from a cultural group. This is an important difference between the traditional and cultural approaches to philosophy. The *traditional approach* has a long tradition in the history of philosophy, dating as far back as Thales. The systematic *cultural approach* in philosophy is a phenomenon of the 20th century.

Does the author have a philosophy of his own? The answer is affirmative although he has not yet written it in one book, but scattered in various works. If you have read his book *Circumstantialism* (1977) and his works on the theory of speech acts (2003) where he ontologically rejected the logical term *proposition*, on the public good (2007a), on the philosophy of media (2006), etc., then you will know that he has a philosophy, but its overall picture is still developing. In due time, he intends to write a volume or two about his own comprehensive systematic philosophy. After all, the *task* of Filipinos is to make themselves philosophers, not just teachers or scholars of philosophy.

FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY AND THE WORLD

It is important to situate Filipino philosophy (TA) in world history. Outside the Philippines, Filipinos are known as a “nation of nannies”¹⁰ or a nation of “hewers of wood [and] drawers of water.”¹¹ This is partly because these are the highly visible commodities we find in Western Asia (Middle East), Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan. Our domestic helpers, caregivers, entertainers, drivers, and labor workers are usually featured in world news. The other reason is partly because very little is known about our sailors, engineers, nurses, doctors, teachers, computer scientists, and the like. There are 4.5 million Filipinos in the United States (“Overseas Filipinos,” n.d.) and, according to a CNN report, the second richest ethnic group in America, after the Indians, are the Filipinos.¹²

When it comes to Filipino philosophy scholars and philosophers making a dint in world philosophy circles, it is virtually zero. Every now and then this Filipino minority group read papers in world philosophy conferences. But many of their counterparts in Asia, like the South Koreans, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Indians were there in droves reading different papers. In the World Congress on Mulla Sadra held in Tehran in 1999, I was the only Filipino there who read a paper on the theory of speech acts. In the 21st World Congress of Philosophy held in Istanbul in 2003, only two Filipinos presented papers. There were also two Filipinos who delivered papers in the philosophy conference in Athens in June 2006,¹³ and I was the only Filipino who presented a paper in the American Philosophical Association Conference held in December 2006 in Washington, D. C. No doubt, there are other Filipinos who read papers in world philosophy conferences alone.

My point here is that Filipino scholars and philosophers are talented. They can face the philosophy world with confidence and with a high standard of scholarship or philosophizing. They need world exposure, and they need to help each other fulfill this exposure. Instead of competing among themselves locally and trying to outsmart each other, or trying to brag which department of philosophy or which philosophical association is the best, and in the process pull each other down, they need to cooperate and pull each other up. The task of showing the world that they have a vibrant umbrella philosophy organization—the PAP—worthy of world respect, and that they have world class philosophy scholars and philosophers, is in their hands.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to emphasize it is high time that Filipino teachers and scholars of philosophy do not lose sight of the goal not only of converting themselves into philosophers but of aspiring to become world-class philosophers. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to concentrate in

either attempting to innovate on the ideas of one's own favorite philosopher, or to discard one's favorite philosopher and reflectively create a new way of thinking and of analyzing things, or to re-examine old and new philosophical issues and offer a profound solution to any of these issues. Moreover, they need to cooperate among themselves in sharing their views with the philosophical world where the real competition for recognition as a world-class philosopher matters.

NOTES

1. Paper presented on 27 May 2007 at Silliman University, Dumaguete City in the philosophical conference sponsored by the Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao.

The author readily accepted the invitation to read a paper in this conference because the theme, "Doing Philosophy in the Philippine Context," is close to my heart. On 16-19 February 2004, an international conference on the theme, "Teaching Philosophy in the Asian Context," was held at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City. It was sponsored by Institut Missio (Germany), the Asian Christian Higher Education Institute of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (Hong Kong), and the Ateneo de Manila University. The paper submitted here was titled "My philosophical development." It talks about how the author shifted his philosophical focus from Western philosophy to Filipino philosophy and the reasons behind the shift. It was published as an appendix of his book *Filipino philosophy: Traditional approach*, Part I, Section 2 (2004a).

During the 21st World Congress of Philosophy, held at Istanbul, Turkey on 10-13 August 2003, the author presented the paper "Is there a Filipino philosophy?" (2007b). Here he distinguished three approaches to Filipino philosophy, viz., traditional, cultural, and national. He also tried briefly to shed light on what it means to be a true philosopher.

Since then he had various papers dealing with Filipino philosophy in the traditional approach, aside from the two books he has written on the subject. (The first book on Filipino traditional philosophy appeared in 2000 and was reprinted in 2004a while the second book appeared in 2004b.) It is *traditional* in the sense that it is the tradition used in histories of philosophy that began as far back as Thales. Here historians of philosophy enumerate chronologically the philosophers of different countries—as in Greek philosophy, British philosophy, French philosophy, etc., and discuss their respective philosophies. In the paper read in Athens, Greece on 2 June 2006 entitled "Filipino philosophy: A Western tradition in an Eastern setting" (2007c), the author discussed the historical development of traditional Filipino philosophy. Although incomplete, it was relatively extensive as it discussed ten Filipino philosophers: five from the past (1870-1950), three from the modern or recent contemporary period (1951-1980), and two from the current contemporary period (1981-onwards).

[Philosophers cited in the books (2004a and 2004b) are: from 1870-1950—Rizal, Bonifacio, Jacinto, Quezon, and Laurel; 1951-1980—Constantino, Embuscado, and Gripaldo; 1981-onwards—Bautista and Ceniza. After *Circumstantialism* (1977), Gripaldo has continued to write on philosophical topics up to now.]

In today's conference, the author will dwell on how one can *become* a Filipino philosopher.

2. Here is the exact quote from Professor John Abbarno (2007): "The paper was well received. There were others who read so we were limited on discussion. I thank you again for...preparing this with such late notice."

3. Dr. Shen's exact words (2007) are: "Someone was saying that you've done very well and described very beautifully how in Philippine society the public merged into the private and vice versa."

4. In Africa—in particular in Nigeria—cultural philosophy is called traditional philosophy or ethnophilosophy since it is extracted from ethnic tribes, specifically, the Yoruba and others. See Udefi (2007, 155-61).

5. For a relatively comprehensive list of Eastern philosophers, see "Timeline of Eastern philosophers," *Wikipedia*, n.d.

6. Speusippus adhered to the philosophy of Plato. Though he rejected the World of Forms, he did not make a significant innovation in Plato's philosophy (see *Wikipedia*, n.d.).

7. The general fatalistic attitude of Filipinos also contributes to their ability to transcend their depressing and lowly situation and manage a smile (see Gripaldo 2006d, 203-20).

8. Florentino Timbreza is not a sociologist but an ethnophilosophy scholar. Apparently, ethnophilosophy is the boundary between sociocultural anthropology and sociocultural philosophy.

9. We respect the mores of headhunters but ethically we disagree with them. It is not a matter of a person from another culture judging the moral merits of another culture, but rather a headhunter may be able to transcend the mores of his own culture and question its moral merits. Among Christians, there are those who favor the death penalty while others question its moral merits. Within a given culture, there may be members who would question the moral merits of their own mores and offer a better ethical alternative, supported by sound reasons or arguments (see Alkemade and Burg 1998).

10. See the remarks of Ms. Quigaman (2005) when she was interviewed during the Miss International Beauty Pageant in Tokyo.

11. Paul Krugman (n.d.) describes the Filipino poor, the majority of the Filipinos, and other Third World workers in this marginalistic, lowly way.

12. Cited by Noel Tan (2007) in a sermon at the Bread of Life Ministry, Greenbelt I, Makati City, 3 March. By "Indians," I do not mean American Indians but those coming from India.

13. In Istanbul, Dr. Corazon Toralba of the University of Asia and the Pacific and I presented papers while in Athens, Dean M. L. M. Festin of San Carlos Seminary and I read papers.

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HOW TO BRING BACK MORAL GRAVITAS

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Part of the task of doing moral philosophy is to strengthen our confidence in morality or to bring back the gravitas of morality. I argue that this cannot be done by a representational view of moral reality and by downplaying the importance of human sentiments that make our moral assertions more natural and authentic.

INTRODUCTION

Moral Realism (MR) is motivated by the desire to make *ethics* a dignified academic discipline that comports well with respectable theories in physical, natural, and social sciences. Underlying this motivation is a tradition in Anglo-American philosophy that flirts with science, an activity that leads its practitioners to think that philosophy is either a scientific discipline or a discipline that is in friendly partnership and collaboration with empirical science. This kind of tradition and activity is strongly shared by External Realists, encouraged by Expressivists and Internalist Realists, and strongly rejected by Nonnaturalists.¹

Moral realists think that by securing the intellectual dignity of ethics they can somehow help bring back the *gravitas* that morality once had (if there ever was a time like that). They do this by either naturalizing or nonnaturalizing ethics.² Perhaps what they unconsciously have in mind is similar to what Christians or Catholics had during the medieval period. To be a Christian or a Catholic then was to be a civilized and an intellectually dignified person. The realist project in ethics hopes to bring about the same *gravitas* in our time in regard to morality by showing that to be a moral person today is to be an intellectually respectable person. Thus, by proving that moral judgments are objectively real and that real moral facts and properties are real reasons for actions, moral realists are confident that they can help revive the respect that we once had for morality.

I am not saying that this project is explicitly articulated by all realist proponents in ethics. But it is implied in the writings of Railton (1986) and Zimmerman (1984) and the unanimous rejection by all ethical realists of subjectivism and relativism in ethics. Hence I take them to insinuate the following assumptions:

1. that there is moral decline in the world;
2. that subjectivism and relativism in ethics contribute and do not have any solution to the decline of morality that we see in the world; and
3. that representational realism in ethics is the only reliable moral theory that can help prevent this decline and bring back the respect that we ought to have for morality.

I will take up each of these three assumptions in this paper. This essay is not without a cause. I try to advance a theoretical and a moral cause here. The theoretical cause is to advance the importance of human sentiments in bringing about actions in the practice of morality. The moral cause is to emphasize the importance of producing morally upright individuals in our society, which philosophers as moral agents, need to inform not only by what they think, but by what they do as well.

Since I think that it has been the traditional opinion of moralists since time immemorial that morality is declining due to the continuing presence of evils (reprehensible actions) in the world, I will simply take the claim that there is moral decline in the world today as true by default. I do not really know how to prove that there is indeed a moral decline in the world. But if there is, I offer an explanation and a reason for it here. So I will simply assume that (1) is true and inquire into it further in part 2. In part 3, I will discuss why (2) is generally true not only of subjectivist and relativist theories in ethics, but even of external realist theories as well. I will argue against (3) in part 4 because metaphysical realism's dismissive view of the role of human attitudes and emotions in morality will reveal that it also holds no solution and hope towards bringing back the respect that we ought to have for morality. And finally in part 5, I will develop some possible solutions to solve (1) and make some suggestions on how to bring back moral gravitas. My thrust in this essay is mainly to show how and why MR is impaired by its metaphysics in giving solutions to the problem of bringing back and maintaining moral dignity in the world of feeling and desiring human beings.

I. MORAL DECLINE IN THE WORLD

When we talk of a decline in morality what we really have in mind is a failure in the practice of morality. Moral decline has to do

with practice (action) not with theory (the knowledge of what ought and what ought not to be done). We all have shared knowledge of what is right or wrong. We all recognize that we have known and unknown duties and responsibilities. We all have reasons for actions. But this shared knowledge is not readily translatable into practice. We know for example that doing X is better than doing Y, or that we have a reason to do X and do not have a reason to do Y, and yet do Y instead of X. This seems to show that there is moral weakness of the will (incontinence/*akrasia*³), and that this weakness can be used to explain why there is moral decline in the world.⁴ Incontinent people do not do what they ought to do.

There is good reason then to believe that moral decline (among other things) in the world is due to weakness of the will. Moral *akrasia* can be true of a single individual or a group of people. How do I define or characterize moral incontinence (henceforth MI)? MI is a conscious or an unconscious failure to conform with, meet, and satisfy the demand(s) or requirement(s) of a moral rule or principle (i.e., a reason for action). It is, in other words, a violation of a moral principle or rule. It is not a state but an action, an action that is inconsistent with a reason or a principle and that this incontinent action is blameworthy. Characterizing incontinence this way goes against a theological and biblical tradition that views MI as a sinful natural state rather than a sinful act (see Rom. 7:14-25). Another tradition that militates against my view is the one which Christianity and Kantianism owe to Plato, the view that MI is due to an overpowering set of affects or desire that cancels out or defeat reason. On this view, the emotions are enemies of reason that need to be defeated by reasoning/rationality.

I wish to drop these traditional views here for two reasons. The first is that they make MI impossible. If MI is due to either a natural state or an overpowering set of emotions or desire, we would wonder why and how a given action can be considered incontinent if it is done beyond one's intention or capacity to control. Person P did Y instead of X despite his knowledge that she has a reason or an intention to X and has no reason or no intention to Y. But if her doing Y is caused by factors beyond which she has no control and which she did not intend to do, how can her action be considered incontinent and culpable? The second is that they have a very negative view about the role of emotions in practical reasoning. Engendered by these traditions is the tendency to downplay, sever, and even vilify the importance of desires and sentiments in motivating actions that are consistent with normative reason by ethical rationalists and realists who follow Kant's lead. My view then is that MI is not due to the presence of a set of emotions or desires that go against one's best judgment. It is rather due to the absence of a sufficient and more powerful set of affective dispositions or desires that could inspire and move an agent to action

in accordance with the demands and requirements of practical reason, which is more consistent with the meaning of *akratos*. It can also be attributed to a poor upbringing in which an agent is brought up in an environment where authorities with moral ascendancy like priests, ministers, teachers, and parents fail to live up to the moral principles they uphold with passion and enthusiasm.

Living up to moral principles that one upholds is not enough to convince and convert others that those principles are the right ones. One also needs to show enthusiasm and cheerfulness in upholding them to inspire followers to live a life that is worth living. In my view, these, among other things, explain what constitutes a good or a bad upbringing. Good people are not born, they are produced or made. It is never easy to produce good people in the world. It is not enough to train individuals to practice the virtues by living a good example. They must also be trained how to cultivate affective dispositions which make the practice of virtues easier and more interesting. It is true that people belonging to one culture can also be trained to be enthusiastic and passionate about violating the moral rules that people from another culture have simply because they hold and share opposing moral principles. This is possible given the diversity of cultures with unique moral rules and values in the world which are formed by people's different religions and ideologies. But this can be taken as a driving force by moral agents in any culture to be more passionate and enthusiastic about training more and more people to engage in the practice of their own moralities. Those who think that the moral principles or values they have and live by are the right ones are expected to be more passionate and enthusiastic in practicing and promoting them than their rivals who think otherwise. Clashes of opposing and competing moralities might be inevitable given the different life situations that we have in the world. But this could be how values are sifted in the real world. Those which do not contribute to human flourishing are eliminated and those which are useful are allowed to thrive. Moralities or values that are more resilient and tenacious are more likely to be adopted and practiced by most people because they solve most of their problems.

On the view of MI that I point to here, intentional action is not important for it to be considered a weakness of the will. Done intentionally or unintentionally, a given action is incontinent if it is inconsistent with a given set of moral principles that one upholds. MI does not consist in one's having conscious intention that goes against her best judgment or reason. It is not also the possession of an overpowering passion that militates against and defeat reason. As a normative concept, MI is simply a conscious or an unconscious action (intentional or otherwise) that violates or falls short from a set of moral rules or principles due either to the lack or absence of a set of sufficient affective dispositions and an inadequate moral upbringing

to move an agent to action in accordance with normative reason. Weakness of the will as described here cannot only be predicated on actions, but on beliefs, intentions, and emotions as well. But I will only concentrate on weakness of the will as predicated on actions here as they are the ones that are mainly considered culpable or immoral.

Moral decline then is a general failure to practice or live by the shared moral principles or ideals that people have. This failure is due to MI or *akrasia*. MI is a conscious or an unconscious violation of or an inability to practice moral principles that are normative (sufficient) reasons for moral agents. This violation or inability is mainly due to the absence (not the presence) of sufficient emotional dispositions that move an agent to action in accordance with a given set of reasons, and an inadequate moral training that makes it difficult for an agent to practice the moral principles she upholds. This account of moral decline commits one to a practical/internal (not metaphysical) realism about moral failures in the world. It also commits one to a solution that forces her to be a practical realist about human emotions and feelings as mental states, which in my view, play a very important role in devising a practical solution to the problem of MI that I try to establish here. I will make some suggestions on how to develop this kind of solution in part 4.

II. MENACE OF SUBJECTIVISM AND RELATIVISM

As a kind of naturalism, subjectivism in ethics is the view that what is right/good or wrong/bad depends on what one affectively approves or disapproves. Subjectivism presupposes the truth of the following claims:

- (1) moral agents have feelings and desires;
- (2) moral agents express these feelings and desires when they make moral judgments; and
- (3) moral judgments are expressions of feelings and desires that moral agents have.

As an argument, I take it that subjectivists must reckon that (3) follows as a conclusion from (1) and (2). Moral realists fear that by making moral judgments contingent on what agents emotively approve or disapprove we lose the knack to tell the difference between correct and incorrect moral judgments. We can never be objectively correct or incorrect about what people feel and desire. This results in the maximization and proliferation of moral disagreements which the moral realists try to minimize and reduce by making moral judgments objectively and universally true or false. If one moral judgment is treated to be as good as another since both are expressions of feelings

by agents making them, then both judgments are valid even if they are opposed to one another.

This picture of the status of moral judgments is totally unacceptable to moral realists because it is inconsistent with the platitudes that we have about moral judgments. We commonly believe that there are right/correct or wrong/incorrect moral judgments and that when two people make opposing moral judgments, one of them (at most) is right. To moral realists, moral decline in the world is precisely caused by making moral judgments dependent on people's feelings. On the subjectivist view of morality, moral decline in the world might be denied. There can be no morally incontinent actions in the world if judgments of them are devoid of propositional or cognitive value. Subjectivists in ethics are therefore not expected to provide a solution to the fact of moral decline in the world if, as engendered by their emotive view of moral judgments, moral decline is merely an expression of our disapproval of many events and actions in the world.

The apprehension by moral realists of the potential menace and inability of subjectivism to provide a solution to moral decline in the world is based on the assumption that we can never be rational (i.e., right or wrong) about feelings and desires. Subjectivists and realists in ethics share this assumption. Realists think that feelings and desires play no role at all in determining the truth or falsity of moral judgments. Moral realists can accept the truth of (1) but deny the truth of (2) and (3). What agents express when making moral judgments are belief statements that correctly represent or correspond to moral facts and properties in the world. Like the moral subjectivist, the moral realist thinks that feelings and desires do not make moral judgments true or false. I think that this assumption is false and should be rejected. I will argue that we can be right or wrong about our feelings and desires.

On the nonrational interpretation of (1) to (3) above which is shared by subjectivists and realists in ethics, moral subjectivism appears to contribute more and can never be expected to provide any solution to the moral decline that we see in the world which it denies. If there is no moral decline in the world, it naturally follows that there are no incontinent or irrational actions in the world. But there are incontinent actions. Moral realists see this as a threat to the *gravitas* that morality has. This is indeed the case if it is granted that we can never be objective and rational about our feelings and desires. I maintain that this is not correct and should be rejected. I admit that feelings and desires may constitute our moral judgments, but I do not admit that we cannot be rational (correct or incorrect) about them.

It is important to observe that while the subjectivist is an irrealist about the existence of moral facts and properties, she is not so about the existence of feelings and desires. The subjectivist believes that there are feelings and desires. Now, feelings and desires are intentional

states, that is, they are feelings or desires about certain things.⁵ The sentential form, “X feels that p,” expresses a relation between an agent/subject X and what she feels which is indicated by the *constative (propositional)* function “p.” In “Pedro feels that he should be honest to his wife,” the subject cannot fail to refer to his feeling which is expressed by the constative that the “that” clause stands for which is “p.” If what is felt is about something and that something is a constative (see Gripaldo 2003, 185-206), then that constative cannot fail to serve as a truth condition for the sentence expressed by the “that” clause.⁶ Thus, sentences expressing feelings can be truth evaluable since they also express constatives.

Now, it is logically *a priori* that a subject cannot simultaneously have contrary feelings or desires. An agent cannot feel that “p” and “~p” simultaneously.⁷ It is incoherent to say, “Pedro feels that he should be honest to his wife and that he should not be honest to his wife.” The principle of noncontradiction applies here. If a logical principle can be applied to determine whether intentional judgments are coherent or not, then such judgments can be rational or irrational, consistent or inconsistent. We can therefore be rational or irrational about our feelings or desires. Now, since the subjectivist and the realist deny that sentences expressing feelings or desires are truth evaluable and rational, any attempt to demonstrate the rationality and cognitivity of feelings and desires are not welcome even if they are available to them.

The same cognitivity and rationality is shown by “Maria desires to δ .” It can be said that when a person desires she desires something, that is, she has a desire about something. A desiring person with that intentional state cannot be mistaken about what she desires. It is her desire after all and not anyone else’s. A desiring person can therefore not fail to refer to her desire when she has it. In “Maria desires to give money to the poor,” Maria cannot fail to refer to her desire to give money to the poor because that is what she desires to do. What Maria desires, which is to give money to the poor, can be a truth condition then for the claim “Maria desires to give money to the poor.” Now, when Maria desires to δ she cannot desire to δ and $\sim\delta$ simultaneously without being incoherent. Maria can be said to desire to δ if and only if she desires to δ , or not to δ if and only if she desires not to δ . Judgments about emotive states then can be truth evaluable. Having such states also follows and observes a simple principle of coherence and consistency. It is therefore not true, as implicitly claimed by subjectivists and realists in ethics, that judgments expressing emotive dispositions can never be cognitively and rationally appraised.

If one denies that there are intentional and affective mental states like feelings and desires, she owes us an explanation about the many platitudes that we have about these states. We often hear people say, “I feel very sad about losing my girlfriend”; “I feel mad about that

girl”; “It feels disgusting to see men peeing on walls”; “Seeing American soldiers in Iraq makes me feel angry at George Bush”; “Juan desires to see Maria naked”; “Pedro has a strong lustful desire for Maria”; “Juan, Maria, and Pedro desire to be rich and famous”; “Maria desires to buy stilettos to feel thinner, taller, and sexier,” and other similar things. People seem to know what they feel or desire about. We simply cannot deny the fact that people possess feelings, desires, and other emotions. Only a moral misanthropist of the Kantian bent will deny the importance of feelings, desires, and other emotions in making moral judgments. It is also simply not true that when people feel or desire certain things they desire them willy-nilly or haphazardly. They have an order or a pattern. They have their own logic and can be described and understood according to how they follow a consistent and coherent pattern. Emotive states can be expressed using rules of inference. They are not irrational as some people or philosophers think. I will say more about emotive reason in part 5.

Relativism in ethics, be it an implicit or an explicit agreement theory, views moral judgments as relative to an agreement or convention. Relativists claim that there can be no morality without convention or agreement (Harman 1975). The problem with such a view about morality is that it is always an open question whether a set of agreed conventions or rules that defines rightness or wrongness is morally authentic. Actual conventions or agreements are sometimes considered immoral. Therefore, we cannot just allow actual conventions to legislate for us what is morally right or wrong. Extant conventions are made by cultures to address problems during their time and age. But we normally think of morality as something that goes beyond the prejudices endemic in human agreements and conventions. We transcend or improve them by engaging in the practice of morality itself upholding, endorsing, and promoting the most tenacious, the most honorable, and the most sentimentally imbued values that we have. These values are the ones that help us survive in the world and the ones that make a difference to us.

Any sane person must be a relativist (see Davidson 2004 and Harman 1975). But like Putnam, an anything goes relativism is not acceptable to me (Putnam 1981, 148). Subscribing to one’s own unique moral values does not end there. In the real world, moralities that are life promoting are more accepted and endorsed by most people because they are the ones that contribute to human flourishing. This means that in a pluralistic society (or in the real world), whenever we are engaged in the practice of morality we are allowed to criticize and debunk other forms of morality by arguing well against them, convert those who subscribe to them, and hope that by doing so those moralities will cease to exist and would be replaced by our own. And if they are pernicious to human life we are even allowed to take actions against them by outlawing them or by threatening those who subscribe to

them with police or military force. This is how we eliminate and replace “wrong,” “bad,” or “weak” moralities. In fact, in our world, moralities need not be allowed by any human law or agreement to compete against each other because it is an undeniable fact that in the real world they already do prior to and independently of this permission. In other words, this competition is simply a fact of life, pretty much in the same way that in the wild, animals compete against each other for food and territory. The fittest among them are the ones that will survive and become more dominant. In the case of human moralities or values, those that are more conducive to human flourishing will naturally evolve as the fittest.⁸

Take for instance the US invasion of Iraq. It is undeniable (at least apparently) that Iraq and the United States hold opposing political, religious, and moral values. It is natural for these countries (or for any country) to preserve their individual dignities and interests by opposing any threat that can potentially undermine them. It is for this reason that the US invaded Iraq. It could also be one of the reasons why the US was attacked on 11 September 2001. Both countries believe that the kind of values they promote and subscribe to are the correct and the right ones, hence the clash that ensued between them. They have no other choice but to fight for them. It is sometimes unavoidable that a conflict like this can happen in the real world due to differences that parties in a conflict find difficult or impossible to solve by peaceful means. But whatever the reasons and causes for conflicts in the world the point is that they just happen, and that in most cases, those involved have no other choice but to fight for whatever reasons they have and hope that in the end they are going to win for the values and ideals they represent. I believe this is the case between the US and its enemies. My point here is to argue in favor of a view about how some values or normative principles promote, advance, and replicate themselves.

I am convinced that moral values replicate themselves in the same way that the *memes*⁹ of Dawkins (1976, 192-201) replicate themselves. Moral values are indeed *memes*. And they replicate themselves by being more aggressive and active in colonizing and replacing other *memes* that are not fit to survive. The values that are shared by the US and its allies can cause them to question, challenge, and criticize the values of other cultures that pose a threat to their longevity. Iraq (like the Taliban Afghanistan) simply had no other choice but to fight it out since it naturally had no interest to simply yield easily. Other cultures are more yielding to different ways of thinking, morality, and lifestyle so they simply adapt to new situations and realities in order to survive. This is certainly not a happy account of how certain moralities or values advance, multiply, and replicate themselves. But we must be prepared and ready to accept a tragic fact like this if we wish to have a better understanding of life as it is lived

out in the real world. No doubt we can call this immoral from our normative moral vantage point, but that is exactly the point of always inescapably subscribing to our respective moralities. We criticize, replace, or eliminate other moralities by making moral judgments that reflect our own.

The most tenacious values (e.g., courage, honesty, love, etc.) that we have in the world then are the ones that endure and become more dominant because they help us cope with the problems in the world better. They are also the ones that conquer our hearts and minds because they make us feel more important, more honorable, and more respectable in the eyes of men. These values seem to appear universal because they are the fittest ones. If there are universal values, they are surely made so by practice or engagement, not by rationalist *a priori* contemplation. If it is possible to improve morality, we have to do it by practicing morality itself. If it is possible to make morality more universal or general, the pragmatic or the evolutionary account of it is more plausible than the metaphysical or rationalist one.

III. MR'S SHARE OF GUILT

Like moral subjectivism and moral relativism, MR is also guilty of downplaying and disregarding the importance of human attitudes and emotions in providing moral facts or reasons for actions. Moral realism, subjectivism, and relativism argue that we can never be rational about our attitudes and emotions. But while moral subjectivism implicitly claims that our attitudes and emotions constitute our moral judgments, moral realism claims otherwise. Moral judgments are constituted by nonmoral facts and properties in the external world and not by human attitudes and affects. To moral relativism, what constitute the same judgments are agreements or conventions in a given context or society. Realism, subjectivism, and relativism then are all in the same moral racket that downplays and disregards the role of human attitudes and emotions in making moral judgments more rational and objective. They all share the same stoical and misanthropic scheme in morality.

Moral realists believe that what constitute moral judgments are not human attitudes and emotions but facts and properties in the world to which those judgments correspond. These facts or properties in the world to which our moral judgments correspond are either natural or nonnatural facts or properties. These natural or nonnatural facts and properties in the world are themselves reasons for actions. Now these bountiful of reasons for actions in the world are motivations for actions as well. Motivations for actions have nothing to do whatsoever with human attitudes and emotions to moral realists. If moral facts and properties in the world motivate actions it is because they are intrinsically motivating.¹⁰ By relegating and rejecting the insights of

Hume regarding the motivational role of human attitudes and emotions, moral realists imply that moral objectivism and cognitivism are secured and hence the respect that we ought to have for morality can be ensured and guaranteed. But can this purely cognitivist project really prevent and offer a solution to moral decline in the world? I think not. I think that moral realism shares the guilt of moral subjectivism and relativism in contributing to moral decline that we see in the world. I also think that its own metaphysical way of securing moral objectivity does not ensure and guarantee moral *gravitas*. It even undermines it because of its lack of *implementable validity*.¹¹ They indicate that MR has no real solution to moral decline in the world.

As already mentioned and described in part 2, moral decline in the world is caused by widespread moral irrationality called MI or akrasia. Weakness of the will in morality is the failure or inability to practice the moral principles that are shared by people in the world. Moral weakness of the will can rightly be called immorality in common parlance. A willed act that is morally weak is then an immoral act. I have also identified two interdependent reasons or causes of MI in part 2. MI is caused by the lack or absence of appropriate human attitudes and emotions in suitable circumstances to move a person to action consistent with the moral principles she upholds, and/or an inadequate moral training or upbringing that makes difficult for an agent to practice the moral principles she maintains and supports.

By denying and discounting the role of human attitudes and emotions in making suitable moral judgments, MR deprives itself of significant sources and means that can be used to inspire and move moral agents to continue practicing and being consistent with the moral principles they uphold despite the adversities in life, which in real practice are among the reasons why ordinary people find it difficult to be moral. Genuine moral practice (being consistent with moral principles) is tested by adversities and hardships in life by perseverance and endurance (concepts and circumstances) which are suitably imbued with or constituted by emotions like fear, anger, distress, love, guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride, etc. A convolution of suitable emotions like these in appropriate situations makes moral perseverance and endurance possible in real life. In real moral practice, we tenaciously endure and persevere not by ignoring these emotions but first, by admitting that they are real; second, by confronting them; and third, by turning them to our advantage. This is called moral glory or triumph. Many people found meaning in life and founded great religions by having and undergoing this experience.

As a metaphysical and an epistemological theory about morality, MR has to downplay and dismiss the reality and importance of these emotions in practice. To realists, these emotions are useless and a hindrance to clear thinking. To them we abide by our moral principles by being cold or serene. We triumph over adversities in moral practice

by not allowing our emotions to influence our actions. We do this by desensitizing ourselves from the emotions and feelings that are caused by adversities and difficulties in life. To the moral realists, being emotionally affected by sufferings and evils in the world is a sign of weakness of the will. To them, moral principles or facts, which are at the same time normative reasons for action, are categorical and unconditional: "Moral requirements...are not conditional at all: neither on desires nor on the absence of other reasons" (McDowell 1998, 94). They should be obeyed and acted upon irrespective and independently of human attitudes and emotions that might embellish and give rise to them.

This kind of stoicism and moral authoritarianism is very unlikely to contribute any authentically human solution to moral decline in the world. An authentic human solution is one which neither disregard nor deny the reality of basic human attitudes and emotions and the important roles they play in bringing about moral actions. A moral philosophy that denies their importance in producing morality and making moral judgments is one that is totally detached from human practice and experience and thus has a limited or a myopic view of real life in the real world of feeling and desiring human beings who face real problems everyday.¹² A moral philosophy that is detached from human affects and experience is a spectator's practical error, an error that is brought about by more theory and less practice. We can call this error *rationalist error*,¹³ the error of downplaying and disregarding the importance of human attitudes and emotions in producing morality and in making moral judgments.

Making a moral judgment is not about correctly representing or describing an action or an event as something wrong. It is mostly about *caring* that a given action or event is wrong. It is wrong because we feel *disgust* and *sorrow* when we see people suffering from poverty and malnutrition, and corruption and greed that cause them. We feel pity and sorrow for people who suffer because we think that, like us, they too have feelings and that being in a situation like that is very unpleasant and difficult. Morality came about because we want to solve problems like these. Emotions like *sorrow* and *disgust* are mental states that we feel unpleasant and uncomfortable about.¹⁴ That is why we want to correct and solve the problems that cause them. Normative terms like "right," "wrong," "good," "bad," "just," and "unjust" are conceptual instruments that we use to solve them.

For instance, fund raisers for poverty and famine-stricken places in the world understand that it is not enough to appeal to people's popular belief that helping hungry and poor people is right or good. They have to appeal to people's strong emotions by specifically selecting and depicting more dramatic and striking images and stories of suffering people through the media in order to move and touch those who can help. They know that people who can help are those

who can be made to care about helping poor and suffering people in the world and not those who merely know and believe that it is right or good to help them. Anti-war propagandists do the same in raising opposition to wars. They know that by depicting dramatic stories and images of senseless killings, gory deaths, and destruction of the environment through the media emotions like pity, disgust, and anger can be easily elicited from people and that these emotions are very likely to create and raise opposition to whatever it is in the world that causes them.

Our experience of problems in the world like death, hunger, and destruction of the physical environment and our attempts to cope with and solve them, produce morality and the normative concepts that constitute it. "Experience" here does not only mean the ability to perceive or represent these occurrences in the world; it is the ability to feel and evoke shared and suitable beliefs and emotions about them as well, some of which are inspired and elicited by culpable actions that cause these unfortunate events in the world. The occurrence of problems in the world, the human attitudes and emotions that they inspire, and our attempts to cope with and solve them are all interrelated. This interrelatedness is what we call "human experience." As a part of an overall attempt to cope with and solve our problems in the world, morality cannot be severed and understood separately from other relevant actions and events in the world. To do so would really make morality strange and queer if it is detached from human experience and practice.

IV. HOW TO BRING BACK MORAL *GRAVITAS*

Moral philosophers are attracted to metaphysical realism because they implicitly want to bring back the *gravitas* that morality once had (if there ever was a time like that). It is true that ethics is not a science (McDowell 1998, viii), but ethics is also not inimical to science. To understand this difference we need to distinguish ethics as practice from ethics as philosophy or theory.¹⁵ Ethics as practice (EP) is not a science because its emphasis is not correct representation and discovery of the laws of nature and the physical world, but the practice of shared moral principles that people already have independently of moral theories. On the other hand, ethics as philosophy or theory (ET) is not hostile to science because it can help us understand why and how people become moral individuals by inquiring into human psychology and the reasons of moral permissions and prohibitions. With sympathy to natural and social sciences, ET can be employed to understand EP.

The EP/ET distinction is not parallel or similar to the normative/metaethics distinction. The normative/metaethics divide can be said to be an issue in ET, but it is not important or has no direct relevance

whatsoever in EP. Moreover, the debates between Realists and Expressivists are issues that are properly situated and relevant only in ET but not in EP. But this is not to say that ET is totally irrelevant in EP. ET's relevance in EP depends on whether it can contribute to the strengthening, prevalence, and effectiveness of EP. It is my view that the *gravitas* of morality can be significantly measured by the following indicators:

- (1) by the strength, tenacity, and intensity of people's moral principles and convictions;
- (2) by the wide practice and adherence to the same moral principles and convictions; and
- (3) by the human goods produced by the presence of (1) and (2).

I believe that the absence of these three interrelated indicators in any culture in the world is enough evidence that a given system of morality is not being taken seriously and is not making any difference to people's lives in that culture. Their absence can also be taken as a significant account of a moral decline in that culture. These indicators are not sufficient, but they are surely necessary to measure qualitatively the respect and dignity that people give to morality in any culture in the world. ET can help strengthen and give an objective account for these simple indicators by using the help of natural and social sciences. EP does not have to be seen as hostile against ET then, for both can complement one another. However, it must be emphasized that EP is more important than ET because first, EP always precedes ET; second, EP can do well without ET; third, ET is only important if it can function in consonance with EP; and fourth, ET needs EP to be reliable. Theories in any academic or intellectual discipline are not reliable if they are devoid of moral values that constitute EP. The pursuit of truth and patience in theoretical research are among the important values that theorists ought to have in order to make their theories more reliable. In fact, it would be impossible for researchers to produce anything without practicing these values.

The distinction between EP and ET is used here to emphasize the gap between practice and theory. The widening of this gap is due to the inability of moral philosophers engaged in ET to acknowledge that part of their task (other than speculation about the nature of reason for action) is to help change people for the better, and thereby help devise effective ways by which moral principles can be promoted and improved, that are said to be reasons and motivations for actions and bring about the realization of (1), (2), and (3) above. If moral principles (facts) are said to be reasons or motivations for actions, then surely they can be used to help and change bad, destructive, and evil people who lack these motivations. I do not think that this noble

undertaking can be done by already either denying the existence of human attitudes and emotions or by already discounting and belittling their importance from the very beginning. Human attitudes and emotions are pertinent and significant not only in making moral judgments objective but in developing a device or a theory about how to help or make people change their destructive attitudes and behaviors as well.

Reasons or motivations for actions are objective because their being normative is shared by moral agents who do not lack principles or standards for thinking and acting. On this view, reasons are recognized not by discovering and accurately representing them, but by making our thoughts and actions consistent with them. Weak-willed persons recognize that they have the best reasons for action but they lack the capacity to respond to them because they either do not have or lack the affective dispositions and/or training that can sufficiently move them to action consistent with the best reasons they recognize. Affective dispositions like desire and other emotions are important because they motivate people to care about doing things according to the best reasons they have. In the case of weak-willed individuals these affective dispositions have to be made stronger, increased, encouraged, or inspired by a suitable song, story, or image that could supplement their affective and practical deficiency.

Bad, evil, and destructive people in society can be considered habitually akratic or weak-willed in relation to certain principles or standards of good and normal conducts or behaviors. They steal, lie, kill, and destroy because they do not, or they lack the ability to, *care* about the principles, rules, and standards that govern these actions. The causes of these actions are certainly complex. But they certainly have to do with the upbringing, training, or biological constitution of these people. In saying this I do not mean that they are hopeless due to these explanatory or determining factors. Their being hopeless is a conclusion that is brought about by the fact that scientific and effective ways to help and change these people are not yet available. What I am proposing here is that we already have the means available to help and change them, and these are the attitudes and emotions that human beings like them share with us. I am talking about the means that propagandists, evangelists, and advertisers exploit and use to promote and endorse their utopias, ideas, and products. These people are creative and effective manipulators of collective and shared emotions and desires of the masses. They can create or change our desires by effectively using emotionally pleasant and appealing songs, stories, and images that can make us behave in a certain way or do something consciously or unconsciously.

Weak-willed people then can be helped or changed. It should also be the business of moral philosophers to speculate about how this can be done if they want to help bring back the *gravitas* of morality.

It is pretty obvious that discovering and accurately representing moral facts and properties can never do this. Realism in ethics is a purely theoretical and speculative discipline,¹⁶ which assumes that it can do its work independently of EP. As a metaethics, it counsels us that it is not the business of ethics to change people because it is like telling them what to do, and it is not the business of philosophy to tell people what to do. Philosophers are expected to guide people on how they should think and not on how they should conduct themselves. This is why philosophers or ethicists are not regarded and expected to behave like priests and preachers. Our moral expectations of them are not the same as our moral expectations of ministers and evangelists. As thinking guides, philosophers today are normally not expected to be morally upright or continent in their behavior. This implicitly gives them the license to live morally unrestricted lives in order to “transcend,” as it were, traditions and cultural prejudices. Ethical realism has nothing to say about the practice of moral principles which is presumably and expectedly the business of moral philosophy to inform. Ethical realism therefore has no solution to moral decline in the world.

Should we expect moral philosophers then to live exemplary moral lives? I believe so. I think it is only right and consistent that those who want to help and change habitually weak-willed, bad, or evil people should live exemplary lives. It is highly reckoned by ancient and medieval philosophers and more so by Eastern philosophers. Theory and practice are entangled in their philosophies. They all have tried their best to live exemplary lives so that the true, the good, and the beautiful can be seen in them. This is how they tried to dignify morality during their time. We can do the same in our time if we want to bring back the dignity of morality that it once had. Ethics then should be in the business of helping people how to live and change their irrational, evil, bad, and destructive attitudes and behaviors as well. Like priests, ministers, and evangelists, moral philosophers are expected to live exemplary lives in order to help bring back the dignity of morality. They are not necessarily expected to found religions bearing their names. But if they profess and style themselves to know something about what is good they are naturally expected to show it by example.

An absolute cleavage between theory and practice is impossible. Thinking cannot be separated from living because they always presuppose each other. I am not saying that we cannot make a conceptual distinction between theory and practice. We can still speak of a difference between theory and practice but not in the sense of a metaphysical duality according to which theory can exist independently of practice. An explanation or a view about what we mean by the moral property “goodness” in “Helping poor people is good” can still be called a theory, but not in the sense that that theory

is made for its own sake independently of the reasons or ends for which it is made. An explanation or a theory is put forward because we desire clarity and truth in order to know how to apply concepts correctly when we are using them in practice. It is also related to human flourishing and/or the search for self-fulfillment and meaning in life. A theory can be simply understood as the art or the technique of learning how to live. Its aim is to always inform how to solve the problems that beset and puzzle human beings as they attempt to cope with the vicissitudes and uncertainties of life.

Moral philosophers can bring back moral *gravitas* then by living exemplary lives and not by discovering, establishing, and representing the existence of moral facts and properties that can make moral statements true independently of our attitudes and emotions. Respect for morality is possible only by the practice of morality. The practice of morality also gives us the right and confidence to help weak-willed and wicked people change their actions. Helping these people means changing the beliefs and desires that they have which cause their incontinent or wicked actions. Changing their wicked beliefs and desires that produce reprehensible actions and events in the world means replacing them with continent or virtuous beliefs and desires that produce life promoting and productive actions and events in the world. Now this task is not easy. It requires not only patience and a genuine desire to care for people but creativity as well. I understand that the task of helping people this way is very unpopular and very strange among moral philosophers. It can be inferred from the noticeable absence of this topic in reputable books and journals in ethics. Most (if not all) moral philosophers think that it is not their business or responsibility to change people morally. I believe that they are mistaken.

Philosophers have been in the business of changing people's opinions and beliefs for centuries. Whenever a philosopher argues for or against a given conclusion she is engaged in changing not only her own but also that of another philosopher's or an intended audience's beliefs and opinions about that conclusion. This interest can be considered a moral one and is motivated by a number of possible reasons which are not devoid of affective significance: patience, passion in the search for truth, the fulfillment gotten from such an interest, the satisfaction upon the discovery of something new, etc. A philosopher can only be said to be a real lover of wisdom if she authentically cares about her vocation, which should be manifested by actions and dispositions accompanied and authenticated by suitable emotions that are expected from her. It is widely held implicitly by many philosophers that they can change other people's false/wrong/incorrect attitudes, opinions, or emotions by simply presenting to them what is true/right/correct and by arguing well against them. I believe this is wrong. Presenting what is right or correct *per se* will not necessarily change other people's wrong attitudes or emotions. A

person who has a given attitude or emotion (henceforth *a/e*) with a normative value (i.e., true/right/correct/good or false/wrong/incorrect/bad) should respond to it by caring about it because it is always an open question whether a given *a/e* with a normative value when presented against another *a/e* with an opposite normative value will change or obliterate that *a/e*.

The process of changing other people's *a/e*'s having normative value is not simple but complex. In many cases, it is a complex process of using informal means like images, stories, or songs that appeal not to the conscious or intellectual ability of a person, but mainly to her unconscious or emotional sensibility and inclination. Most people respond favorably not to *what* the message or information is about but to *how* it is given. This is the reason why most people are attracted to untruths or falsehoods like myths, fictions, and lies rather than to scientific and philosophical truths. Myths, fictions, and lies are mostly told or shown by appealing to the affective sensibilities and by eliciting positive and pleasant emotions in people. Intellectual or cognitive truths lack the *appeal* and the *attractiveness* expected of them because their proponents think that by themselves, these unadulterated and cold truths can change or replace people's false and irrational attitudes and emotions.

Advertisers and entertainers, who are also in the business of changing, creating, and even playing with our *a/e*'s, know better (see Evans 2001, xv, chap. 4 and Zaltman 2003, chap. 9). They are more active and aggressive in this job than moral philosophers, parents, and priests. People who spend most of their time watching television, seeing movies, listening to pop music, and playing video games than listening to the sermons of their parents, priests, or ministers are more likely to develop and form values that are shaped and determined by the more interesting and appealing images, stories, messages, and sounds that advertising and entertainment subtly portray and evoke. Advertisers and entertainers are more effective in getting the attention of their audience and in shaping their opinions and values because they know how to use emotions in creating desires for their products and ideas.¹⁷ They know that most people's actions are not necessarily motivated by images, stories, and ideas that are purely true or rational. Most people buy their products because they evoke and elicit positive emotions like joy, satisfaction, love, pride, etc. They know that a beautifully told and an enthusiastically promoted lie or falsehood is more likely to be fancied and admired by most people than an unpleasantly and blandly said truth. Many international companies are now seriously studying the nature and interrelatedness of emotions such as joy, fear, and disgust, due to the favorable advantages and benefits that are available to those who recognize the importance and effectiveness of human emotions in motivating actions (see Helm 2001).

If helping people change their evil and destructive ways necessarily involves renewing and changing their motivations for actions, then we need to affirm and accept the fact that human sentiments play a very significant role in renewing, creating, changing, and bringing about motivations and actions. While it is true that some emotions like *joy* and *grief* do not necessarily bring about or motivate actions (Roberts 2003, 63), it is nevertheless true that every moral action is more natural and authentic when motivated or brought about by appropriate emotions. Desires, which are either products or aspects of our emotions, can be renewed, created, or changed by introducing emotion inducing images, stories, and/or songs.

Commercial advertisements are good examples of what I am driving at here. To increase purchase of a given brand of car (i.e., the action of buying a particular model or brand), an advertisement should first create a desire for that car by eliciting positive emotions like joy, pride, and lust/love (if a gorgeous woman can be associated with that brand). Commercial advertisements do this because companies who make and pay for them basically know (from practical experience and from empirical evidence) that desires motivate actions, and that desires for certain things are always associated and produced by emotionally inducing images, stories, or songs. By doing this, commercial product advertisements can subtly and directly influence not only people's choice and purchase of goods and services, but even their choice of values and lifestyles as well.

I do not see any reason why the effective and practical method employed by advertisements cannot be done and applied in changing bad or incontinent people in our society. I reckon that this method is unacceptable only to smug moral philosophers and clergymen who believe that human attitudes and emotions are illusory, messy, unstable, and irrational. To these well-intentioned individuals, building morality on human emotions is like building a house on sand. As shown in part 3, this *apprehension* is unjustified. Since emotions are forms of judgment (or construal) and are intentional (i.e., constational), they can be normative as well. We can therefore be rational about our emotions. To disregard or deny the existence of emotions and their role in motivating actions will not only run counter to most people's platitudes about their existence and function in daily life, but will also prevent us from the possibility of seriously studying and using them to help people create and live more meaningful lives.

CONCLUSION

I understand that the assumption that there is *moral decline* in the world is controversial. But I take it that if there is such a decline it is necessarily constituted by widespread actions and events in the world which ordinary people like us consider detestable and reprehensible:

wars, poverty and hunger, murders, sexual permissiveness among young people, government corruption, ethnic cleansing and the refusal of some powerful countries to intervene, terrorism, etc. In my view, they, among other things, necessarily constitute what we can call *moral decline* in the world. I have tried to show and argue that as a metaphysical and a purely theoretical view of ethics, MR is inadequate to provide a moral solution to such moral problem in the world.

I have argued that such moral and practical problems can only be helped by, firstly, practicing morality itself. Human beings (including philosophers) who uphold and defend the importance of morality, are required to be morally upright in their actions. I take this to be pretty uncontroversial and undisputed even among philosophers as it is necessarily assumed and fundamental in classical, medieval, and Eastern philosophical traditions.

Secondly, we should help change evil and incontinent people in the world by changing their attitudes and emotions, using the most innovative marketing method that we have. Yes, moral principles (morality) should be marketed as well, like commodities, if we want to minimize the effect of commercial *advertisements* on the values and actions of most people in our society. I know that this suggestion is strange. But if we consider it inevitable for advertisements to influence the values and actions of many people in our society and if it is not practical and desirable to eliminate capitalism as the economic system that makes it possible, then we might as well employ one of its means of expanding itself in order to make morality *competitive*. Morality should be made competitive as well if we think that, like many goods and services, it can also help solve many of our most important problems. Morality is supposed to be endorsed and promoted. That is essentially the meaning of every moral judgment that we make. Morality can expand itself as well along with capitalism, which to my view is neither moral nor immoral. Capitalism is neither hostile nor friendly to morality. It can be used to either promote or destroy morality. If most of us are in favor of promoting morality for the survival of the human race, then we should help expand the practice and influence of morality by knowing how to market it. We just cannot force people to be moral, especially if it is against their will and inclination.

And thirdly, we can only promote and expand the influence of morality by recognizing the importance of human attitudes, feelings, and emotions in shaping and bringing about moral respect and dignity in the world. We cannot possibly bring back moral dignity by already discounting the role of human attitudes and sentiments from the start. I consider our attitudes and sentiments the *softest* and the most changeable parts in our life, and which I take to be mainly responsible for most of our motivations and actions. Advertisers know this. That is why all their advertisements appeal to human attitudes and

sentiments to motivate consumers to purchase goods and services. They know that most people act on what they feel and desire and not on what is rationally and purely true and factual.

I gather that MR is only interested in the discovery and representation of truths and facts independently of human attitudes and sentiments and is therefore handicapped in providing practical and real solutions to moral problems in the world. If the preceding discussions against MR hold, there are no means to validly implement MR. The interdependent solutions I propose above are more practical and real for they try to bridge the gap between theory and practice in ethics.

NOTES

1. MR here mainly refers (but is not limited) to the naturalist realism in ethics advanced by the Cornell realists (see Brink 1989). The robust moral realism/naturalism of Cornell realists, namely Boyd (1988), Brink (1989), Railton (1986), and Sturgeon (1988), can also be referred to as *metaphysical realism* according to how Putnam (1994) understands this term. *Expressivism* refers to the philosophical position of Gibbard (1990) and Blackburn (1998). *Internalism* applies to the realism of Putnam (1994) and Smith (2004). Contemporary *nonnaturalism* refers to that of Shafer-Landau (2003) and can also be applied to the *second nature* realism of McDowell (1998; 184-185, 188-189, 192-194). Putnam (2004, 17-22) refers to non-naturalists as *inflationary ontologists* in the tradition of Plato. I take this to apply to contemporary nonnaturalists as well. Gibbard (1990, 154) also refers to them as *Platonistic*.

2. *Naturalism* and *nonnaturalism* are two names that go with the term *Moral Realism* (MR) today. My views here are mainly directed against the naturalistic externalist MR of the Cornell realists and the nonnaturalistic MR of Shafer-Landau (2003), McDowell (1998), and Nagel (1970). This essay is a reaction against these realisms about morality for their silence and myopic view about the role of human affects in motivation and action. Desires, feelings, and emotions are treated as insignificant in their theories of motivation. These philosophers give primacy to beliefs which can do the motivation on their own, making desires dispensable since they are treated as motivated and not motivating attitudes by them. Smith (2004, 146-53), who also styles himself as being a realist of an *internalist* naturalistic kind, thinks that desires play a very important role in motivation provided that they are coherent and maximally informed. But Smith's view of the role of desires in motivation, though interesting, is unsatisfactory and wanting for it does not give us a more enlightening explanation about what a desire is as an intentional and affective human attitude. His rejection of the phenomenological conception of desire (Smith 1994, 104-11) is unacceptable to me since

I believe that a phenomenological explanation of desires, feelings, and emotions holds more promise in our understanding of the role of human sentiments in morality and action.

3. From the Greek *akratos*, meaning the *lack of power* to control oneself.

4. I am using *incontinence* here strictly in its moral sense (i.e., in relation to moral rules or principles which are considered a moral agent's reasons for action) and not in the sense of simply lacking self control in regard nonmoral actions like eating so much chocolates when overweight, going to bed without brushing one's teeth, watching a movie instead of studying for an exam, and the like.

5. For a discussion on the intentional and affective nature of feelings and emotions, see Madell (1997, 147-62) and Roberts (2003, 60-179).

6. See Schiffer (1990, 602-14) for a discussion of the pleonastic conception of propositions and properties on which my analysis here of propositional attitudes and affects is modeled. Gripaldo (2003) questioned the ontological existence of the *proposition* and replaced it with the *constative*.

7. That is, the conjunction of "p" and "~p." In regard any issue that might arise on the possibility of believing contrary constatives, I am with Davidson when he (2004, 211) says, "...I assumed that although it is possible simultaneously to believe each of a set of inconsistent propositions, it is not possible to believe the conjunction when the inconsistency is obvious."

8. For a discussion on the evolutionary origins of morality, see Sober and Wilson (2000, 185-206).

9. Memes are units of cultural transmission.

10. Dancy (1993, 24, 34) writes:

The sort of cognitive theory I want to support maintains that there are no such things as Humean beliefs or desires. Instead of these internally and externally motivating states, there are what we might call *intrinsically* motivating states, which can be present without motivating but which when they do motivate do so in their own right. They can motivate in their own right, and so are not Humean beliefs; but they can be present without motivating, and so are not Humean desires....our beliefs stand both as representations of the world and as reasons to change the world. Similarly, the idea of a fact which is intrinsically motivational is one which sees that fact as relating to the world in two ways at once. It is true to (or part of) that world, and a reason for changing it.

11. To Zaltman (2003, 24), *implementable validity* “means that an idea lends itself to effective action.”

12. See Gibbard (1990, 126-50) for an insightful discussion on the normativity and importance of human emotions in morality. He (1990, 128) writes:

...morality, on a narrow reading, concerns the moral emotions it makes sense to have from a standpoint of full and impartial engagement. It concerns the things it makes sense to feel guilty for having done and the things it makes sense to be angry with others for having done.

13. Brad Hooker suggested to me that this term is better than *stoical error*, which is originally what I used to label this kind of error in the first draft of this essay.

14. For a discussion of emotions as mental states, see Roberts (2003, 36-59, 60-83).

15. See Aristotle (1984, IV.4) for a discussion on the difference between *praxis* (action) and *techné* (production).

16. See Korsgaard (1996, 44, esp. n. 74) on a similar point.

17. See Zaltman (2003) for a detailed discussion of the most recent innovative and empirical marketing insights alluded to here.

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HEGEL AND MALAYSIA: DIALECTICS MEETS A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

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Hegel's Philosophy of right holds in high regard the form of a constitutional monarchy with the executive, judiciary, and legislature having overlapping boundaries. The Malaysian governmental structure reflects this configuration. The fundamental premise of this paper is that the interpretive lens of Hegelian metaphysics offers a unique critique of Malaysia's political lineament. In applying Hegel to assess the general form of the Malaysian constitutional monarchy, two specific terrains traversed would be the state-religion liaison and the ramification of government into the crown, executive, judiciary, and legislature.

INTRODUCTION

This paper professes to undertake a philosophical assessment of and discussion on the form of the Malaysian government. Its intrinsic premise is that Hegel's elaborate framework as documented in his *Philosophy of right* (1967) offers a unique philosophical account of the state with its segmentation into the major powers of executive, legislature, judiciary, and monarchy. The integral constitution of Malaysia and the religion-state relation that is embedded within it are amenable to a close analysis by Hegel. Using Hegel's formulations as a critique of the Malaysian constitutional monarchy affords us fresh insights in matters of justification of the intersecting components of government and the rationality of the practice of administration in Malaysia. Elements of the Hegelian thesis can help disclose blemishes and highlight refinements within the Malaysian polity. Although the principal design of this paper is to use Hegel as a critique of Malaysia's constitution, the engagement of this project will inevitably entail some evaluation of the Hegelian critical instrument. Juxtaposing Hegel and Malaysia disposes them to a symbiotic relationship of mutual elucidation. Before plunging into Hegel's appraisal

of Malaysia's constitution, some explanation of his fundamental metaphysics is in order.

HEGEL: BRIEF OVERVIEW

It is all but impossible to condense Hegel into just a few paragraphs, but I will attempt to outline ideas of his that are relevant to our project here. Hegel's *Philosophy of right* encapsulates his treatise on political philosophy, which is just a segment of his overall scheme of reality. In his *Encyclopaedia of the philosophical sciences*, Hegel (1991, 45) begins with the science of pure ideas, Logic—ideas “in the abstract element of thinking.” Logic is the part of philosophy that is concerned with laying bare the inner essence of the Absolute or Totality. Logic, therefore, is the Absolute's knowledge of Itself in Itself, in abstraction from Its concrete self-manifestation in Nature and Human Society. “Concrete reality,” in the sense of Nature and the sphere of the Human Spirit, is the process by which the logical idea or Logos actualizes Itself (Hegel 1991, 42). The second part of the *Encyclopaedia* is the philosophy of Nature. Nature exemplifies the movement of formal abstract logic into externality. Subjectivity can be said to make its appearance in the animal organism, though not in the form of self-consciousness. Nature then brings us to the threshold of Spirit. The third part in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* deals with the philosophy of Spirit. This third part refers to the Absolute as returning to Itself or knowing Itself through rational beings.

The philosophy of Spirit is subdivided into Subjective Spirit, Objective Spirit and Absolute Spirit. Just as the Absolute in Itself objectifies or expresses Itself in Nature, so also Spirit in itself objectifies or expresses itself as Objective Spirit. It is here in the section on *Objective Spirit* that Hegel situates his political philosophy. From his treatment of the psychology of consciousness in Subjective Spirit, Hegel proceeds to the expression of consciousness in society, that is, through the socio-political sphere. Subsumed within Objective Spirit of the socio-political sphere is the *abstract right-morality-ethical life* triad. Hegel's system frequently has triads within triads. Within *ethical life* alone there resides another triad: *family-civil society-state*. The realm of Objective Spirit also includes Hegel's *philosophy of history* (1956). Manifestation of the Absolute is not just limited to particular epochs, but extends through world history. World history is for Hegel, the dialectic of national spirits, or states; and as we progress beyond these states and through the overall philosophy of history, we will arrive at the threshold of the realm of *Absolute Spirit* (Copleston 1994, 227-28). Absolute Spirit is the synthesis of Subjective Spirit and Objective Spirit on a higher plane and it encompasses philosophy of art, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of philosophy.

In Hegel's (1956, 19) *Philosophy of history*, we find his view of the direction and destination of all human history: “The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.” Hegel

ties the *rational will* with *freedom*. The Absolute Logic or Reason that comes to know Itself through self-conscious beings and their socio-political institutions implies self-determination; hence, freedom. His political theory can be accurately equated with his notion of the development of consciousness of the *rational will* in the socio-political sphere. Hegel's triadic structure is actually his dialectics of affirmation-negation-negation of negation (or commonly understood, though not specifically originating from Hegel—thesis-antithesis-synthesis). The dialectics reconciles correlative opposites—subjectivity with objectivity, particularity with universality. Each of these concepts is engorged with a host of senses. "Subjectivity" for instance, implies individual opinion, individual assent, mental state, and the realm of consciousness in general. "Objectivity" carries with it the meanings of externally established organization and its abstract form or structure, enacted laws of the state, and the visible objective realm. While "particularity" frequently refers to the needs and interests of the particular individual and the application of universal principles to particular concrete instances as well as the application of established norms and laws to individual cases, "universality" has been consistently associated with rational principles as, for instance, the whole complex of rational principles that operate within the organization of a state. The individual and the state are sometimes perceived as being at loggerheads with each other. Hegel's overarching thesis is that these two units are neither mutually exclusive nor diametrically opposed to each other. The state that embodies a rational ideational infrastructure is the state that holds within itself the harmonious individual-state correlation.

As a proponent of *Absolute Idealism*, Hegel's understanding of concepts differs from the customary sense of concepts or categories. Deviating from the conventional understanding of concepts, Hegel's depiction of concepts is such that while the earliest phase of the concept is abstract and inert, it gradually develops through history. For Hegel, the concept is a dynamic and causative entity. Not only can a concept undergo a process of diremption through meticulous deduction via the dialectical process, consciousness and realization of this dynamic development of the concept take place through history. There have been numerous charges laid at Hegel's doorstep regarding his postulate of concepts having ontological reality and causative function in history. No doubt, in Hegel's defence we can argue for ideas playing a determinative role in historical events, but his metaphysical premise is problematic. Whether ideas precede and are ontologically independent of events, or otherwise, constitute a huge debate, which we can bypass. What is generally accepted is that Hegel elucidates the important categories that reflect political reality and so furnishes us with a handy method of understanding these categories' individual content and relations to each other. The distinctive Hegelian dialectics, which simply refers to the deductive process of reasoning, is also not totally unassailable. Its negation mode cannot be viewed as a logical negation. A logical negative is in absolute contradiction to the

affirmative, and hence can never be reconciled. I believe that we cannot view the Hegelian negative in the strict logical sense of say, "It is raining and not raining at the same time." Hegel's negative is more appropriately taken as a correlative opposite as for instance individual interests as opposite to but nonetheless reconcilable with collective interests.

To reiterate what was declared earlier, the task of this paper is to apply the theoretical framework of Hegel's theory of the state to critically examine the constitutional structure of Malaysia and the religion-state relation that is embodied within Malaysia's political praxis. Besides the three-branch form of the Malaysian government we will also examine the relation between state and religion in Malaysia for two important reasons: religion figures very prominently in Malaysian culture in general and her politics in particular; and because Hegel has some important things to say about the matter. The underlying conviction of this paper is that Hegel's theory of the state, in the main, promises to offer fresh insights in the area of rational justification of political structure and practice. This rationality can take the form of political justice, organizational integrity, or dialectical resolution; all fundamental criteria in evaluating Malaysia's political formation.

OVERLAPPING POWERS

Subsequent to a general election in Malaysia, the head of the party that has the most number of elected candidates and is eligible to establish a government, will be invited by the *Yang Dipertuan Agung* (Monarch) to form the new government. This head of the successful party becomes the Prime Minister and he submits for approval by the Monarch, the names that he recommends to form the Cabinet, the supreme policy-making body of the nation and the executive authority of the federation (Abdul 1974, 17). The Cabinet is a subset of Parliament, the legislative body of the nation. The three major powers of the Malaysian government are not separate from each other. When Hegel's hermeneutic is applied to these overlapping powers a unique rationale for this particular configuration emerges. The basis of the dialectics of governmental powers is the notion of *unity in difference*. The three dialectical moments are *individuality* (crown), *particularity* (executive and judiciary) and *universality* (legislature) (Hegel 1967, 176). Each one reflects the characteristics of the other two. As illustration, let us take the *executive*, which represents *particularity* (administration in particular ministries and adjudication upon particular cases).¹ Contained in the executive are also the laws that the executive administers (laws are the universal element) and the Monarch (individual character as the symbolic representation of the unity of particularity and universality) who appoints civil servants and makes final decisions. Hegel seems to hold the view that the powers of the state must be distinguished, but each of them must build itself inwardly into a whole and contain within it the other moments. He insists that the powers are to

be distinguished only as phases of the concept and that in actuality these powers strive to be an integral whole. The Malaysian constitutional monarchy has this form of intersecting boundaries. It is possible to posit different justifications for such a structure. One proposed justification reasons from the principle of democracy (see Mahathir 1995, 22-23). The executive must be directly involved in legislation (included in the Parliament), to ensure that the maxim of democracy is exercised; that the democratically elected party plays the principal role in the administration of the country. In addition, although the judiciary is a separate body, the elected government must at least be granted some input in the choice of the members of the judiciary. The electorate does not choose the judiciary, and so, the elected government must have some involvement in the judiciary so as not to compromise the essence of "rule by the people." In a democracy, when the idea of consensus in a greater or lesser degree² is employed to defend the overlap of powers, it falters because of its susceptibility to obviate some necessary autonomy of function for the sake of justice. Validating a hegemonic single party monopoly on the grounds of democratic election detracts from the integrity of the intersecting powers.

For Hegel, rationality supersedes the majority. As the old saw runs, "Majority is not always right." He calls attention to Johann Fichte's misconstruing the "universal will" to be what he, Hegel, labels as the "general will" or "common will" and not the "rational will." Hegel considers the general or common will as hinging upon the majority, the arbitrary, and the contractual,³ and hence, rendering the state vulnerable to ochlocracy. The direct corollary of holding the rational will above the majority will is the enjoining of the ruling party to not submit to the urgings of a majority propelled by unwarranted demands. Critics of the Internal Security Act (ISA) with its detention without trial, oppose the violation of imprescriptible human rights, to wit, right to a fair trial, even if the majority were to endorse this violation.

Thus far, we have identified certain flaws in employing the tenet of democracy as a justification for the overlap of powers. The Hegelian emphasis on rationality seems a more viable support, but what does this rationality entail and how does the earlier stated unity in difference account for the overlap of powers? Hegel furnishes a conceptual justification, that is, the sense of the integrity of concepts. One may interpret this as implying that the dialectic of concepts is actually a sequence of necessarily linked logical deductions; as for instance, the concept of the monarch, by logical necessity includes the concept of the universal-legislature and the particular-judiciary and executive. It is highly likely that Hegel had this in mind. However, a more tenable approach would be to view the dialectic as a process of philosophical reasoning not amounting to rigorous formal deductions of logic. The trajectory of Hegel's political philosophy, or for that matter, practically all his theses, rest on the substratum of unity of universality with particularity. In the political sphere, individual interests

are reconcilable with universal rational interests of the state. Hence, the powers representing the varying moments ought not to be mutually exclusive and one-sided. Intersecting boundaries sustain this unity. Hegel's framework with its rationality and reconciled "opposites" leitmotif contributes to a sound justification of the general configuration of the Malaysian polity. The three powers of the Malaysian government are the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. Hegel settles the judiciary alongside the executive, and divides the political constitution of the state into three substantive divisions: the legislature, the executive, and the crown.

MALAYSIAN SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT

The Monarch

The *Agung* stands as the head of state of Malaysia. Malaysia is a federation of 13 states/provinces with nine of them having hereditary rulers (*sultans*) who reign for life, and four others with governors and chief ministers at their helm (Abdul 1974, 7-8). A Conference of Rulers comprises the nine *sultans* and four governors. The *Agung's* office was first constituted by the 1957 constitution, the constitution that paved the way for *merdeka* (independence). Prior to that, the High Commissioner, appointed by Britain's Her Majesty The Queen as her proxy, functioned as ruler of the nation, though he is not recognized as head of state (Mohamed 1976, 21). The crown of Malaysia is both hereditary as well as elected. His fellow *sultans* elect him and he reigns as King for five years. In actual fact, a *sultan* becomes King by rotation but yet, he has to agree to ascend to the throne and at least five of his fellow *sultans* must give their vote of approval. So, in one sense, it is not an automatic assumption of the crown because at least five of his peers must consent to it. Malaysia is currently the only nation in the world that has a rotational system of kingship. Incidentally, the King can be removed from office by a resolution of the Conference of Rulers and where five members of the Conference have voted for his removal. Malaysia is definitely not an autocratic state and her King is far from being a potentate because he is still subordinate to the Constitution. When exercising his executive authority the King operates within the parameters of the constitution and he acts on the advice of the Cabinet or Prime Minister (Mohamed 1976, 58). The *sultans* of Malaysia enjoyed legal immunity until 1993 when Parliament revoked the clauses in the Constitution, which stated that the *sultans* are not liable to any legal proceedings in their personal capacity.

Taking into consideration the mechanics of the Malaysian rotational hereditary kingship, the subordination of the King to the Constitution, and the fact that in many instances he acts on the advise of the Cabinet, it would be fair to say that personal competency is not the principal criterion for the crown. Hegel's exposition on the crown is rather intricate, unfolding

as follows: The internal structure of the state comes to a head in *one* individual, the monarch. The stage of individuality resolves universality and particularity; but at this final level the individual also represents the state, the personality of the state, and endorses or finalizes the “I will” stamp when making state decisions. Personality, like subjectivity, is *infinitely self-related*, and so possesses its truth only in an actual person (Hegel 1967, 37). Only spirit or self-consciousness is capable of reconciling the opposites. Self-consciousness is distinct from mere consciousness. A reptile, for instance, possesses consciousness of his environment, but consciousness of it being conscious of its environment is beyond the reptile’s ability. For sure, human beings possess self-consciousness. Hegel labels this as $I = I$, referring to the capacity of a person to reflect upon himself or to come in contact with his own consciousness. The I relates to itself as *infinite universality*. Consciousness of something indicates finitude because consciousness is determined or limited by the object of consciousness. The will of the person is infinite. It can abstract itself from anything—awareness of external environment as well as internal processes. It is also said that human beings may be the only existent that has the intellectual capacity to conceive what is infinite or limitless; we can conceptualize infinite space, for instance. This infinite subjectivity, $I = I$ implies freedom—freedom from finiteness and freedom for the infinite. The will has the potential to reflect on something infinite, that is, its own will. This self-conscious but contentless and simple relation of itself to itself ($I = I$), Hegel calls the *person*. A person is a unit of freedom. As inherently free, the person is infinite and has the right to be treated as a person and not used as one uses a finite thing. Therefore, concludes Hegel, it is only in an actual person, the monarch, that the personality of the state is made real. A so-called “artificial community” (seen collectively as “one person”), be it a society, a community, or a family, however inherently concrete it may be, contains personality only abstractly. The concepts of “sovereignty” and “sovereign” will assist us in this explication. The sovereignty of a state refers to the independence of that state to conduct its own affairs, without interference from foreign states. The sovereign or king is the head of state and because of the *person’s* capacity for infinity (as elucidated above), Hegel regards the *person* as the sovereign (supreme) existent of all things in the world (a very anthropocentric worldview). Hence, only a state with a sovereign, who symbolically subsumes within himself the totality of that state, can possess state sovereignty. The form of an organizational structure is abstract and a collection of people occupying a territory is not *one person* (self-reflectivity is absent). These do not have sovereign status (Hegel 1967, 180-81). It would indeed be difficult to deny the appealing nature of this rather unique account of the crown. In actual fact, the account dwells upon unravelling the concepts of “person” and “sovereign.” All nation states, Malaysia included, have a person at its helm.

What is the difference then between say the *Agung* of Malaysia and the President of Singapore? The main difference is, of course, the fact that

the Malaysian head of state is a hereditary monarch, while that of Singapore is not. Then again, to say that the *Agung* fulfils the criterion of hereditary monarch is not completely accurate. He is elected by a rotational system and with the endorsement of his peers from a pool of hereditary *sultans*. So, in a sense, there is still a sliver of rational choice in the case of the Malaysian crown. Hegel sanctions hereditary monarchy by constructing a rather convoluted and, to my mind, tenuous deduction based on what he considers to be unravelled from the concept of the crown itself. He (1967, 184) writes:

This ultimate self in which the will of the state is concentrated is, when thus taken in abstraction, a single self and therefore is *immediate* individuality. Hence, its natural character is implied in its very conception.

Hegel's notion of immediacy can be defined in two possible senses. One, an individual taken in abstraction (abstracted from society) is simply a unit, and his individuality is *immediate* as opposed to being mediated by his roles, characteristics, and associations in society. Two, an individual in its immediacy implies that as an infant, its physical organism is not yet conscious of its spiritual realm, and so, *immediate* individuality belongs to a human in the course of nature, prior to maturity, before the dawn of self-consciousness mediated by his environment. This raw state of immediacy has reference to the individual's natural characteristics by virtue of birth, or what is given. Therefore, for Hegel, within the notion of the crown is included the notion of hereditary monarchy. There are inherent difficulties with the above account. The association between immediacy, naturalness, and being hereditary is very tenuous. Karl Marx's insightful critique is that with all Hegel's accent on rationality and self-reflectivity of conscious beings, his case for the apex of the state rests on being natural and hereditary rather than self-determined ability (Berki 1972, 218). Furthermore, the genesis of the royal or aristocratic lineage is founded on social agreement. The appellation of the first monarch or aristocrat is accorded by merit of achievement or by social approval, not heredity. It seems rather flimsy not to insist on the objective competence of the monarch. Considering that Hegel imposes this criterion on public servants, what more on the leader of the state? The only justification that I can see for hereditary monarchy is not from the Hegelian conceptual deduction above, but from a utilitarian premise. Hereditary monarchy is useful because it obviates factious contentions upon the demise of the head of state (prospective candidates competing to occupy the throne). The hereditary monarch has some independence because he will not be pressured to ingratiate himself to the electorate in order to be re-elected. Arguably, for the case of Malaysia, the insusceptibility of the *Agung* to political contention and intrigue facilitates the formation of a focal point of cultural and national identity. The Monarch, as head of state, is the symbolic

representative of the Malaysian polity. The integrity and national identity of the whole body politic is nurtured via two pathways; one is subjective or psychological, through gaining the affection of the people and oaths of allegiance to law and King. [The five principles of nationhood of Malaysia (*Rukun Negara*) include “Loyalty to King and Country”]. The other is objective, through the established institutions, laws, and constitution.

The Executive

Members of the Malaysian Cabinet are ministers who swear to honor and defend the Constitution. Each minister is responsible for decisions and administration of his or her ministry. There is also in the Malaysian Cabinet what is known as *collective responsibility*, implying that if a minister harbors opinions that are at variance with Cabinet decisions, he is still expected to defend in public the stand of Cabinet. If, in conscience, he feels incapable of doing so then he must resign (Mohamed 1976, 53). The Cabinet’s principal duty is to formulate policies for government. Hegel (1967, 188-89) sees the moment of particularity in the concept corresponding to the structure and functions of the executive arm of government. This sphere, he argues, functions to apply the universal principle, the laws and constitution, to the individual case and to private interests. It is the duty of the executive officers to care for each particular element in civil society and in these private ends, the universal interests should prevail. The execution of Cabinet policies through the many levels of public administration, may to a degree be construed as the application of universal rudiments of policies to *particular* interests, but the framing of policies itself can in Hegelian vocabulary be aptly categorized in the *universal* moment of his dialectic. The particularity-ness of the executive is more readily apparent in the civil service. Although the Cabinet of Malaysia constitutes the executive branch of the nation, the civil service, which is managed by the executive, plays a crucial role in the daily execution of administrative functions. Cabinet members are so constrained by time and energy that they rely heavily upon the civil service for data analysis. These experienced and well-informed civil officers supply the ministers with highly important counsel that lend towards the decision-making process in Cabinet. Since civil servants come in direct contact with citizens, they ought to develop certain qualities to ensure that the people have a positive perception of the executive branch of government. As Hegel rightly identifies, two principal qualities are good human relations skills and the virtue of impartiality. Hegel seems to believe that members of the executive should come largely from the middle class; he calls this the class of the educated and the morally and politically conscious. With control from higher-ups (their respective superiors) and feedbacks from their clients (corporations, interest groups) below that act as checks and balances, civil servants are somewhat deterred from turning into a tyrannous aristocratic class (Hegel 1967, 193). The Hegelian discourse on the executive

arm of government to a fair extent reflects the Malaysian application, particularly the notion of the hierarchical structure and the direction of accountability. Also, as Malaysia has achieved her independence from her colonizers and is heading towards developed and high-income nation status, the role of the civil service has shifted more towards initiator and expeditor of socio-economic growth than mere preserver of the status quo.

The Judiciary

The independence of the Malaysian Judiciary is claimed to be protected by certain provisions in the Constitution, one of them being that judges cannot be removed except on the grounds of misbehavior or incapacitation resulting from infirmity or injury. This removal can only be executed by a tribunal appointed by the Monarch. The question is, can judicial independence be guaranteed when the King acts on the advice of the Prime Minister and so allows for a subtle intrusion by Executive powers? Additionally, the King, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, after consulting the Conference of Rulers, appoints judges of the High Court (Abdul 1974, 22). This has fuelled much debate as regards judicial independence in Malaysia. Argued by the majority of political theorists, the independence of the judiciary is vital for serving principles of law and justice. The Hegelian notion of intersecting boundaries is predicated upon the postulate of concepts enfolding the dialectics of particularity and universality. His placement of the judiciary with the executive within the mode of particularity is not to be construed as intrusion by the executive into judiciary domain to the extent of transgressing principles of justice. Independence of the judiciary in order to serve the principle of justice is rationally defensible.

I intend here to draw attention to the question of the rational basis of a trial by jury. Hegel seems to firmly support a judicial system that incorporates a trial by jury. His justification is quite intriguing. With his ideal of a conciliation of subjective free assent and external objective structures, Hegel declares that the optimal case is when the criminal confesses to the truth of his wrongdoing. Then, the judge's sentence is not an imposition on the free assent of the criminal. But, of course, the criminal can lie and convince himself that he is not morally and legally culpable. We might perceive this imposition of the judge's verdict as being disrespectful of the freedom of the accused. One way to remedy this dilemma, suggests Hegel, is to have a trial by jury. He says that the jury is to be regarded as the peers of the accused, and *their verdict is the verdict of the accused*. The jury is placed at level with the accused simply because unlike the judge, they are not considered professionals in court. Reason is universal, and so, is common to jury and the accused alike (Hegel 1967, 275). Incidentally, the criminal who lies adds another crime—the subjective defiance of his reason or inner universality.

Before February 1995 trial by jury (ordinarily a jury of seven persons) in Malaysia was in existence in all the states of Peninsular Malaysia. Capital offences were tried by one judge and two assessors in East Malaysia (Mimi 1987, 229). However, on 17 February 1995 trials by jury throughout Malaysia were abolished. Both trials by jury and trials with the aid of assessors were repealed. Only trials with one judge sitting alone remain (Mimi 1999, 305-306). A possible reason to account for the elimination of the jury is that jurors, being untrained in legal proceedings, might be easily swayed to arrive at verdicts that are neither discerning nor impartial. Another possible explanation is that in states where the executive power has a hand in the judiciary, as for instance, in Malaysia, judges of the High Court are appointed by the King *on the advice* of the Prime Minister, and so, one might speculate that the abolition of trial by jury camouflages a further trespassing on judiciary turf by the executive. High Court verdicts are now left solely in the hands of judges that in some manner or other had their appointment influenced by the executive. We could argue for the greater objectivity of the professional judge over a team of nonspecialist lay-persons jury. Then again, Hegel's argument is derived solely from his reasoning that judgment pronounced to the ordinary citizen ought to come from persons who are of the same level. When a close affinity exists between the lay-person judged party and the lay-person judging party, the subjective freedom of the individual, argues Hegel, is preserved. Participation in the court is maximal, since the engaged parties in the judicial process are the judge, lawyers, and lay-persons jury. Leaving this debate aside, we consider now the matter of the legislature.

The Legislature

Malaysia's federal system of legislature is structured in such a way that the Federal Parliament has the authority to legislate on certain matters while the State Legislative Assemblies have the authority to legislate on other specific matters. There are also concurrent subjects that straddle both the ambits of federal and state legislatures (Abdul 1974, 12). While state legislature is unicameral, Parliament is bicameral. The Malaysian Parliament is bifurcated into the Senate (*Dewan Negara*) and the House of Representatives (*Dewan Rakyat*). The Senate is made up of members elected by the State/Provincial Legislatures and members appointed by the Monarch. Hegel categorizes the legislature as the phase of the universal because it is concerned with law-making, matters that ought to revere the universal rational maxims of jurisprudence and that enacted laws are universally binding.

Malaysia adopted the form of the Westminster parliamentary system of democracy but adapted its substance to fit her political reality, a reality particularly characterized by racial and ethnic diversity. Communalist sentiments infuse the whole electoral and parliamentary complex. The *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) comprises a coalition of parties that

represent the major ethnic groups in Malaysia. Since its inception in 1973 (said to have evolved from *Alliance*) this coalition has governed the country, undergirded by the promise of fulfilling communal exigencies. The electoral history of Malaysia has revealed a political phenomenon whereby the viability of parties that disregard the communal agenda is clearly precarious (Khong 1987, 11-39). Hegel's construction of the ideal legislature excludes the above consideration, but brings into focus the participation of *estates* that comprise the landed gentry, business class, and civil servants. If rationality in terms of justice and organizational integrity is to characterize the Hegelian sense of the ideal, then for the Malaysian instance, socio-economic divisions have to coalesce with the specific concerns of ethnic heterogeneity in parliamentary representation. The composition of the Malaysian Senate differs from that deduced by Hegel. While aristocratic birth is not a criterion of Malaysian senators, for Hegel, the Upper House of Parliament, the "House of Lords" (the counterpart to the Senate) ought to be occupied by the landed gentry. This estate consists of nobilities with landed rights by birth. While the estate of economic providers depends on others for her revenue and the civil servants are dependent on the state, the landed gentry is financially independent and hence, is not influenced either by the political state above nor the citizens below. Also, since in this estate, property is to be passed down to the eldest son (primogeniture), they have no freedom to bequeath their property to whomever they wish (it is established by necessity—by nature). Hence, the independence and security of the property of the inheritor allows for a more free and impartial commitment to duties of the state (Hegel 1967, 199). The estate of economic providers, argues Hegel, reflects the phase of the human person as immersed in economic corporations. Harking back to the phase of *civil society* (the second moment in ethical life), the Hegelian overarching premise of reconciling the goal of the individual with that of the state, is expedited through our involvement in corporations. It is through corporations that individuals acquire a social identity and actualize themselves in work. The close associations between state bodies and business corporations of civil society in Malaysia help play a didactic role in inducting her citizens into political awareness and life.

The House of Representatives (the Lower House of Malaysian Parliament) that comprises individuals who have been directly voted by the electorate, embodies the kernel of democratic expression. The Monarch, though forming a component of Parliament, and who may deliver his address at the opening of Parliament, does not directly participate in Parliament sittings (Mohamed 1976, 58-59). For a bill to become a law, it must pass both the Lower and Upper Houses and acceded to by the King. Hegel avers that the notion of everyone being directly involved in the legislature rests on the inaccurate conviction that everyone is politically competent. Although such universal competence is incorrect, nevertheless, he believes that the individual has the right to express his views via a

competent representative. Incidentally, he stresses that the interests of the general public rather than the parochial interests of particular bodies be the preeminent concern in Parliament. An even representation in parliament will facilitate this objective rather than solely depending on the goodwill of parliamentarians. For the Malaysian case, civil servants bounded by collective responsibility are not permitted to publicly oppose government policies. In legislative deliberations the rule of collective responsibility may prohibit a ruling party member from honouring his conscience and objecting to proposals made by his party, which he believes to be unreasonable, unjust, or prejudiced. Therefore, not only is universal reason within the individual transgressed but the rationality of the whole process of legislative deliberation can be impugned. Incidentally, lack of representation from nongovernmental sectors that are votaries of human rights and especially the rights of the disadvantaged and minority will be inimical to a rational legislature.

The inclusion of the executive Cabinet within the legislative Parliament, as urged by Hegel, is not an endorsement of ruling government bullying the opposition. Unfortunately, sometimes, through manipulation of the Standing Orders by the reigning group, opposition parties in Parliament are muted and enervated. Hegel is convinced of the value of the legislative assemblies being opened to the public. This openness serves two principal functions. It educates the public in matters of politics and, it is a mechanism that keeps assembly participants on their toes, compelling them to be competent and abreast with current public opinion. Public opinion matters because it reflects the principle of subjective freedom. The Malaysian Parliament sitting is not conducted within closed doors, unlike Cabinet meetings. However, there is no live televising of Parliament proceedings. In the Malaysian legislature, broad representation that considers economic, welfare, and ethnic exigencies, and that has in place parliamentary proceedings that provide equitable debate space for ruling and opposition parties, and telecast live, will help serve the goals of uniting individual with rational collective interests and increase subjective confidence in the objective apparatus of state administration.

STATE AND RELIGION

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia states that Islam is Malaysia's official religion and that freedom of religion is guaranteed. However, in early July and late September 2001, the then premier of Malaysia, Mahathir Bin Mohamad provoked some unease when he publicly declared Malaysia as an Islamic state. The 7th July statement was in his address at the Convention of Malaysia's coalition party *Barisan Nasional* in Kuala Lumpur. Mahathir made the same declaration at the *Gerakan* (Movement) Party Annual Delegates Conference in Kuala Lumpur on 29 September 2001 (see *Utusan Malaysia* 2001, 2; *The Sun* 2001, 4). Questions arose as to what he meant by that statement. While Mahathir claimed that existing

legislation remains despite Malaysia being an Islamic state, the opposition party, Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (*PAS*) begged to differ by defining an Islamic state as one governed by *Syariah* or Islamic Law. This logomachy or semantic dispute aside, the intimation of conflating religion and state in Malaysia is not only an affront to the Federal Constitution, but it also blatantly disregards the plurality of the Malaysian citizenry. The Democratic Action Party (DAP) of Malaysia, together with several other organizations, take exception to the rendering of Malaysia as an Islamic state, be it the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) version or the *PAS* version. They appeal to the fact that Malaysia's constitutional and political history attests her consistent status as a secular state (Chung, n.d.).

The insertion of religious doctrines and influences within statecraft exposes a multi-religious nation to the possibility of polarization and conflict. While rationality transcends religious boundaries, religious teachings based on revealed truths are peculiar to specific religious traditions. If, in relation to the state, we adhere to the religious form of experience and make it the authority for the state and for determining the laws of the state, then, cautions Hegel, the state will fall prey to weakness, insecurity, and disorder. The state is an organism in which firmly fixed distinct powers, laws, and institutions have been developed. It cannot be built upon psychological or religious experience no matter how noble and authentic those experiences are. He quips that if religion were to be the authority for the state, then we can expect statements like: "To the righteous man no law is given; only be pious, and for the rest, practise what thou wilt" (Hegel 1967, 167). Hegel warns that religious fanaticism within politics is a dangerous thing and it threatens the integrity of the rational concrete state. Religion is unflinchingly founded upon revelation. If revelation becomes the basis of statecraft, immense difficulty arises from its interpretation and implementation. As Hegel argues, the concept of the state being embedded within the category of *Objective Spirit*, by necessity, adheres to rational principles of organization that has relevance in the objective realm. These rational principles are not only reflective of pragmatic concerns, but also of matters of ethics, rights, duties, and justice. Although revealed truths may coincide with rational-moral precepts, however, in the event of a tussle between revelation and reason, justifications of political decisions, actions, measures, policies, and so forth, ought only to appeal to reason. States where revealed truths are interpreted by religious authorities, are not impervious to several points of contention; namely, method of authenticating the authority figure, verification of the veracity of the revelations, and the accuracy of their interpretations. Moreover, nonbelievers may not assent to the revelations of a particular religious tradition provided these doctrines can be incorporated into their personal world-view.

Hegel acknowledges that religion need not be antagonistic to the state. However, he asserts that religion's place is in the field of the heart—subjectivity, while the state is in the sphere of objectivity. Hence, if piety

is to pass for the actuality of the state, all laws are cast to the wind and the legislator operates from subjective feelings. It is precisely the fact that everything in the state is established and secure, which is the bulwark against caprice and dogmatic opinion, and so reinforcing the objectivity of the state. I believe that Hegel's assignment of the state as superseding religion in matters of concrete organization is a sound doctrine and immunizes the rationality of the state against insidious forces of pietism and fundamentalist religiosity. Another important distinction between religion and the state is that, although the concept of the state ideally reconciles free inner assent (patriotism) with objective outer structures, the essence of religion resides predominantly in inner assent (faith) [reaffirming Hegel's distinction between religion as subjectivity and state as objectivity.] Hence, an institution of religion that relies excessively upon external constraints, stipulated sanctions, and punitive threats to ensure adherence, deviates from its inner essence. When force is applied to practices of faith, the religious merit of those deeds diminishes.

There appear to be claims of Malaysia as a secular state despite no explicit mention of the word "secular" in the Federal Constitution. Article 3 (1) of Malaysia's Federal Constitution states: "Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation." In reference to this article, the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission [1956-57] Report reads: "This shall not imply that the state is not a secular state." (Note that "secular" is in the Report, not Constitution.) Malaysia's status as a secular or Islamic state seems to be controversial. There is present here two streams of judicial systems. While the secular civil law applies to all residents of Malaysia, Islamic Law or *Syariah* has jurisdiction only over Muslims, who form 60% of Malaysia's population. In March 1988, an amended article 121 (1a) of Malaysia's Federal Constitution provides that the civil court shall have no jurisdiction with respect to matters within the jurisdiction of the *Syariah* court. If the law ought to be universally binding, having a separate justice system that applies only to one ethnic population, then it contravenes this Hegelian precept. There have been cases of individuals who have been embroiled in legal disputes pertaining to the question of placement of jurisdiction, civil or religious. Even some High Court judges have refused to adjudicate on grave matters on the ground that these encroach upon Islamic Law, and thereby leaving litigants without recourse to justice.⁴ The separation of religion and state as subscribed to by Hegel suggests that a secular state would be the ideal.

CONCLUSION

In this project we endeavored to append the Hegelian theoretical framework upon the Malaysian political structure. While being fully aware of the inherent difficulties in applying a thoroughly conceptual-metaphysical scheme to help articulate and perhaps account for the empirical

political lineament of Malaysia, we nonetheless were able to discover that a Hegelian critique of Malaysia's constitutional framework contributes to the theoretical foundation of Malaysia's politics. Despite certain shortcomings of Hegel's model, what it does is to paint a philosophical delineation of socio-political development using broad strokes. Its application of rationality as political justice, organizational integrity, and dialectical resolution, would be able to accommodate idiosyncratic features of particular contexts. Hegel establishes a fresh mode of critical discourse upon Malaysia's polity.

NOTES

1. Hegel groups the judiciary together with the executive in his dialectical phase of *particularity* because the judiciary is responsible for the application of law to particular cases. "Universality" represents the broad, universal, formal, and rational principles of law and political organization. It can also refer to the relevance of a precept to everyone; as for instance laws are legally binding on all residents of a nation.

2. Note that in an electoral system with too many parties contesting and a simple majority decider, the elected party may not receive the mandate of the bulk of the electorate.

3. Hegel relegates Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social contract* to the same erroneous stand.

4. For a case of this jurisdictional quandary, see Editors (2005, 2-8).

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HOMO RELIGIOSUS SPINNING A WEB OF NARRATIVE SELF¹

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The work argues that the self is composed of words and deeds that are founded on an emotional appreciation of reality, which includes notions of what reality is really like; an existential sense of what it means to be human, either abstractly or as part of one's specific culture/religion; and a sense of how human beings relate to one another, as part of a social system that includes morality. The author compares conclusions from social scientists and historians of religion with insights from the Philosophy of Mind to argue that each self has a tripartite foundation that is emotional, existential, and social.

When I turn my reflexion on *myself*, I never can perceive this self without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. 'Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self.

—David Hume (1921, 260)

In the following pages, I will present a theory about the nature of the content required for the formation of a self. Specifically, I will show how historically this content has been developed in and provided by the core activities of religion. As David Hume said above, the self is always a consciousness of something, of some content. I will propose that the self has a tripartite foundation—emotional, existential, and social. Part of the evidence concerns the apparent biological need for certain core concepts for the formation of the human self from the machinery of the brain (basic materials out of which the self is constructed). Part of the evidence concerns the apparent need for cultural systems—historically, religion—to develop and provide these core concepts. I will

briefly discuss both of these needs with evidence drawn from contemporary neuroscience, on the one hand, and widely accepted and influential work from the study of religion in the social sciences, on the other hand.

The study of the history of religions has a special contribution to the understanding of the self. Historians of religion talk about the ways in which human beings understand what they take to be reality. The description of the changes in religion over time can be read as a history of the self—both in this theory and in religion's own understanding—because religion takes itself to be about what is really real. So as the nature of our beliefs about what is real changes over time, we change over time.

BACKGROUND

Hume's observations on the nature of perception and the self were compelling in his own time. And yet, something about them rings more true today given what we know about how the human brain works. There is a lot we do not know as well, so any description is partly a struggle for useful words to symbolize a theory. To explain my theory I will present it here using an important metaphor from Daniel Dennett, a philosopher of mind (1991, 55). My theory does not depend on the veracity of Dennett's work, rather I find his way of talking about the self useful for descriptive purposes. I will use his language but not rely upon his assumptions to demonstrate the soundness of my theory.

Dennett argues that Hume was more correct than is often appreciated. He claims that the human self is not a thing but an abstraction derived from the activity of the brain. The implication of this view is that all human activities are, in the end, activities of one's brain interacting with the larger world, which includes one's own body. Thus the mind is not a being but a doing. This notion has a long history, as old as Aristotle's observation (1941, 592) that, "Mind...is in its essential nature activity...." These activities include making use of the perceptions Hume mentioned, as well as our behaviors and the production of what we experience as mental phenomena. Dennett uses the metaphor of a spider naturally spinning a web to explain this. He (1991, 55) says:

But the strangest and most wonderful constructions in the whole animal world are the amazing, intricate constructions made by the primate, *Homo sapiens*. Each normal individual of this species makes a self. Out of its brain it spins a web of words and deeds, and, like the other creatures, it does not have to know what it is doing; it just does it.

As I said, it is not my intention to prove that Dennett is correct, although I believe this to be the case. My topic is the nature of the material

out of which the web of a self is spun, what I am calling the self's tripartite foundation. The particular metaphor one uses to understand the nature of the self or the building blocks that go into its construction (or development or formation) is not crucial for my purposes. Dennett's metaphor is compelling and useful so I employ it and some of his conclusions to illustrate my argument.

Dennett (1991, 193) claims that, "We somehow install an already invented and largely 'debugged' system of habits in the partly unstructured brain." My contention is that this "somehow" has been the practice of religion's main sociological or anthropological activity in the world, that of outlining a theory of the nature of reality, the meaning of life, and the nature of social relations. I am not claiming that religion is the only way to accomplish this task, or that this is the only thing religion does. I believe, and intend to demonstrate, that what experts in the study of religion have historically and widely held to be the major spheres of activity of religion can be seen to provide the material, or system of habits, for human consciousness to function.² I believe that this process developed as a part of human beings' natural cultural evolution. Although I do not agree that there is evidence to support a further claim, some might argue that religion has provided this material as part of the activity of some intention beyond human understanding (i.e., God). This raises an important issue in the philosophy of religion, which is not in my intention to argue. But, it is my belief that what we call the highest achievements of human beings—our grand cultures and religions—are themselves as much products of nature as we are. It is part of reality's complexity that it produced life and that life evolved to create forms of intelligence that take evolution in a new and more abstract direction, i.e., culture.

Another metaphor for this material is based on the personal computer. Dennett (1991, 190) concludes:

So the tremendous advance of *Homo sapiens* in the last 10,000 years must almost all be due to harnessing the plasticity of that brain in radically new ways—by creating something like software to enhance its underlying powers.

According to Dennett's theory, the human brain is like a very sophisticated, incomprehensibly intricate, biologically-based computer. This comparison is straightforward as our neurons function in a way analogous to the internal workings of computer hardware. Neurons are either activated or not. Computer circuits are either on or off (corresponding to the binary language of the computer that is composed of ones and zeros).³ From the activity of the brain a self is spun. The self is more than the brain in a way analogous to the practical functioning of a computer being more than a pile of hardware. The functionality of the computer is provided by software, which is to say it is the computer programs and not the computers themselves that *do* things (like word processing programs used to write academic papers). If the

brain is the computer hardware, then there is something that provides functionality for us the way a software does. For the human brain that “something like software” that Dennett referred to is culture—at least that which anthropologists call culture—such as language, custom, art, music, and ritual.

Clifford Geertz (1973, 83, 127, 250-51), an anthropologist, used this analogy decades ago in a different context. Geertz makes the point that the analogy can be confusing if one studies culture, but in the context of the philosophy of mind it is quite useful. Geertz said that it is not useful for understanding the self acting in the world (social relations). I take the analogy in another direction toward understanding the nature of the self. This is also how Dennett used the analogy. The nature of culture is more complex than just the ways the brain uses culture to form a self, because each self interacts with others. That is Geertz’s point: the interaction makes the analogy less useful in the context of studying social relations. But Geertz does agree that culture provides the material out of which selves are formed. Specifically, “The human nervous system relies inescapably on the accessibility of public symbolic structures to build up its own autonomous, ongoing pattern of activity.” That pattern of activity is what Dennett calls spinning a narrative web of the self. What Geertz called “public symbolic structures,” at their deepest level, is what I will show to be the tripartite foundation of the self. Further, Geertz said, “This in turn, implies that human thinking is primarily an overt act conducted in terms of the objective materials of the common culture, and only secondarily a private matter.” We think through our culture the way a computer thinks through software.⁴ Culture is our software.⁵ My contribution is in taking this concept a step farther. There is a special kind of software called the operating system that provides the foundation for all other software (i.e., Apple’s Mac OS X or Microsoft’s Windows XP). Operating systems are the deep level of software that allows the hardware to use the practical software. I claim that there are three specific ways in which religion has historically provided material that is the operating system for the human brain: emotional, existential, and social.

Returning briefly to Dennett, that “tremendous advance” he referred to above occurred with what anthropologists call “cultural takeoff” (Harris 1989, 126). This is the point at which culture replaces natural selection as the primary mechanism for our further development, or cultural evolution.⁶ Culture and the brain evolved together before this point, but after that biological evolution is largely replaced by cultural evolution in the life of the species. Geertz (1973, 40-41, 55-83) has described how culture arises with us and helps form us. My claim is that there are kinds of culture that are responsible for this rather than culture generally. There seems to be basic categories of culture that we have in common.⁷ Every society has a different culture but we are cultural beings in the same way. Why is that? I suggest that it all relates to the ways our consciousness evolves. This is not to say that every form of consciousness must look like ours, but that ours happens

to look this way. As an aside, perhaps the reason it has proven so difficult to communicate with dolphins—which may have their own consciousness—in spite of their obvious language abilities, is that their evolutionary track differentiated very early on from ours. The most important developments for each of us were thus very different.

Most importantly, cultures develop over time. My understanding is that this entire grand human phenomenon is the evolutionary process. In itself, this is just the flow of reality—the dialectical process that is our universe. Human beings are just one example of how varied and interesting nature is. As products of nature, human beings represent one extreme of the possibilities inherent in reality. That is my belief, but these issues are debated. Vital to my theory is an observation that while the philosophy of mind studies the nature of consciousness and the human self, the descriptions offered by experts like Dennett are focused on the end result, not the process. Dennett's field is focused on formulating a description—quite a difficult undertaking of its own.

It seems to me, therefore, that there is something left out of Dennett's theory: history. There is an historical process involved in the specific ways that consciousness constructs material out of which to form a self. This is not a disagreement with Dennett's work, just an observation of his field's boundaries. These self-spun selves he describes did not arise instantaneously. These human selves arise over time as the species evolves culturally. These selves spin webs that consist of their words and deeds, interact with the words and deeds of other selves, and then become new words and deeds and so on. The process as described reads like a depersonalized version of G. W. F. Hegel's dialectic (1953) of self-consciousness: thesis (words and deeds of self) begets antithesis (words and deeds of other self), which mutually interact to produce a synthesis (new words and deeds that arise in the interaction between selves; explained further in the conclusion). This process develops over time. We call the more recent developments human history. Hegel had a particular theory about the nature and causes of this development. I believe the process is depersonalized, which is to say it has no overriding intention. Reality is dynamic and the patterns formed can become understandable, even though they are not intentional *per se* (I advocate a scientific understanding of the human, so in principle we could make our history more intentional).

WHY CONSCIOUSNESS WOULD NEED MEDIATING STRUCTURES

In answering the question of why cats purr, a local veterinarian said that he does not like to use human emotion words for pets, like happy, angry or jealous (Stripling 2005, D1). Cats have physiological states like

satiation, hunger or fear. They purr when they are satiated, and on some occasions when seriously ill or injured. We cannot say that it is because they are happy. We have no idea how to understand the mental states of other species, and have a difficult time understanding our own. To say that we can know that a purring cat is really happy is beyond the current state of human knowledge. That much seems obvious. My point is that there is something very important about the process of basic physiological states—emotional in their own way—becoming that which is able to conceptualize, analyze, and integrate emotional states (in this context emotional states differ from physiological states by virtue of self awareness). The structures in the brain required for both are rooted in the same evolutionarily older structures, as newer parts of the brain are grafted onto older parts. Somewhere in our evolution we had to learn how to have emotions in a way that was not overwhelming to consciousness itself.⁸ As the veterinarian put it, our emotion words reflect something complex that we think is beyond what a cat experiences. In short, we had to develop mechanisms that allow us to feel in proportion. We, or some progenitor, had to go through this process to arrive where we are today. For example, being able to feel fear and devise plans for responding to it that are more complex than fighting or fleeing. We think about our emotional experiences rather than merely experiencing emotions, which arguably the cat does not do.

My contention, which I will elaborate below, is that religion must have arisen to help structure the experience of newly emotional creatures. This explains why religion has been around as long as the species. Geertz (1973, 127) said:

Whatever else religion may be, it is in part an attempt (of an implicit and directly felt rather than explicit and consciously thought about sort) to conserve the fund of general meanings in terms of which each individual interprets his [or her] experience and organizes his [or her] conduct.

My claim is that the fragile nature of consciousness requires the mediation of cultural systems (funds of general meaning) that structure the functioning of the brain while integrating the individual into a social setting. These systems rely especially on the emotional experience of the individual consciousness living in a complex, ever changing reality. They also existentially define the individual's place in the broader social setting as well as that social setting's interpreted relation to the whole of this ever changing reality. Finally, these systems organize and facilitate the social interaction of individuals and groups over time.

When these cultural systems are organized around a particular worldview or social group we have historically called them religion. According to Geertz (1973, 68):

Rather than culture acting only to supplement, develop, and extend organically based capacities logically and genetically prior to it, it would seem to be ingredient to those capacities themselves. A culture-less human being would probably turn out to be not an unfulfilled ape, but a wholly mindless and consequently unworkable monstrosity.

Evolving consciousness acting in the world creates structures, which themselves evolve, to mediate what would otherwise be an overwhelming experience. Religion has historically provided the tools we need to become cognitively sophisticated emotional creatures, tools to have and to organize emotional experience in a conscious way. Here again the language is convoluted because the same organ that creates culture (brain biologically) is a product of culture (brain having formed mind). This is a dialectical process in which the cause and effect mutually interpenetrate one another. Our biological evolution provided the physical structures capable of having emotions but the process of integrating them into an understanding of the experience demanded something else, something cultural, which evolved as well. Consciousness needs the structure of culture to function—qua human consciousness—and so whatever else it may be, religion evolved with us to provide content to culture for this process of development. Further, there is no reason to believe this is not an ongoing process. In evolving culturally, we are different from our ancestors and, if the species survives global warming, our descendents will be different from us in significant ways—not biologically but functionally because of their acculturation.

WHERE RELIGION COMES IN

The defining features of religion correspond to universal needs conditioned by the biology of our complex brain structures, and these must be satisfied in either overtly religious or in secular contexts. The satisfaction of these needs takes the form of developing material for the tripartite foundation of the self I introduced above. This process is profound for our thinking—it is similar to the role an operating system has for the functioning of a computer. These needs can be, and traditionally have been, grouped into three major areas by the social sciences: emotional, existential, and social. These are the elements that go into the foundation of the self, whether in religion or not. Recent research in the neurosciences helps us to understand these needs (see Damasio 1994). Further, their universality calls for attempts to articulate an integrated understanding of what it means to be human in this time and place, especially in ways that can speak to a scientifically informed population facing dire social and environmental challenges. In short, this basic nature, which some claim is an inherent religiosity, means that even

nonreligious people would benefit from a more comprehensive and intentional construction of the self.⁹

Whether organized intentionally or not, we all need what Geertz (1973, 90) has called "conceptions of a general order of existence." A common shorthand for this foundation of the self is the term *worldview*. Geertz (1973, 127) explains, "Their world view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their conception of nature, of self, of society."¹⁰ It is not insignificant that he refers to conceptions, "of nature, of self, and of society" as these correspond exactly to what I identify as emotional, existential, and social. My use of the word emotional is intended to refer to conceptions of the nature of reality that help us to structure our emotional appreciation of the world.¹¹ Conceptions of the self are obviously existential in nature. And conceptions of society are about our social lives. It is precisely these three elements that the classic literature in the field identifies as defining: emotional, existential, and social. Religion, especially in the form of intellectual reflection called theology, is involved in the organized, as opposed to the secular and often more accidental, construction of these vital elements. Religion is the depth dimension of culture that provides us with material with which we develop and expand our selves. Religion is not necessary for this activity, but the activity is necessary for human consciousness to arise from brain activity.

By *religious* I mean having some basic features of religion. By *religion* I mean social institutions that are organized, geographically or culturally, at least partially in order to provide for certain basic needs; for an understanding of the world; the place of society in that world; and the role of the individual, as well as facilitating ongoing social cohesion. A more complete definition of religion would be the classic one put forth by Geertz (1973, 90):

...a religion is: a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [people] by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.

My key contention is that these basic features are common to all human beings and all societies. Put together in an organized form we call them religion, sometimes also ideology, but outside of those organized forms, the same dynamics of establishing pervasive and powerful views on the general order of existence are part of human life. It is what we do as a part of spinning the web of our self in concert with others and as participants in human history. The need for this kind of material is rooted in our biology. In religion, and religious like activities, the depth dimension of these public symbolic structures is acted out culturally as in rituals. In other words, religion is the subset of culture made up of so-called sacred symbols that

reflect and build up material that is foundational for culture, through (as Geertz argued above) the inducement of certain feelings and behaviors such as religious experience and rituals. This last phrase is important in this context because feelings or emotions are an essential ingredient in spinning a narrative web of self.

As this foundational material is the depth dimension of culture, that which provides the foundation for the culture's particular details, it is foundational for culture (as the material foundation), and therefore necessary for human life to be human, whether developed in the organized form of religion or not. This is why Geertz (1973, 83) claimed that human culture evolves along side the evolution of the human brain. Both require each other and in interacting from each other (mutually interpenetrating cause and effect). In my computer metaphor, just as a computer requires an operating system and software to have functionality, so our brains require certain sorts of cultural material to function. This material can be extremely subtle and is extremely pervasive, much more varied and foundational than we typically appreciate outside of the context of religion.

SOME CONFUSION TO AVOID

There are a few potential areas of confusion that deserve comment before going on. Geertz (1973, 83) claims that all of this mutually reinforcing evolution

. . . indicates that the most recent developments in the evolution of nervous structure consist in the appearance of mechanisms which both permit the maintenance of more complex regnant fields and make the full determination of these fields in terms of intrinsic (innate) parameters increasingly impossible.

It is important that what I am claiming is to have identified foundational material for the construction of the self. What Geertz claims is that it is impossible to fully predict how that foundation is used in practice, what a given culture will actually look like. I do not think that he meant to suggest that these "complex regnant fields" were not analyzable or universal. So, while it is true that I am taking Geertz's ideas in a different direction, I do not think this is a violation of those ideas. He (1973, 82) suggested as much:

The problem of the evolution of mind is, therefore, neither a false issue generated by a misconceived metaphysic, nor one of discovering at which point in the history of life an invisible anima was superadded to organic material. It is a matter of tracing the development of certain sorts of abilities, capacities, tendencies, and propensities in organisms and delineating the

types of factors upon which the existence of such characteristics depends.

I am putting forth a theory about the nature of these “abilities, capacities, tendencies, and propensities.”

There is also a basic confusion about the critique of religion that deserves comment as it overlaps with the understanding of the self I use. When people discuss religion they usually mean a particular kind of religion. Most famously, Karl Marx (1975a, 3:175) wrote that, “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.”¹² Such critiques are not really about religion as an activity providing material for the construction of selves, but rather are about particular kinds of belief systems. My claim is that the basic categories of religion’s activity refer to a universal phenomenon that is eminently human and biologically founded. Religion often is identified with any intentional effort at constructing a self, and this misses the point. Religion itself is not monolithic and the constructions it offers vary widely. When people talk about the fundamental nature of reality, especially as it applies to human beings, they are involved in an activity that looks like religion, and is often called religion by lay people and specialists alike. But as Geertz said, we all need these basic conceptions. *Religious* is not *religion* and neither are necessarily supernatural or even nonscientific. A basic religious nature (implied in the term *Homo religiosus*, see below) means that we all need some of what religion provides even if we find it in secular places, in scientific constructions that have nothing to do with a God or gods.

THE DETAILS OF THIS TRIPARTITE FOUNDATION OF THE SELF

In the pages that follow I will expand on the nature of the material that has historically been provided by religion. I will do this in a generic way, one found in the classic literature in the study of religion, anthropology, and sociology. In fact, my argument is not especially complex or involved, it does not involve any claims that are particularly contentious in the field, but it is new in the idea that nonreligious people have exactly the same needs for *religious material* and is unique in the form I am presenting it here. People have long talked about these issues, but have usually talked about them in the context of studying religion. Their apparent universality demands that these conversations be widened to include secular contexts, and thus I make use of the philosophy of mind.

As regards emotion, first, this was one of the issues touched upon by Mircea Eliade, a historian of religion. Eliade (1974) argued that human beings are essentially religious, that we are “*Homo religiosus*.” While Eliade’s approach is very different from my own, some

of the vital details overlap. To be honest, he probably would not have appreciated my divorcing the content of his ideas from the general form in which he claimed to have found them, but I will proceed regardless.

My point has to do with a generic human phenomenon regardless of its cultural content and Eliade's interest was more along the lines of finding equivalents between them. We are both in agreement that the human being might accurately be described as *Homo religiosus*. To him this meant that we find manifestations of the sacred, of power beyond us, in almost every type of thing and situation. He said that the world is a seemingly mysterious place in which spirit manifests itself in many, often unpredictable, forms. Spirit infuses and permeates the world. When we are in times of reflection, crisis, celebration, or despair, this spirit is apt to manifest itself—this is called a *hierophany*. Religious experience, according to Eliade, has to do with experiences of *hierophanies*, connections with the sacred.

These experiences I point out are emotional in nature and central to the activity of constructing selves. For Eliade (1974, 12), everything that is not sacred is profane, to the degree that there is anything else.

What I have just said—that anything whatever can become at any given moment a *hierophany*—may seem to contradict all these definitions. If anything whatever may embody separate values, can the sacred-profane dichotomy have any meaning?

For me, the point is that these emotional experiences are an ever-present aspect of our lives and come to form the foundation for our thinking. What Eliade calls *sacred* I would call *significant*, as in what someone experiences or calls sacred is something that is significant to them. For Eliade, ultimately, the distinction between sacred and profane is not, in and of itself, very meaningful. As he (1974, 12) said:

All the definitions given up till now of the religious phenomenon have one thing in common: each has its own way of showing that the sacred and the religious life are the opposite of the profane and the secular life. But as soon as you start to fix limits to the notion of the sacred you come upon difficulties—difficulties both theoretical and practical.

What he thought was important are the ways in which people relate to the sacred, which to me is an exploration of the varied ways we experience our lives, in particular our emotional lives in different contexts (what people usually call *religious experience* or *spirituality*, but it has a much wider application). Extrapolating a bit, it seems that if the distinction between sacred and profane is a thin line, and if the thin line is simply what people do, then the whole world is sacred. So, to Eliade the whole world is the realm of spirit. What really interested him is how, where, and when spirit

manifests itself. I would say that this emotional response to the world has a biological basis (some might want to say it includes a spiritual one as well) and can be found in and out of contexts that are identified as religious but might also be identified with any context that is seen as significant to an individual or group.

Here we ought to be sure of our terms, because Eliade found no distinction between the older forms of religious behavior that we know from archaeology and the newer forms we see around us in grand buildings or on television. Religious behavior, he (1974, 11) concluded, was a matter of relating to spirit, and all ways appeared to him to be equally valid. It is all a matter of an emotional response that is human, and most importantly, for both of us, is equally important in organized and unorganized contexts—for him because spirit is omnipresent and for me because of the emotional nature of all thought (by virtue of all conscious processes having passed through the screening mechanisms of the amygdala, especially). The way he (1974, 30) put it was:

This dialectic of the sacred belongs to all religions, not only to the supposedly “primitive” forms. It is expressed as much in the worship of stones and trees, as in the theology of Indian avatars, or the supreme mystery of the Incarnation.

My contention is that Eliade described an emotional experience that allows us to appreciate the world and its mysteries, an appreciation that includes wonder, awe, and fear, as well as curiosity and an appreciation for beauty. Religion has always helped us to understand the world through stories that we tell and re-tell; sacred stories that for believers are the words of the gods or God. This is the first part of the foundation of the self: the emotional, to define the limits within which we experience what it means to be human.

Second, there is the existential issue: the specific need to define who we are and how we relate to the world. The sociologist Peter Berger (1969), in concert with Geertz, argued that because human beings are “curiously unfinished” at birth—i.e., our bodies and brains have not finished their formation at the time of birth—we end up behaving in a myriad of ways that are simply not possible for nonhuman animals. We have drives that could be argued to be innate (certainly a drive to survive fits this understanding), but where nonhuman animals “know” how to live, we, as a group that exists over time, must define or construct our own way. The process by which this defining is done is a social process, because by virtue of our *unfinishedness* we are social creatures living within a reality that is socially constructed. Berger did not mean that whatever is really real does not exist independently of us, but rather what we take to be reality is a social construction. The nonhuman animal, Berger (1969, 5) said, “...lives in a world that is more or less completely determined by its instinctual structure...By contrast, [the human’s] instinctual structure at

birth is both underspecialized and undirected toward a species-specific environment." Our knowledge, even our faintest ideas about what is really real, changes over time. Ideally these ideas benefit from increased knowledge, but are actually limited in a variety of ways. What we believe about what is really real becomes what is real for us. Berger argued that our basic biology (especially the complex biology of how our brains develop) determines that these definitions of our social environment must come out of activity. This is, of course, the position of earlier thinkers such as Marx (1975b, 3:275), who discussed the phenomenon in terms of "species-being" (the activity of humans as a group).

Our sociological understanding of the particular ways in which humans actually live day-to-day continues to grow more sophisticated while seeming to be quite natural. Berger (1969, 8) wrote:

The understanding of society as rooted in man's externalization, that is, as a product of human activity, is particularly important in view of the fact that society appears to common sense as something quite different, as independent of human activity and as sharing in the innate givenness of nature.

There seems to be no obvious givenness to nature, or at least no universally agreed upon predefined way for humans to live, but only the sequence of experiences of our lives, individually and as a species. Obviously various historically existing religions and other worldviews have their own views on this issue, but seen comparatively they all include the processes that Berger described.

The question for Berger is how this unfinishedness relates to the spinning of the narrative web of self in particular. According to him (1969, 19):

A meaningful order, or *nomos*, is imposed upon the discrete experiences and meanings of individuals. To say that society is a world-building enterprise is to say that it is ordering, or *nomizing*, activity.

Because we do not have a sense of the order of the world hard-wired into us (which Berger contrasts with how nonhuman animals know how to live) Berger argued that this order must, of necessity, be constructed. The construction itself is complex, ultimately involves entire societies, and must account for the ordinary and the extraordinary. The social construction of reality must incorporate the unusual as well as the ordinary—or to use Eliade's terms, the sacred and profane. As Berger (1969, 25) said:

Religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. Put differently, religion is cosmization in a sacred

mode. By sacred is meant here a quality of mysterious and awesome power, other than [human] and yet related to [the human], which is believed to reside in certain objects or experience.

I come back to religion because it seems significant to Berger (as it was for Geertz) that our worldviews have this element of sacrality, or a depth of meaning that secures them. What they describe as sacred I call significant, and the significance is at least in part because the sacred is foundational. This then is the second foundational element for the construction of the self, the existential, to provide us with a sense of what it means to be human in our time and place.

Lastly, we have a vital need for social cohesion. This is the third foundational element for the spinning of the self. Ira Zepp Jr., a historian of religion, has a recent book in which he discusses this issue in religious terms. He relies heavily on Eliade's work for his analysis. In writing about his understanding of religion, Zepp said (1997, 14):

This [analysis] of religion transcends the normal understanding. I am concerned with the religious person—*homo religiosus*—the tendency of human beings to re-link, re-bind, re-connect, and re-concile themselves with each other and nature. This is precisely what the Latin 're-ligare' (from which the English word 'religion' is derived) means. Whenever people are in the process of restoring life to wholeness, integration and unity, they are engaging in religious activity.

Drawing on traditional work in the history of religion, Zepp described what he sees as the religious dimension of shopping malls. He implied that malls have replaced more traditional religious centers in the Western world today. He (1997, 10) did not explore the reasons for this, but one thing is obvious: malls are ubiquitous today in the way churches have been historically. Zepp offered an interesting analysis of the ways in which malls can be seen as analogous to traditional religious centers. He argued that religion has always served the function of bringing people together (which I argue is a part of how we form our selves), and that this religious element can be found in malls. His claim about malls bringing people together—providing a context for social cohesion in a way that can be seen as religious, or relating to our worldviews—is for me the relevant part in his book.

The important point Zepp makes is that religious behavior relies centrally on concepts of sacred space and time providing for the emotional experience of being human, as I have discussed above. Zepp relies on an argument developed in part by Eliade and in part by the

geographer Paul Wheatley (1971). Wheatley described sacred centers in a comparative fashion in the late 1970s. Wheatley traveled the world and discovered that religions commonly have constructions of a ritual or commercial center around which their activities and worldview are organized (in terms of their geography and calendar). There are cathedrals; mosques, temples, notions of center of the world being at the headwaters of the Ganges in India, notions of the center of the world being in Rome as well as more modest manifestations in village and regional centers. In the final analysis, a self must have some sense of what defines or delimits truly human interactions: interactions with self, others, history, and the rest of the world. To do this, a self needs concepts of space and of time for these interactions [Zepp (1997, 33) says this about religion specifically, but it applies here too]. On a practical level, exchange has always formed a material justification for human beings to come together in interactions that are potentially meaningful (existentially and/or emotionally). This facilitation of social cohesion, then, is the third element needed for the construction of a self. We benefit from having something like a glue to help secure social relations, although this can be abused as well.

CONCLUSION

If the self has this tripartite foundation, then perhaps changes and adaptations in how we understand what is really real provide the mechanisms by which we evolve culturally. This sense of what is really real, I claim, does things such as defining the limits and expectations for our relationships with others. For example, in ancient times it was understood to be quite natural that some human beings would own other human beings.¹³ This is a foundational part of how the ancients understood the nature of what it means to be human. In that context, the idea of a slave rebellion (not just against a particular master but against a slave system) was unthinkable, and in fact the first successful slave rebellion did not occur until the late eighteenth century in Haiti (see Federal Research Division..., n.d.). The propriety of such rebellions against injustice is now obvious to most, so obvious as to be beyond question. People will disagree about what constitutes injustice, but not about the immorality of injustice itself.

My point is that an evolution in how we understand reality and the self—updates to our operating system to use the computer analogy—provides different limits within which we construct our socially defined reality or in how we imagine the possibilities of being human. In ancient times the existence of slavery was obvious, where for most of us today it is obviously appalling. Though some say that the actual percentage of people living in slavery is higher today than ever, my point is that the general acceptance of slavery has reversed; it is now generally rejected. This change in the perception of what is a proper relationship between people is an example of our cultural evolution, specifically the social and existential aspects of what selves are, ideally making progress in the direction of real

democracy and mutually supportive and caring relationships developing in ever wider circles in human society.

NOTES

1. This is the Introduction of the author's doctoral dissertation the complete title of which is "*Homo religiosus spinning a web of narrative self: Insights from the study of religion for an understanding of the historical development of the self.*" At present the whole manuscript is about to be released as a book under the title *What is religion? On the nature of the human mind and the role of religion (with or without God)*. *What is religion?* will be available via internet booksellers in the fall of 2007.

2. I mean this necessity practically. In practice this is what scientists have found to be the case.

3. More specifically, the neurons function according to an "all or nothing" principle by which they fire when a Threshold of Excitation is reached. This is only an analogy for the sake of understanding, as neural functioning is much more subtle and nuanced than computer hardware.

4. The language here is a bit convoluted, but Dennett's view is that thinking is something that the brain does, and which one experiences or is witness to. The "one" doing the experiencing is the brain as well, and this ability or experience is something that seems to be particular to especially sophisticated brains, biologically speaking.

5. This is an old analogy and it is important to keep in mind that this is not a literal description but an analogous one for the sake of understanding something that is very complex. Philosophers debate how far to take this analogy, but it is illustrative at a basic level.

6. Whether we have stopped evolving biologically and only evolve culturally is disputed, and not important for my argument. What is important is that we do and have evolved culturally since that "Cultural Takeoff."

7. Geertz suggests that this kind of understanding should not be sought in terms of cultural universals (cultural content that is universal). For this reason I am suggesting that what is universal can be identified in terms of biological needs rather than particular cultural expressions (in terms of form rather than content). The cultural forms are universal, the contents vary widely.

8. "Learn" is not quite the right word here, although it captures what I have in mind. What happened was evolutionary, and so I mean learn in the sense that an evolutionary adaptation reflects a species having "learned" how to cope with something in its environment. Perhaps this is why other hominid species did not survive, they did not "learn" how to integrate complex cognitive functions with emotions with as much success.

9. I argued a version of this point in Curtis (1998, 311-30). I use some of those ideas here, developed more fully. And I also intend to develop them further in concert with the argument here in a future work.

10. Geertz wrote “world view” as two words but I will use one word.

11. This claim is not just my own, but is the conclusion of neuroscientists like Damasio.

12. More commonly, this essay is known as “Contribution to the critique of Hegel’s philosophy of right: Introduction,” and the end of the first sentence often reads: “... just as it is the soul of soulless conditions.”

13. Alfred North Whitehead (1971, 13) is the source of this example of social progress.

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CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS, GOLDMAN'S ONTOLOGICAL WARDROBE, AND A NEW PERSPECTIVE OVER *VERITAS*¹

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There are good reasons to reject absolutism about truth not only for theoretical (chiefly, semantic) purposes but also in connection with the issues of cross-cultural communication and understanding. In explaining the neorealist approach, an analogy given by Alvin Goldman is employed and it is maintained that despite its difficulties Goldman's account is on the right track vis-à-vis truth and the ontological matters related to it.

INTRODUCTION: TRUTH AND THE NORMATIVE FUNCTION OF SCHEMES

The epistemological *Zeitgeist* regarding the nature of truth is noticeably different from how things used to be in the analytic tradition several decades ago. Philosophers who invest their time and mental energy on this matter currently produce their work in a Post-Wittgensteinian era of discursive enlightenment where it is widely, but certainly not unanimously, recognized that truth, generated within linguistic or cultural frameworks, can *somehow* be plural rather than absolute and singular (see, e.g., Alcock 1996; Baç 2006; Goldman 1986, 1999; Lynch 1998, 2005; and Putnam 1986, 1994). Needless to say, this *prima facie* plausible idea has attracted serious criticism, too, the most notable objection being the Davidsonian renunciation of the very idea of conceptual schemes (see Davidson 1985, 1986, 1990, 2001). Donald Davidson argues that to require some sort of a semantic intermediary in communication between a speaker and an interpreter is a fundamentally mistaken idea. He claims—by taking truth as a basic concept in theories of meaning and interpretation, employing the

principle of charity, and shifting the emphasis to “passing theories” in communication rather than leaning heavily on the agents’ prior theories—that he has found a way to overcome the kind of relativism that accompanies the theories of Kuhn, Feyerabend, Whorf, and Quine. In this paper, I will not rehearse the well-known responses to Davidson’s position (see, e.g., Norris 1997, Hacking 1998, and Lynch 1998). I believe it has clearly been shown that Davidson’s account rests on a highly problematic “quasi-behaviorism” and a dubious identification of the concept of untranslatability with that of incommensurability (see Malpas 1992, 204). Instead, I will first offer certain considerations by employing some cultural examples in order to motivate the need for plurality in this matter, and then, departing from Alvin Goldman’s approach, I will gesture towards a more promising conception of truth in the rest of my paper.

Let me first make a few brief preparatory remarks about the “Davidsonian monism” in epistemology and semantics. Despite Davidson’s systematic efforts to undermine it, the fact of the matter is that speakers of any language come to verbal communication well-equipped with a certain cognitive orientation which is part of a more or less determinate worldview and a complex conceptual network. Consequently, the speakers’ “expectancies” and beliefs cannot, generally speaking, be understood in isolation from their cultural, linguistic, and cognitive background. To see why this is so, we must look at the basics: even simple instances of visual perception seem to involve top-down as well as bottom-up cognitive processes, and this means that human perception is essentially and irreducibly a non-conscious, rapid, and highly organized decision making process aimed at making sense of whatever falls into our visual field (see, e.g., Benjafield 1992). Of course, a case can be made *a fortiori* for learning and human memory (see Best 1995). Davidson’s arguments against conceptual schemes lose their strength from the viewpoint of contemporary cognitive—as opposed to an outmoded stimulus-response—psychology.

We do not, however, need to borrow strength from psychological considerations in trying to endorse the role of some “background” in the making of the truth-makers of our world. There are good reasons to believe that most (if not all) of our phenomenal states of affairs, and hence *truths*, are substantially shaped and fashioned by something like conceptual schemes. The best examples are, of course, found in cross-cultural situations. So let me distance myself for a moment from the analytic philosophers’ favorite sentences like “snow is white” and list a few examples from a broader semantic perspective in order to make my anti-Davidsonian point more clearly.

(1) Typically, Westerners find it very difficult to understand the master-pupil relationship in many religious or mystic Eastern

traditions—such as that which can be found in the circles of Khorasan Dervishes (e.g., Hacı Bektaş-i Veli), Mevlevi Sufis (e.g., Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi), and the Buddhist monks and blamas. Given the Western cultural and moral standards, their behavior and the way they treat each other are often incomprehensible, if not politically incorrect.

(2) Many sacred or metaphysical rituals and celebrations of various cultures often seem only entertaining in a touristic way to the outsiders.² In certain cases of radical difference with respect to pertinent cultural values, perspectives, or forms of life, only after *living with*—as opposed to “examining closely” or even “observing tolerantly and respectfully”—the members of such a community can an outsider begin to get a grasp of the hidden meanings, subtle connotations, and profundities behind the words, actions, and states of mind of the “other.” For instance, powwow dances and songs of aboriginal peoples make little sense, other than some kind of noisy and colorful entertainment to the outsiders while there are, of course, rich stories and an altogether *different metaphysic* behind powwow—which literally means “he dreams” in Algonquian. The issue here is not about translation difficulties but, more relevant for my purposes, about the incomprehensibility of certain situations. The author of the present paper vividly remembers watching a finely subtitled Chinese movie about village life without understanding most of the “situations” involved in it.³

(3) A statement like “Jesus (or Truth) sets you free” (Jn. 8:31-36; Rom. 6:18), which is familiar and comprehensible to most members of Western societies, means almost nothing to those who are not acquainted with the Christian notions, even if they understand the English words in that sentence. This is, again, not a difficulty in translation; it is an inability to grasp a certain situation which can only be understood within a conceptual, historical, religious framework.

My aim here is not to offer a discussion in cultural studies; nor do I hope to provide a rigorous treatment and critique of Davidson’s main theses. These examples are only meant to convey the idea that, *contra* Davidson, the mere observation of behavior (linguistic or otherwise) accompanied by charitable assumptions regarding a speaker’s belief system is, for the most cases of interpretation, not sufficient to get an adequate understanding of the speaker’s world (of states of affairs) and the sentences she holds true. In many cases, the statements to be translated and understood involve, as a matter of fact, nonconstatival cultural elements. Of course, this fact may elude analytic philosophers especially when they tend toward restricting the sentential repertoire to such items as “snow is white” in constatival analyses (see Gripaldo 2003, 185-206). Such a tendency is misleading because most of our statements actually bear,

in a rather straightforward way, signs of the pertinent culture and its idiosyncratic social components, and they come with various communally recognizable marks. This does not necessarily mean that different conceptual schemes are isolated and completely incommensurable units, but rather that there are perspicuous discrepancies as well as overlaps among different ways of conceptualizing the world. In other words, we do not need to postulate distinct worlds for cognizers belonging to different worldviews in order to make sense of pluralistic semantics. There is one reality but more than one way to talk about its states of affairs.

KANT'S LEGACY AND THE PROBLEM OF OBJECTIVITY

The moral of the above discussion is that there are good reasons to endorse conceptual/cultural frameworks and "pluralism" not only for theoretical (to wit, semantic) purposes but also in connection with the issues concerning crosscultural communication and understanding. It is yet an open question how we should conceive of truth and the sort of "objectivity" that is often supposed to underlie our alethic (i.e., truth) accounts. In this section, I want to turn to this theoretical question to spell out concisely my take on this matter. As I have mentioned at the beginning, we have witnessed certain important changes in the general philosophical attitude towards ontology and truth during the last half of the past century. Actually, it would not be a hyperbolic claim to say that truth has been in a process of philosophical recuperation for a while now. In the eternal battle between the realist and his opponent, there came a point in the history of ideas when the antirealist or relativist camp deservedly had the onto-epistemic upper hand, chiefly because of the formidable problems of radical externalism that seems to underlie the traditional realist perspective. This was a time when the good old *adaequatio* that had once been presumed to take place conveniently between what belongs to parts/aspects of the realm of being and what resides in the human mind was seriously questioned and eventually did lose its captivating air of philosophical obviousness. Although the original heroes of the countermovement are generally spotted in the second half of the 19th century (Nietzsche and James), one actually has to go as far back as Hume, Berkeley, and Kant to trace the history of the ontological demise of the customary conception of *veritas*. Of course, the last of these three philosophers occupies a rather peculiar and important position in the debate between the realist and antirealist about the nature of *veritas*, for his empirical realism *cum* transcendental idealism opens up some new ways of thinking about the extent of "externality" of the object-end of human knowledge. Kant (1965) takes the Berkeleyan claim that only an idea resembles an idea to the next level with his version of idealism,

although he believes that ordinary objects of human knowledge and the sort of *veritas* that interests finite cognizers like us are not merely inbred offspring of perceptual data where one could not talk about anything mind-independent. Kant is best characterized as a realist whose ontology is critically enlightened and whose epistemology is rendered reasonably humble.

A considerable number of philosophers understandably balk at the idea that Kant was a realist. The Kantian sort of idealism is often taken to directly entail subjectivism—of course, not in a complimentary sense of the term. The etymological root of “realism” (“*res*”) reveals that the realist invariably turns his gaze to what is out there objectively, that is, to what exists in a manner unaffected or unmodified by the inner workings of the human mind. The realm of existence constitutes, forms, and situates itself without any contribution from the mental capacities and functions of finite cognitive agents. Kant’s contention that the objects we can recognize as objects gain that ontological status only by virtue of being in conformity with humans’ cognitive limits and possibilities is often interpreted as saying that those objects depend on cognizers for their existence—a contention that seems to violate our deepest, strongest intuitions about objecthood. But this attitude misses a significant sense of objectivity that is present in Kant’s transcendental account. The mere fact that the forms of perception are provided by our cognitive capacities does not entail for Kant that the objects given to cognition are inside our heads or that we are in total control of the contents of our minds. Nor is it implied that what appears to us at any given moment is automatically elevated to the status of “real.” A stick may look bent when immersed in a glass of water, but, as far as Kant’s empirical realism is concerned, we are always entitled to maintain that certain “appearances” we are presented with are actually not veridical. Such a “reality-check” is possible principally because empirical truths and the ontological makers of such truths—namely, ordinary phenomenal states of affairs—are *somehow* anchored to a mind-independent, in-itself reality that is absolutely not the mind’s creation. Consequently, Kant denies not only the traditional realist thesis that the common objects of our cognition are autonomous enough to metaphysically sustain themselves in the total absence of knowers who provide ontological or transcendental limits, but also the “subjectivist” claim that the phenomenal world given to human cognition lacks a metaphysical anchor to what putatively lies beyond cognizers.

During the last few decades, neorealist (mostly, neo-Kantian) philosophers have capitalized on the transcendental aspects of Kant’s philosophy, explicating and elucidating the norms and limits of veridicality not cognitively but *linguistically*. Those thinkers (such as Hilary Putnam) who produce onto-alethic accounts under the

influence of the post-Wittgensteinian enlightenment distance themselves from traditional sorts of realism while rejecting the idea that objects are simply mental creations (*cf.* Wittgenstein 1958). Furthermore, some neorealists, more inclined towards realism than Putnam, argue that states of affairs of our phenomenal world are constrained in a multitude of ways, and that, contrary to some extreme claims of metaphysical anti-realism, there is nothing philosophically repulsive about the thesis that one sort of constraint has to do with “objectivity” (or mind-independence) in the traditional ontological sense of the term. I believe it must be conceded that this realist element is no stranger to Kant’s ontological account. Furthermore, I think that the gist of another important and relatively recent component of contemporary literature on truth and reality, namely, *the idea of plurality* of conceptual schemes through which phenomenal truth-makers (say, states of affairs) present themselves, can also be found in Kant’s philosophy despite the well-known fact that Kant advocated a universalist ontology. In other words, while the notion of a mind-independent reality and empirical realism tells us, from the Kantian point of view, that human knowledge is *objective*, a form of *pluralism* or *relativism*, which is a fairly familiar characteristic of today’s ontological accounts, is also present in Kant’s onto-epistemic theory in a concealed and peculiar way. To state it in a nutshell, I am suggesting that Kant was a realist, and actually a relativist at that: If the conditions of the possibility of knowledge are essentially indexed to already existing mental capacities of finite knowers belonging to a certain species, possible alterations in those conditions or constraints must yield, using the modern terminology, different sets of objects of experience and thus different truth-makers. Of course, Kant thought that there was a single, universal set of constraints pertaining to objects of our world. My point is that it must yet be borne in mind that transcendental idealism delivers a serious blow to the project of characterizing the external reality as some sort of self-sufficient, autonomous “metaphysical author” who creates a phenomenal world by employing nothing but in-itself, noumenal building blocks. In this sense, the world can only be *co-authored*, one author being the subject. Change the possibilities or limits or the onto-epistemic identity of the “co-author” residing on the subject-side of the relation and you will get, according to the Kantian account, a different phenomenal world. Kant’s universalistic philosophy harbors, in a surprising way, an element of ontological relativity.

This is the reason why Kant provides inspiration for neorealists who are frankly objectivists *and* relativists at the same time. The underlying idea here is that our ordinary states of affairs are individuated as a joint product of the mind-independent reality, human cognition, and, last but not least, the linguistic tools of human

agents. The natural result of this onto-semantic move is that both the traditional forms of metaphysical realism and extreme anti-realism fail to give convincing accounts of the ontological nature of our phenomenal truth-makers. The truth-making relations are definitely constrained by a mind-independent reality *and* they are relative to cognition and human discourse.

ALVIN GOLDMAN'S ONTOLOGICAL WARDROBE

Let me display this whole issue on a contemporary example. According to Alvin Goldman (1986, 1999), who has consistently tried to reconcile a realist perspective with a pluralistic outlook, the early Putnam's internal realism was an example of antirealism in that it was based upon such epistemic considerations as justification under ideal (or sufficiently good) epistemic conditions. The common problem about the claims of Putnam and Dummett is that it is circular to characterize truth in terms of epistemic justification or verification because constatival truth is a basic concept by means of which we define justification and evidence. The principal difference between a realist like Goldman and the verificationists like Dummett is that the latter approach the issue about truth from a standpoint that prioritizes human understanding and meaning. By contrast Goldman (1986, 151) holds that

in the case of many if not most physical object statements, their truth certainly appears to be possible independently of human verification. For example, it might be true that such-and-such happened in the Andromeda galaxy although no human beings were (or are) in a position to verify it. (To hold otherwise would involve an untenable form of *speciesism*.) Moreover this modal fact seems far more certain than any (interesting) doctrine in the theory of meaning.

Although Goldman believes that a correspondence theory of truth has the promise of filling the realist bill, he has no intention of reviving the idea that our world is "prestructured into truthlike entities." The quasi-Kantian alternative Goldman instead has in mind can be spelled out by using the metaphor of "fitting." Accordingly, the truth-bearers resemble garments which do or do not fit the "body" (the world) and this means that the correspondence or fitting relation can be envisaged in a multiplicity of ways. To give an example, the reality itself does not dictate a choice between such footwear as sandals, slippers, or basketball shoes. But the in-itself reality is surely not a construction: a shoe cannot be worn as a hat. Now we can articulate the fundamental problem of antirealism by employing

the fittingness metaphor: the proponent of the epistemic theory of truth conflates the manufactured garments and the body. For a realist like Goldman, the truth conditions of our statements are to be found in the world; but our world is not a noumenal object in the sense of being independent of human conceptualization. Although the fitting between a certain part/aspect of the world and a truth-bearer is not decided simply by what we all might believe and agree upon, still the terms and conditions of such "correspondence" are laid down in a manner comprehensible to human cognizers. Therefore, we are never cut off from the world we try to understand.

Without a doubt, Goldman's metaphor of fittingness is a significant improvement upon the customary correspondence truth. It is nonetheless a somewhat ambiguous one. The main source of difficulty is about the exact identity of the "body" in that analogy. Goldman (1986, 152-54) explicitly says that what he calls "the world" is not an unconceptualized, noumenal entity. But if the "body" is meant to denote the *conceptualized world*, it cannot be as objective or "garment-independent" as Goldman's analogy initially suggests. To put it differently, our (conceptualized) world is one that is *ex hypothesi* always already dressed-up. This blurs, and detracts from the strength of, the body-garment contrast Goldman aims to depict in his discussion of the fittingness relation. Moreover, now it seems right to ask from *whose* point of view the world has been conceptualized. Goldman's analogy becomes confusing as a result of his failure to specify the *extent* and *nature* of garment-independence (e.g., objectivity, ontological robustness, etc.) that he wishes to attribute to that body. His portrayal of the world as a single body which different garments could fit retains the externalist realist's idea that the world, unlike those garments, has a unique form and determined ontological structure. But the metaphor gets slightly incoherent once he pronounces that his focus of attention in this context is actually the phenomenal world rather than some in-itself, unconceptualized reality.

Viewed from a slightly different perspective, Goldman's predicament seems to spring from two conflicting tendencies. On the one hand, he wants to preserve the objectivity of the fitting relation by rendering the "object side" of it as nonconceptual as possible—hence, the notion of a single, objective body. On the other hand, he is aware of the fact that he cannot turn that body into a prestructured noumenal realm—for this would be to repeat the common mistake of the traditional correspondence theories. The philosophical upshot of this tension is that Goldman's fittingness metaphor is marred with some ontological ambiguity and a question about the explanatory potential of his analogy although it can easily be admitted that his approach is a fresh one, opening up new onto-alethic avenues on an old philosophical issue.

SOME REMARKS ON PHENOMENAL TRUTH-MAKING

One notable aspect of Goldman's alethic view is that it is presented as a "descriptive success" theory. The measure of success for a truth-bearer is fitting or corresponding to some part/aspect of reality. But Goldman doubts that the traditional realist's favorite truth-makers, viz., atomistic facts, are plausible candidates for such a task. There are various sorts of truths (e.g., negative truths) which apparently have no obvious truth-makers. So Goldman contends that "[a]s long as anything that makes a proposition true is part of reality—construed as broadly as possible—this fits the correspondence theory as formulated" (Goldman 1999, 62). This idea is different from what is conveyed by traditional correspondence theory of truth-making in that the latter position "embeds" the makers of our ordinary truths in the mind-independent reality instead of basing the phenomenal realm ontologically upon it.⁴ Another way to express the ontological difference here is to point out that there are irreducible intensional components found in the constitution of the neorealist's truth-makers, which effectively means that the in-itself reality cannot be the "unaided originator" of truth. At no stage of cognitive or discursive activity can we come across bare, purely extensional facts that are strictly uncontaminated by conceptualization. In my opinion this is a remarkable point and shows why, despite theoretical difficulties at times, the neo-Kantian approach to ontology and alethic matters is on the right track.

Instead of struggling with Goldman's "body-garment" model of truth-making, we can perhaps give up the whole idea of reading the aspects of our states of affairs into the in-itself reality and pursue a different kind of project, to wit, that of capturing and characterizing truth-making relations at the level of "occurrences" that can be identified in the situations belonging to our phenomenal world (see, e.g., Baç 2006 and Lynch 1998). This seems like a reasonable move considering the variety of contexts in which we use the predicate "true." As I have pointed out, the world generously yields not only truths about snow, rocks, cats, and trees, but—depending on our discursive repertoire and phenomenological horizons—also "truths" about electro-magnetic waves, corruption, inflation rates, personal enlightenment, and nostalgia. We have to turn our gaze into the world we are always already in touch with if we wish to find the dwelling place of our truth-makers even though a mind-independent reality must be admitted as a postulate of reason in order to make sense of the ultimate metaphysical ground of all phenomena. (As Kant rightly said, we do not wish to accept an absurdity like "there can be appearances without something that appears.") Taking all these points into account, I think we can safely say that truth returns to the philosophical scene after tough times and that there is actually no need to sacrifice the best intuitions of either

realism or idealism/pragmatism. This “synthetic” approach is favored today by those who consider the neorealist or neo-Kantian perspective as a constructive step away from extreme relativisms and absolutist forms of realism.

The alethic view exhibited here locates truth-makers or truth conditions of our statements within conceptual schemes, and has advantages over its rivals mostly in terms of explanatory power. That is, it seems to explain better, by reference to some intensional notions, the successful and unsuccessful instances of linguistic/cultural communication. Contrary to Davidson’s claim, scheme-based semantics does not require absolute incommensurability across different forms of life. Rather, it posits fluid and dynamic schemes which overlap one another to varying degrees. Consequently, it seems possible to combat both extreme relativism and an unpalatable kind of monism. Such a philosophical move also gives us a far more helpful discursive tool in illuminating what is relative and what is not in crosscultural communication and understanding. We can and should talk about truth, not in an absolute sense (*viz.*, *sub specie aeternitatis*), but only against the normative background of particular linguistic/cultural frameworks. Contrary to the claims of those who fiercely attack the whole notion of schemes or frameworks, that notion still preserves its theoretical attraction; and it also sheds light on the possibility of relating ourselves to foreign ways of life. Understanding other forms of life or cultural systems is an open possibility that depends on how successfully we can step into their *Lebenswelt* and make sense of the phenomenal circumstances in their world. All things considered, this seems to be the right way to avoid the touristification of authentic traditions and, more generally, to avoid what Linda Alcoff (1996) dubbed “The *National Geographic* attitude” towards other cultures.

NOTES

1. My research in this field has been supported by the Bogaziçi University Research Fund during 2005-2007.

2. While the notions of “fun” and “entertainment” have almost a transcendental function especially in the American way of life, the situation is vastly different in many other cultures of the world. And such facts ordinarily yield significant gaps in cross-cultural communication. My favorite real-life example is the following: One of the Western commentators of the movie *A voice from heaven*—directed by Giuseppe Asaro (1999), documenting the life of the Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and the mystic tradition of *qawwali*—has described in an interview the singers’ ecstatic religious experience by saying “I think they were having a good time.” The point here is *not* just that this is an understatement or a cavalier

oversimplification; nor is it, in its essence, a reflection of a difficulty of translation to Western languages. Rather, the commentator's remark is due to the total absence of a cultural situation and a state of mind in the "Western life style."

3. I have once heard from a colleague of mine, Li Li, that when Chinese people watch movies like Bernardo Bertolucci's *The last emperor* (1987) produced for the Western viewers, they typically do not get the impression that those movies are really about Chinese people because the actors—despite being of Chinese origin—apparently behave and speak in a way comprehensible to their "intended audience" only.

4. For a critical treatment of this issue, see Baç (2003).

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Submitted: 7 December 2006

BOOK REVIEW

Peter H. Spader: *Scheler's Ethical Personalism: Its Logic, Development, and Promise*

**New York: Fordham University Press,
2002, 327 pp.**

Spader identifies and addresses in this work three enigmas that continue to overshadow the merits of Scheler's ethical personalism (9-10): (a) the lack of phenomenological evidences, (b) the sudden change of path from ethics to religion and metaphysics, and (c) the movement from theism to panentheism. Spader's book is thus an attempt to rid Scheler's ethical theory of its illusive reputation by making explicit the rationale behind the obscurities that Scheler seems to have intentionally embraced.

Spader's conscious effort to present his findings in an unambiguous manner, which is quite a thrill considering the ambiguity of Scheler's own presentation, is admirable. He divides the book into four sections following his work's four tasks: (1) introduction—where he justifies the need for a theoretical reconstruction of Scheler's ethical personalism in the light of the overwhelming neglect of what he considers a "pioneering" work, (2) the challenge of Kant—where he begins his task by unraveling the initial problems that Scheler faced, the challenges that motivated him to develop an ethics that Kant deemed unworkable, (3) the challenge of Scheler's new ethics—where he presents the outline of Scheler's ethics and attempts to resolve its problems, and (4) defending a Schelerian ethical personalism—where he tackles systematically the popular objections to Scheler's ethics.

In Chapter 2, Spader explores Kant's rational formalism, identifying its basic themes, and the challenges that it poses against all nonformal ethics. Spader stresses that these so-called challenges were perceived by Scheler as requirements that he needed to meet in order to establish a defensible material ethics. Spader transforms Scheler's rather obscure list of "things to do" (*cf.* "Formalism in ethics," 6-7) into three general requirements: the requirement of the noncontingent values, the requirement of noncontingent feeling, and the requirement of the noncontingent person.

In Chapter 3 Spader demonstrates how Scheler, using the phenomenological method, was able to meet the first of the three requirements, thus claiming a direct access to noncontingent nonformal values. Spader illustrates how Scheler attacked Kant's position which renders it impossible to have such an access by simply overthrowing his dichotomy in his descriptive analysis of the phenomenological given. The phenomenological given transcends Kant's dualism, which divides reality into the *noumena* and the *phenomena*—the rational and the sensible. Hence, Scheler believes that nonformal values, precisely as phenomenological given, are not simply tied to what is given and that there are spiritual acts that are not simply rational, in that they are only directed to what is rationally given, for there are those that are open to what is spiritual yet given in experience.

Spader shows in Chapter 4 how Scheler explored the realm of feelings, thus identifying the role of love and hate in morality. As his response to the second requirement, Scheler explained the noncontingency of feelings, thereby granting them the privilege of revealing to us noncontingent values. Here, Spader irons out a particular dilemma that taints Scheler's ethics with moral relativism: the paradoxical nature of love. In spite of its obvious relative nature, Scheler had assigned to love the fundamental role of providing access to the objective realm of values. Spader clarifies that Scheler indicated love as an act that is not simply reduced to the preferences of the actor. Hence, here Spader is able to elucidate ambiguous themes in Scheler's ethical personalism: the relative-absolute nature of *ordo amoris* and the objective hierarchical ranking of values. Spader ends this chapter with what Scheler identifies as the root cause of value distortion, *ressentiment* (resentment). Spader attempts to clarify the role that *ressentiment* plays in the distortion of values. Scheler explains that *ressentiment*, like love, penetrates the depth of our being, working within our very core, and there it determines our access to the hierarchy of values. This, according to Spader, accounts for the possibility of a *subjective*-distorted, hence corrupted, view of what otherwise is an objective ranking of values (97-100).

In the next chapter Spader traces Scheler's successful attempt to rescue the concept of the person from the reductive tendency of Kant's rationalism. Spader elucidates Scheler's view of the person as the foundation of all essentially different acts (*cf.* "Formalism in ethics," 382-83). Spader, however, does more than this in an effort to present a flipside analysis; he presents a phenomenological description of our experience of acts where he acknowledges their nondurational nature and irreducible meaning. Also, in this chapter, Spader makes his first claim concerning the first enigma:

Scheler never intended the Formalism to be a book in which he developed a complete ethics, or even the

foundations of one. The book was intended to show the possibility of such an ethics in the light of Kant's attack upon all nonformal ethics. (117)

In Chapter 6 Spader performs the monumental task of putting together the bits and pieces of Scheler's ethics, discovering its rational movement—not an easy task, for Spader has to wrestle with Scheler's rough sketch and then battle his way out of the many problems that obscure Scheler's promising endeavor. Spader highlights the features that made Scheler's ethical personalism distinct and of pioneering importance: the hierarchical rank of values, the noncontingent realization of moral values, the directedness of the will toward values and their contents (i.e., the moral tenor), and the will's role in the person's performance of deeds. Then Spader focuses on the problem that he suggests prompted Scheler to shift gears, from ethical personalism to religion and metaphysics, namely, the limits of finite persons. Hence, in Chapter 7 Spader investigates this new horizon, underscoring the fact that there is logic behind Scheler's apparent whimsical change of direction. In Chapter 8 Spader explains the transition from theism to panentheism, and ends his exposition with an elaborate presentation of the problematic relationship between the *geist* (loosely translated as mind or spirit, although Spader stresses that both translations are inadequate) and the *drang* (impulse or drive). Spader, however, asserts that Scheler did not really get to solve the dilemma concerning the limits of the finite persons, that in fact even after the final turn—the panentheistic turn—he still found himself grappling with the same problem.

In the last three chapters, Spader puts his findings into the test by presenting a detailed reply to the general objections to Scheler's ethical theory; he divides his counter-analysis into three tasks: (i) defending the central role of the person, (ii) defending the central role of the heart in value-conception, and (iii) defending Scheler's knowledge of values. Spader deals with the criticisms that were raised in the works of distinguished scholars, who includes Stephen Strasser (*Phenomenology of feeling*, 1967), Karol Wojtyla (*The acting person*, 1979), Dietrich von Hildebrand (*Christian ethics*, 1953), Philip Blosser (*Scheler's critique of Kant's ethics*, 1995), Eugene Kelly (*Max Scheler*, 1977), and Parvis Emad (*Heidegger and the phenomenology of values*, 1981).

Spader's work thrives in its approach: comprehensive yet engaging, decisive yet unassuming. Spader is successful in placing Scheler at the forefront of an ongoing moral dialogue. But more than this, Spader is able to revitalize a narrowing framework by elucidating its richness, thus exploring the possibility of furthering what Scheler can contribute to the discussion of God, religion, phenomenology, dialogue, intersubjectivity, and even rationalism. For this, Spader indeed makes Scheler promising.

Nevertheless, I wish to express a mild frustration over Spader's comparative analysis of Scheler and Husserl on the issue of intersubjectivity (244-48). In particular, I find Spader's tendency to give Scheler's phenomenology an air of distinctness at the expense of Husserl as particularly flawed. Although his employment of Schutz's interpretation—in "William James's concept of the stream of thought phenomenologically interpreted," which appeared in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1975, vol. 2) is justified in form—I believe it would have been more interesting if he based his discussion on a more recent interpretation of Husserl's intersubjectivity, considering that Schutz's interpretation is no longer accepted by most Husserlian scholars. I wish to mention, for example, Dan Zahavi's recent work, *Husserl and transcendental intersubjectivity: A response to the linguistic pragmatic critique* (2001), where, guided by Husserl's unpublished manuscripts, Zahavi offers an alternative interpretation of Husserl's transcendental idealistic theory of constitution, one that not only makes intersubjectivity positible, but one that characterizes it as the complete subjectivity, the real correlate of the world, as revealed by a complete reduction to the transcendental realm. This radical transformation of the *subject*, as intersubjectively constituted and constituting, and of the *world*, as intersubjectively constituted, precludes the understanding that there is in Husserl a subject-object dichotomy—the same dichotomy to which Spader objects (246). Zahavi also offers a much better understanding of transcendental reduction, one that compliments Scheler's theory. However, in spite of this Spader's work does not lose its significance. His expositions of rival theories alone serve as introductions to the works of various scholars. Spader's real contribution lies in his characterization of Scheler's ethical personalism—he makes it possible for others to explore this theory as a serious moral philosophy. Its semblance with the Christian ethics known as *situation ethics* is also interesting. Spader's work with its thorough presentation of the genesis of Scheler's thoughts is open even to beginning students of philosophy, though to Scheler enthusiasts, it is a must read.

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PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

NATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 2006

THEME: *Socio-Political Perspectives on Nation Building*

VENUE: Celestial Resort, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City

DATE: 5-7 April 2006 (Wednesday to Friday)

5 April 2006 (Wednesday)

1. Introduction of Participants/Convention Announcements. Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, PhD [San Beda College, Manila]. PAP Vice President.

2. Launching of the PAP Monograph, Vol. 1. *Recent philosophies in the Philippines*. Edited by Rolando M. Gripaldo, PhD [De La Salle University, Manila] and Jove Jim Aguas, PhD [University of Santo Tomas Manila]. Selected Philosophical Papers delivered at PAP Conferences.

3. Plenary Lectures: (a) Human dignity, community and nation building: Thomistic approach or perspective. Liza Ruth A. Ocampo, PhD [University of the Philippines, Quezon City]. (b) Agimat: Spirituality and power. Fr. Teodulo Gonzales, PhD [Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City].

4. Simultaneous Lectures: (a) Rawl's idea of overlapping consensus. Alvin A. Sario, MA [Aquinas University, Legaspi City]. (b) Directives from Hegel's philosophy of right for nation building. Sanley S. Abila, MA [University of the Philippines in the Visayas, Iloilo].

6 April 2006 (Thursday)

5. Plenary Lecture: What is education for? Appraising the proliferation of educational institutions in the Cagayan Valley. Edmundo Castaneda, PhD [San Lorenzo Ruiz Parish, Burgos, Isabela]

6. Simultaneous Lectures: (a) Bayanihan as overlapping consensus: A model of solidarity for nation building. Mark Lawrence Cruz, MA [Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City]. (b) Conflict, competition, communication, and cooperation enroute to an optimal social choice: A proposed interpretation of social choice theory as applied to issues concerning distribution of goods. Jeremiah Joven B. Joaquin, MA [St. Scholastica's College, Manila]

7. Plenary Lecture: Bayan, inang bayan, nacion, bansa sa kaisipang Pilipino: Ang usapin ng “nasyonalismo” sa pagbubuo ng kapilipinohan. Zeus P. Salazar, PhD [University of the Philippines, Quezon City].

7 April 2006 (Friday)

8. Simultaneous Lectures: (a) The elements of Mohandas K. “Mahatma” Gandhi’s *satyagraha*. Jose Ma. Ybanez Tomacruz, MA [Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City]. (b) The second lecturer did not show up.

9. Plenary Lecture: Tatlong talinghaga ng mabuting buhay: Isang panimulang pagmumuni-muni sa panitikan at pilosopiya. Benilda S. Santos, PhD [Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City]

10. Simultaneous Lectures: (a) Isang libo’t isang tuwa, buong bansa...The meaning of nationhood and the role of mass communications media according to Jurgen Habermas. Lovelyn Paclibar, MA [Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City]. (b) Discourse analysis on the tripeople dialogue of Pikit, Cotabato. Eduardo M. Santoyo, MA [De La Salle University, Manila].

PAP MIDYEAR CONFERENCE, 2006

THEME: *Postcolonialism*

VENUE: Philosophy Department, St. Scholastica’s College, Manila

DATE: 27 October 2006 (Friday)

1. Concurrent Discussions: (a) The role of the humanities in a globalized world. James Victor M. Esguerra, MA [De La Salle University, Manila]. (b) A rereading of Constantino’s postcolonial discourses in Philippine education. Christian Byran S. Bustamante, MA [San Beda College, Manila].

2. Plenary Lectures: (a) Panitikan at pagkamakabayan. Bienvenido Lumbera, PhD (Philippine National Artist). (b) Ang wika bilang suliranin ng historyagrapiyang Pilipino. Fr. Jose Rhommel B. Hernandez, PhD [San Beda College, Manila].

3. Second Concurrent Discussions: (a) Ang kaakuhan ng Filipino American sa *Stone: The awakening* ni Whilce Portacio. Jelson Estrella Capilos, MA [Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City]. (b) The other speaker did not show up.

**PHILIPPINE NATIONAL
PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH
SOCIETY LECTURES, 2006-2007**

**2006-2007 THEME: ISSUES IN THE PHILOSOPHY
OF PERSON**

1. Christine Carmela R. Ramos, PhD [De La Salle University, Manila]. To have or to be? Reexamining Erich Fromm's inquiry of the person. 22 July 2006. Saturday. 1300-1430 HRS. DLSU William Shaw Little Theater (WSLT).

2. Noelle Leslie de la Cruz. PhD [De La Salle University, Manila]. Shadow and evil in Mamashi Kishimoto's *Naruto: A Jungian analysis of a contemporary manga/anime series*. 12 August 2006. Saturday. 1300-1430 HRS. DLSU Yuchengco (Y) 407-409.

3. Diego Odchimar, MA. [University of Santo Tomas, Manila]. Immanuel Kant's concept of the person: Why "end" in himself? why not "means" to an end? 23 September 2006. Saturday. 1300-1430 HRS. Y 407-409.

4. Alvin Tan, MA [Adamson University, Manila]. What does it mean to become a human person? 14 October 2006. Saturday. 1300-1500 HRS. Y 507-509.

5. Lovelyn Paclibar, MA [Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City]. The individuality of person, according to Jurgen Habermas. 28 October 2006. Saturday. 1300-1500 HRS. Y 507, 509.

6. Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr., PhD [De La Salle University, Manila]. Death and authenticity: A Heideggerian examination of human existence. 18 November 2006. Saturday. 1300-1500 HRS. Y 407-409.

7. Juan Rafael Macaranas, PhD [De La Salle College of St. Benilde, Manila]. The dialogical person of Martin Buber: An application. 2 December 2006. Saturday. 1300-1500 HRS. Y 507-509.

9. Laureen Velasco, MA [De La Salle University, Manila]. Acquired self vs. one's original face: Zen philosophy of person. 20 January 2007. Saturday. 1300-1430 HRS. Y 407-409.

10. Leopoldo dela Cruz Jr., PhD [Aguinaldo College, Cavite City]. Concept of the person in contemporary Filipino literature: Implications to pedagogy and cultural reconstruction. 24 February 2007. 1300-1500 HRS. WSLT.

11. Juan Rafael Macaranas, PhD [College of St. Benilde, Manila]. The human person in the aspect of work according to Pope John Paul II: An application. 17 March 2007. 1300-1500 HRS. WSLT.

12. Natividad Dominique Manuat, MA [De La Salle University, Manila]. On embodiment: The person as sexed and gendered. 31 March 2997. Saturday. 1300-1500 HRS. WSLT.

2007 Summer

13. Juan Rafel Macaranas, PhD [College of St. Benilde, Manila]. Martin Buber and Pope John Paul II: A mutual correlation of the dialogical acting person. 5 May 2007. Saturday. 1030-1230 HRS. WSLT.

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN LUZON, 2006

4TH REGIONAL ANNUAL CONVENTION

THEME: *Philosophy, Values Education, and Cultural Transformation*

VENUE: Center for Culture and the Arts, Saint Louis University, Baguio City

DATE: 27-28 October 2006 (Friday & Saturday)

1. Wilfried Vanhoutte, PhD [St. Louis University, Baguio City]. Values and civilization in the Middle Ages: A contemporary perspective. 27 October 2006, Friday. 1030-1200 HRS. SLU CCA Main Theatre.

2. Bartman Gacrama, MA [La Sallette University, Santiago City, Isabela]. Cultural transformation and the moral education of the individual, 27 October 2006. Friday. 1400-1530 HRS. SLU CCA Main Theatre.

3. Fr. Edmundo Castaneda, PhD [Our Lady of Visitation Seminary, Roxas, Isabela]. To be or not to be a university: Understanding the meaning of "quality education" among tertiary schools in the Cagayan Valley. 27 October 2006. Friday. 1600-1730 HRS. SLU Main Theatre.

4. Mark Calano, PhD [University of the Philippines-Baguio, Baguio City]. A contextualization of Charles Taylor's communitarian ethics. October 28, 2006. Saturday. 0800-0930 HRS. SLU CCA Main Theatre.

5. Carmelo P. Marollano, PhD [De La Salle University, Manila]. Revolution, revaluation, and reevaluation of values education. 28 October 2006. Saturday. 1000-1130 HRS. SLU CCA Main Theatre.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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