

SOPHOPHILIA

Critical Readings in Philosophy

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PREFACE

This volume entitled **Sophophilia**—Greek word for “Wisdom of Love”—is in profound recognition of the boldness of the French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas who in his philosophical works has turned philosophy on its head by arguing that philosophy to be more relevant and meaningful in its human sense should not be “love of wisdom (or learning)” but rather “wisdom of love.” In his **Totality and Infinity**, Levinas says: “Philosophy is the wisdom of love at the service of love . . . and serves justice by thematizing the difference and reducing the thematized to difference . . . Philosophy justifies and criticizes the laws of being and of the city.”

Sophophilia is a collection of philosophical essays representing a wide range of philosophical climates, traditions, tendencies and commitments intended to prepare and introduce new enthusiasts to the academic field of Philosophy. The author has determined that an exploration of basic issues relative to these classic philosophical areas is essential for the novice to really get a sensible and meaningful grasp of philosophy in general and of academic philosophy in particular.

The author extends his sincere gratitude and appreciation to Carlos Bueno and Glenn Agbing for the finishing touches.

Ruel F. Pepa

For the generation
of
Maree Khrystin Charlize
and
Mari Khleya Lexis

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BASIC PHILOSOPHY

A Philosophical Theorizing in Search of A Method of Transformative Philosophizing

I. Philosophy As A Breaking Free from Classical Philosophy

Philosophy, as we know it (or as it is known by those who know it), consists of elaborations (or presentations of elaborations) of propositions/proposals that widen and/or deepen, analyze and/or criticize, contradict and/or annihilate preceding elaborations (or presentations of elaborations) of certain propositions/proposals. Hence, the development of philosophy, like the historic time in which it runs, is a linearity of affirmations and negations, advocacies and assaults, praises and protestations.

But however we look into the internalities of particular philosophical formulations and presentations, the linearity of movements occurs on a beaten path, nay a steel railroad, that, if retrogressive immortality may theoretically/hypothetically sustain us, unconditionally leads back to Socrates or even further back to the Pre-Socratics. As if only the ancient Greeks/Hellenes were supernaturally/magically gifted with both the spirit and the intellect to inaugurate the enterprise we now call Philosophy.

What right do we, non-Greeks/non-Hellenes, have to philosophize? Or, is philosophizing a matter of right? Are we, non-Greeks/non-Hellenes, only relegated to the sideline/periphery of the intellectual terrain/arena to discuss the history of philosophy and later, debate on philosophical issues whose roots of problematization automatically trace back to issues--however seemingly amusingly trivial and simplistic they are in the modern world of thematization--originally raised by the Greek mind?

Philosophy's history brings us to non-Greek/non-Hellene territories, no question about it, for there has been a deparochialization of Philosophy through generations marked by a temporal

boundary that separates B.C.E. (before the common era) from the C.E. (common era). There was, in fact, a cosmopolitanization of Philosophy heightened in a geographical region--Northwestern Europe and the British Isles--cartographically over and above its birthplace. Philosophy's "elevation" is symbolic of its more serious and more sophisticated level of achievement in the modern age in terms of intellectual configurations, challenges, complexities, and controversies. But the whole process and event are not a severance of linkage from what is originally Greek/Hellene. Philosophy, therefore, as we know it now, is the undying flow of Greek/Hellene problematization--the persistence of perennial global Hellenization. This is classic/classical philosophy.

And in this historic and geographic movement, could there be an institutionalization of a certain form/type of alienation that has artificialized the way intellectuals in another milieu like ours look at, interpret, anticipate, and propose to approach the crucial nodes of life in the here and now, the there and then, and even the unforeseen/unforeseeable? Or, probably our cultural location is so uniquely special so that alienation is not an issue because the categories of the so-called classical philosophy perfectly match our reality? Has classical philosophy been alienating us, or have we been the ones alienating classical philosophy? Should philosophy be always classical? Is there a way to inaugurate a philosophy that is not classical and yet, still a philosophy, no more, no less?

When the first of the "classicals"—the Pre-Socratics—started to philosophize, they looked at the world where they lived; they looked at themselves as they relate with the world; and they looked inside themselves as individuals uniquely distinguished from others. This is the universal starting point of philosophizing—non-Greek/non-Hellene or whatever. Yet, this universal point of departure can only be truly meaningful if grounded in reality. This is pure and simple philosophizing that transcends the territories of time and space or time-space/space-time. And as we look at the world we live in in the context of our present realities; as we look at the ways we relate with these realities; and as we look inside us as unique individuals affected and affecting, influenced and influencing these realities, have we not embarked into an enterprise we call philosophy/philosophizing?

II. Toward a Method of Philosophizing

Classical philosophy, as system-building, is both Greek/Hellene and metaphysical in rootage, influence, and dynamic. What I propose in this paper is not a system of philosophy/philosophical system--hence, non-metaphysical (even anti-metaphysical) and I believe non-Greek/non-Hellene (but without being anti-Greek/anti-Hellene). It's not even a philosophy but rather a philosophizing--not a system but a method. A method of philosophizing has the advantage of being universal, not in prescribing an absolute and all-encompassing paradigm or thinking/thought-paradigm/thought-system intended to fit the Leibnizian "all possible worlds," but in critically problematizing, approaching, focusing to, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating an event/the hermeneutic of an event, the causal factor(s) that has(have) effected the event, and the thought-power that has woven and interwoven the fibers of formulation that constitutes the hermeneutic of the event.

A method of philosophizing is also a pragmatico-evolutionary movement of perception-reflection-action that constitutes the dialectical spontaneity of a praxis open to the signification of flux, the disintegration of norms, and the formation of the novel and the avant-garde. A method of philosophizing, like the philosophizer equipped with it, is an authentic warrior flexible in seasons of warfare, capable to laugh at defeats and celebrate in victories. A pragmatico-evolutionary method of philosophizing is inherently transformative—a transformative philosophizing that takes the challenge of and responds to the Marxian critique of hermeneuticist philosophy ["Philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it." (Theses on Feuerbach)] I am, therefore, proposing for a philosophy that is transformative philosophizing, clear-eyed and wide-ranging in perception, deep and insightful in reflection, and empowering, influential, and transforming in action. It is a method of philosophizing to which no race, region, nation or ethnicity can ever lay claim. This philosophizing is non-metaphysical, much less non-

Greek/non-Hellene. But it has all the critical power to disentangle and disintegrate metaphysical generalizations and problematizations, seriosities, and follies, as well as all the user-friendliness to be in the disposal of anyone in any situation—paramount or virtual, national or global—in normal, even abnormal, circumstances. This method of philosophizing is aimed to ultimately de-professionalize philosophy/philosophizing. So that, philosophizing is no longer the “esoteric” and specialized task of academically “anointed” gurus and mahatmas.

III. A Method of Philosophizing Called “Transformative Philosophizing”

Transformative philosophizing consists of a multi-progressive path of transcendence and renewal. The cycle is constituted by the philosophical tasks of 1) translation: the propositionalization of a phenomenon/event; 2) hermeneutics/interpretation: the abstracting intellectualization of the components or mechanics of the interpreted phenomenon/event; 3) analysis: an investigation into the salient components or mechanics of the interpreted phenomenon/event; 4) pragmatization: the verification of how the analyzed mechanics of the phenomenon/event are operationalized in human experience; 5) synthesis: the integration of the pragmatically confirmed theorizing and the theoretically signified practice; and 6) evaluation: a propositional assessment of the transformative worth of the phenomenon/event, wherein the transformation could effect a new paradigm of existence that strengthens one’s “will-to-power” and supports her/his courage in “saying-yes-to-life.” [with apologies to Nietzsche]

Transformative philosophizing is an act of critically “gliding” along the empirico-rational milieu of the cultural apparatus with an aim to effect transformation of being and strength of character in the stability of a well-defined state of affairs through cognitive enlightenment and intellectual empowerment with the instrumentality of transformative philosophizing’s multi-procedural cycle of progression toward transcendence and renewal. Transformative philosophizing is a reflective act/active reflection that looks deeply into the ordered chaos/chaotic order of human flexibility/flexible humanity equipped with all the capability of embracing the persistence of the recurrence of eternity/eternal recurrence in space-time/time-space continuum.

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Nurturing the Imagination of Resistance: Some important views from contemporary philosophers

[This is the text of the 2004 Martin Heidegger Memorial Lecture, delivered on 28 July 2004 at the Barsam Hall Audio-Visual Room, Trinity College of Quezon City (TCQC), The Philippines]

From the Hermeneutics of Suspicion to the Post-Modern Imagination of Resistance

Stanley Honer in his "An Invitation to Philosophy" comments that philosophy does not answer questions; philosophy questions answers.

In the history of western philosophy, the most penetrating and radical questions asked by modern philosophy came out through the defiant treatises of what the French hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur in his *Freud and Philosophy* (1970) calls "the masters of the hermeneutics of suspicion" namely, **Karl Marx**, **Friedrich Nietzsche**, and **Sigmund Freud**. According to Ricoeur, the **hermeneutics of suspicion** is "a method of interpretation which assumes that the literal or surface-level meaning of a text is an effort to conceal the political interests which are served by the text. The purpose of interpretation is to strip off the concealment, unmasking those interests."^[1] It unmasks and unveils untenable claims. It suspects the credibility of the superficial text and explores what is underneath the surface to reveal a more authentic dimension of meaning.

Marx's analysis of religion exposed and opposed the illusory character of the transcendent realm conceived and taught by religion to ease the misery and hardship experienced by dehumanized people exploited in work places by the new slave-drivers of the Industrial Era — the capitalists. Hence, Marx concluded that religion is the opium of the people.

With an equally devastating attack against the religion of his time, Nietzsche saw in it a determination to elevate weakness to the level of strength thereby making weakness honorable

and worthy of praise. In such situation, the character of the religious human being is led to a state of domestication where the full potential of being human is not explored, much less realized. Because of the "moral values" of humility, pity, hospitality, kindness, among others, the human being has been deprived of the natural flow of the "will to power" which, according to Nietzsche, is the sole factor that makes humanity the bridge stretched between the "Unmensch" [beast] and the "Übermensch" [Overman].

Religion in the hands of Freud was critically presented to distinguish "the real" from "the apparent". Though religion could be a source of comfort and feeling of assurance, getting one's self in a serious problem in the warp and woof of life exposes the illusions that inhabit this house of cards. In Freud, religion is simply an expression of one's wish to be protected and defended by a father-figure called "God".

It could be said at this point that the masters of the hermeneutics of suspicion though "destructive" in their methodology did not actually aim to destroy institutionalized edifices of culture and civilization just for the senseless sake of destroying them. They embarked in their respective projects to "clear the horizon for a more authentic word, for a new reign of Truth, not only by means of a 'destructive' critique, but by the invention of an art of interpreting."^[2] It is only in destroying the false assumptions and the untenable platforms of awareness that new liberating paradigms of thought may arise to allow the human being a better interpretation of her/his reality. In the process, such hermeneutics of suspicion leads to a bi-focal critique — a critique that is not only trained towards the participant in a system but likewise towards the system itself.

However, the hermeneutics of suspicion in the post-modern climate is an expression of the same **spirit of philosophic resistance** to "a profound disenchantment with modernism (and its conviction to reason, rationalism, scientism, objectivity and progress) much earlier in Western history."^[3] Modernism is generally perceived to be predominated by the key principles of linear progress, absolute truth, knowledge standardization and rational formation of states of affairs.

Nietzsche's Imagination of Resistance: Reality as Interpretations

Of the three sources of the hermeneutics of suspicion in the modern era, Nietzsche's "prophetic pronouncements" are hailed by contemporary philosophy as most expressive of the post-modern temper — the most pregnant of post-modern ideas

Nietzsche's **imagination of resistance** is profoundly expressed in both his minor and major philosophical works. In an unpublished essay, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," which he wrote in 1873, Nietzsche argues that that which is claimed to be objective truth is nothing but a barrage of metaphors. Objective truth, the basis of scientific theories, is only an illusion. Hence, if 'truth' is relative, no amount of scientific hypothesizing can capture it.

In *Beyond Good and Evil, Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1886), Nietzsche goes a step further in asserting this relativity. No absolute moral standards objectively predominate the human situation, *a priori*. There is nothing inherently abhorrent in exploitation; its moral suitability largely depends on the social status of the person who perpetrates the exploitation in society.

In another book, *On the Genealogy of Morals, A Polemic*, Nietzsche presses further on in his attack of objectivity. Traditional morality for him is tremendously influenced by the Christian valuation of weakness and hence should be torn down. The human "will to power" is tragically devastated by one's mind-set of guilt and remorse. Christianity has contrived them to control the natural occurrence of human flourishing. Nietzsche maintains that there is no absolute, objective, supernatural and universal perspective. The human existential reality is relative: "There are no facts, only interpretations." The very absence of a definite and absolute moral influence in the human existential realm, bestows on the human being the lonely task of setting his own normative guidelines.

Nietzsche's imagination of resistance is likewise reflected in his other works which he later produced like *The Case of Wagner, A Musician's Problem* (1888), *Twilight of the Idols, or How One Philosophizes with a Hammer* (1888), *The Antichrist, Curse on Christianity* (1888), and *Ecce Homo, How One Becomes What One Is* (1888).

Among the philosophers of the contemporary period, the imagination of resistance that preoccupied Nietzsche's life of defiant philosophizing has had a massive extent of influence on the philosophizing of Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard among others.

Heidegger's Imagination of Resistance: Hermeneutics as Existential Understanding

Heidegger's imagination of resistance is shown in his *Being and Time* as he challenges the Husserlian concept of objectivity in phenomenology. "Husserl argues that objective interpretation is possible using his transcendental phenomenological method that requires bracketing the subjectivity inhering in the interpreter's *life-world* (*Lebenswelt*), the world of personal experience and desires."^[4] Heidegger argues that such bracketing is not possible on the ground that "the understanding of a situation is directly mediated by a fore-knowledge, or sensitivity to situations, that is comprised by the understander's life-world."^[5] Hence, holding that *Lebenswelt* in abeyance would even make understanding impossible. In this connection, Heidegger concludes that "as a necessary part of human 'being-in-the-world' (*Dasein*), things are perceived according to how they are encountered and used in one's everyday routines and tasks. Perception and apprehension thus move from fore-knowledge to an *existential understanding*, a largely unreflective and automatic grasp of a situation that triggers a response."^[6]

In so doing, Heidegger transforms hermeneutics from a theory of interpretation (epistemological hermeneutics) to a theory of existential understanding (ontological hermeneutics).

He 'depsychologizes' hermeneutics by dissociating it from the empathetic perception of other beings. Understanding now appears as a *no-longer-conscious* component of *Dasein*; it is embedded within the context of specific situations and plans, with, in effect, finite computational resources. Therefore, interpretation (*Auslegung*) which depends on such existential understanding (*Verstehen*) is not the general logical method found in classical philology, but refers to a conscious recognition of one's own world. Dilthey's methodological hermeneutic circle is consequently supplanted by the more fundamental *ontological hermeneutic circle*, which leads from existential understanding situated in a world to a self-conscious interpretive stance. This self-consciousness, however, cannot escape its limitations to achieve a transcendental understanding in the sense of Hegel, who considered rationality the ability to reflectively accept or reject (transcend) the received socio-cultural tradition. According to this reading of Heidegger, fore-knowledge is accumulated over time and constrains successive exercises of

existential understanding. But self-conscious understanding cannot choose which elements in the experience based foreknowledge are respecified in the bootstrapping process.[7]

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger's phenomenology of *Dasein* is basically a hermeneutic undertaking. Understanding occurs before cognition, and being able to seize the currently ongoing state of affairs is not required by its meaning. It is actually the seizing of *Dasein*'s potentiality-for-Being — a projection into the future — that is vital for the structure of *Dasein*. In Heidegger, therefore, we see a type of hermeneutics that engages two significant facets: 1) an understanding of the existentially previous condition of *Dasein*, and 2) an interpretation of the potentiality of Being that belongs to *Dasein*. It only means that we do not approach an object or text totally devoid of all presuppositions; Heidegger's *Dasein* is filled with primordial understanding.

Foucault's Imagination of Resistance: The Substructures of Concealed Genealogy

The French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926- 1984) challenged the basic notions on how the human being thinks of absolute universal truths about human nature and social transformation in the history of civilizations. In defiance of Marxian as well as Freudian influences, Foucault purported that rote activities defined people's identities and systemized their knowledge. Foucault's exploration into the issue of power and its variegating configurations is an underlying consideration in his brand of postmodernism.

Foucault's postmodern imagination of resistance is reflected in his theory of historical understanding that challenges conventional history as a chronological presentation of foreseeable facts. He replaces it with substructures of concealed and non-thematized corpus of historical information. These substructures are the determining factors and presuppositions of organization — the formation of uniqueness that justify the awareness and understanding — through which societies consummate their distinctive characters.

Derrida's Imagination of Resistance: In Radical Defiance of Logocentrism

The French poststructuralist and postmodernist Jacques Derrida (b. 1930) is concerned with the deconstruction of texts and the inter-textual relationship of meaning.

His imagination of resistance is trained towards "logocentrism". While philosophers *write* their ideas, they however claim that philosophy is not a matter of writing. They claim that philosophy rather deals with ideas on a subject matter and writing on such a subject matter is not actually "philosophically necessary". Philosophy aims to determine the undeniable truth basic to the problem. Reason and truth — not the rhetoric of language — structure it. This location of philosophy in the dimension of truth and reason "untouched" by the written word refuses to be defined as writing. Philosophy therefore looks at writing as "a necessary evil" that gives way for the philosopher to convey his ideas.

Derrida strongly opposes such a preposterous view. For him, the philosopher's relation to language must be seen as a part of the problem of knowledge. One cannot forsake language as a negligible tool of communication for ideas are inseparably connected to language. Logocentrism views reason as conditioned by "a metaphysics of presence."

Philosophical discourse is not privileged in any way, and any attempt to explain what "meaning" *means* will self-destruct. Put more precisely, the signifiers of language systems cannot refer to a transcendental *signified* originating in the mind of the speaker because the "signified" is itself created by the conventional, and hence arbitrary, signifiers of language. Signifiers therefore merely refer to other signifiers (e.g., words refer only to other words). The "meaning" is always deferred and Presence is never actually present. Signifiers attain significance only in their differences from each other (the signifier "cat" is neither "cap" nor "car") or in what they define themselves against ("to be asleep" is understood in contrast to "to be awake").[8]

Logocentrism is understandable only as it connects with a myriad of other ideas. It is impossible to understand an idea that is not conceptualized. Ideas are all structured in language. Hence, meaning and text are perpetually connected.

Lyotard's Imagination of Resistance: The Disenfranchisement of Meta-narratives

The French post-structural philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard's (1924-1998) intellectual commitment includes a wide coverage of issues not only in the field of philosophy but equally in politics and aesthetics His scholarly works consistently touches on the notion that reality expresses itself not in "meta-narratives"[9] but in a multiplicity of particular states of affairs that

cannot precisely be signified by rational theory. Lyotard believed that since politics is based on exact representations of reality, such particular states of affairs are considered to have deep political importance.

Lyotard's philosophical imagination of resistance expresses many of the foremost thematizations commonly shared in post-structural and postmodern thought. It casts a serious doubt on the powers of reason and in the process, affirms the importance of non-rationality in terms of feelings and emotions. It likewise disenfranchises humanism and the traditional philosophical anthropocentric conception of knowledge, being an advocacy of heterogeneity and difference. It proposes that a social perception which relies on the principle of "progress" has been rendered irrelevant and immaterial by the post-industrial paradigm-shift in the areas of science, technology, politics and culture.

Conclusion

The philosophical strand of the imagination of resistance that runs from the hermeneutics of suspicion to postmodern and post-structural uprisings is a defiant response of contemporary philosophizing against the objectivism, rationalism, and positivistic scientism of the modern era. It is also a devastating reaction against the structural conception of reality which presupposes the inevitability of universal linguistic structures which ultimately predetermine the essence of reality.

The postmodern imagination of resistance is therefore a radical expression of a denial of absolute essences, defining characters, inherent natures and other universalizations that artificially capture the dynamicity of Heidegger's *Dasein*.

The postmodern imagination of resistance is truly "an incredulity towards metanarratives" as Lyotard succinctly puts it. Hence, from the postmodern point of view, no interpretation of reality can ever be conditioned by certain universal, absolute, and objective grand presuppositions.

ENDNOTES

1. http://www-english.tamu.edu/pers/fac/myers/hermeneutical_lexicon.html
2. Paul Ricoeur, **Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 33.
3. <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/9095/postmodernism.html>
4. http://www.ai.mit.edu/people/jcma/papers/1986-ai-memo-871/subsection3_4_1.html
5. Ibid.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Loc. cit.
8. http://www.whitworth.edu/Academic/Department/Core/Classes/CO250/France/Data/d_derri.htm
9. "'Meta-narrative' is Lyotard's term. It means a story or narrative that is presumed to have great generality and represents a final and apodictic truth [apodictic truths: an imaginary concept of truth in which it is supposed that we know something with absolute certainty. To be an apodictic truth there must be no possibility of mistake]. Modernists, Lyotard tells us, believe in metanarratives whereas postmoderns are incredulous of metanarratives. Postmoderns, in this sense of the term, are eclectic and gather their beliefs from a variety of sources while treating the resulting compilation as tentative." <http://www.california.com/~rathbone/local4.htm>

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PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

Random Thoughts on Values

1. Values and Rules of Behavior

Phenomenologically, "behavior" may be viewed in two successive levels: *the pre-reflective* and *the reflective*.

On the one hand, "behavior," which is spontaneous in the pre-reflective level is based on the inaccessible and unconscious biological aspect of being. On the other hand, "behavior" in the reflective level is dealt with deliberately. The non-thematic character of "behavior" in the former level becomes thematic in the latter. "Behavior" in its non-thematic form is absent in human consciousness. However, the active participation of human consciousness in dealing with "behavior" gives way to the exploitation of its very nature as the noesis (active consciousness) reflects upon "behavior" as its noema (object of consciousness).

Hence, "rules of behavior" can only emerge at the reflective level. It cannot do so at the pre-reflective level because "behavior" as it takes place in this level precedes consciousness and therefore, does not involve explicit "rules." "Rules" emanate only when human consciousness perceives certain aspects in the natural processes occurring in every dimension of reality as necessary and significant to grasp realistically and creatively the relation of this dimension with human existence.

This perspective gives us a glimpse of the relation between values and rules of behavior. Both basically emanate from the stream of consciousness occurring in the reflective level. Both are concerned with what is desirable: values, in general, arise as Sartre's "**being-in-itself**" (or a human being who is always open to possibilities) constitutes objects as desirable while rules

of behavior emerge as s/he tries to put in methodical order his attempt to internalize that which is desirable. Therefore, the human being, as the "for-itself," creates his own values and rules of behavior whose characters are based on every human surpassing.

As the "for-itself" seeks to be united with the "self" in a progressive and unceasing struggle to properly understand the cause of his becoming in the context of human historicity, values--the desirable objectives of all surpassings--and rules of behavior--the ordered and systematic manner of dealing rationally with the desirable objectives-- will always remain as the life-blood of all human attempts in creativity.

II. Is Survival a Value?

Survival in the non-conscious plane of being is *not* a value. It spontaneously runs along the flow of implicit biological order wherein human consciousness has no *primal* focus. Such nature is seen among animals and even newborn babies. They are driven by an instinctive force toward a struggle for survival where in deliberation is non-operative. An **unmensch** (Nietzsche) through which drive for survival is seen is not consciously aware of *what ought to be done*. What it does is simply an event in the realm of unconscious regularities. Through constant regularities occurring between its biological structure and the milieu into which it has been adapted, biological needs are spontaneously generated and do conform to *what is*.

However, the explicitation of "survival" leads us to a higher plane. Here, survival is thematically presented to human consciousness and thereby acquires a twofold character subjectively dependent upon each individual human being to whom survival becomes an issue. To him who believes that existence is only an accident, survival which is a by-product of this accident is just another accident to which his entire existence is tied-up until the point when he will ultimately disintegrate to nothing.

Survival, therefore, in this instance, is not a value--a desirable objective of all human undertakings--but simply an "unsought-for" drive that is inseparable from the necessities spontaneously generated in the unconscious biological dimension of reality. For such types of human, values are only those which he can freely *desire* within the *confines* of conscious

reflection, with no connection whatsoever to the the mysterious stream of blind natural processes completely uncontrolled by human sanity.

But to him who believes that his being caught amidst the complexities of human existence allows him to perceive the necessities generated by the biological processes independent of rationality, survival, from its subjection in the lower level, is raised to a higher point in the human consciousness where it is signified in the on-going motion of human reality. It, thus, becomes a value.

From the consciousness of the situation where difficulties of living and the problem of the deprivation of the right to live arise, the status of survival is raised to become a value. However, in the final analysis, we are able to find out that these difficulties and problems somehow become a fact of human existence only because man himself created them.

iii. Acquisition of Values

Values are acquired through *social practice*. To constitute reality, the human being is caught in a dialectical relation with the world, By the very nature of this relation, the human being consciously perceives the necessities involved to continuously participate in the historic process. His knowledge of these necessities is a dimension of freedom, for, upon knowing the complexities of living, the human being's will is then left in an autonomous situation to reflect and act upon it, to change what can possibly be changed.

In action and reflection--praxis--values are acquired; for how can man, the "being-for-itself," go on in his struggle to be united with the "self" if there is not a value that will give meaning to his aspirations? The human being in his *becoming* is always confronted by possibilities because it is a facticity of his existence to be incomplete--always lacking as s/he strides on new situations from moment ot moment.

iv. Fundamental Values Crucial for National Development

There are threee fundamental values crucial in dealing with the arduous task of social transformation for national development. These are *freedom*, *responsibility* and *creativity*.

Every humanist value that has been given an eminent place in the heart of the human being as s/he partakes in the task of moving toward higher and greater refinement follows from the primacy of these three values.

From the necessities of human existence geared toward national development, we can fully harness the value of freedom in terms of decision-making . In the process of being immersed in such kind of situations, i.e., to keep oneself always in touch with what is obtaining in the superstructure of the society, *responsibility* is definitely significant. Both freedom and responsibility are, however, futile if they are not perfectly joined in unison with our wish to *create* a just and humanized society.

(c) Ruel F. Pepa

ABSOLUTISM AND RELATIVISM IN ETHICS: A LINGUISTIC ANALYTIC APPROACH

[A Professorial Lecture delivered at the Mabini Hall of Colegio de San Juan de Letran, Intramuros, Manila on 29 January 1998.]

1.0 The Problem and the Hypothesis

1.1 Are moral values relative or absolute?¹

1.2 Values in general, seen *a priori*, are absolute—across the board; seen *a posteriori*, they are basically relative and only become absolute by the process of **absolutization**.

2.0 The Framework of Analysis

2.1 The paradigm of this discussion is **linguistic analytic**.²

2.2 The linguistic analytic paradigm aims to clarify meanings of concepts, statements, propositions and other utterances so as to facilitate understanding.³

2.3 The inferential point of reference of the linguistic analytic paradigm is **The Principle of Contextual Dependence**.⁴

¹ Cf. Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics: The New Morality (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1996), pp. 44-45; Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind: A Revolutionary Approach to Man's Understanding of Himself (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980).

² Cf. A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 137; Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1997), p.22.

³ Cf. Arthur C. Danto, What Philosophy Is: A Guide to the Elements (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1968), p.16.

⁴ Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations. www.filestube.com/p/philosophical+investigations+pdf

2.31 The principle of contextual dependence recognizes the metaphysical assumption that there is a **multiplicity of contexts**.⁵

2.4 The basic contextual loci of this discussion are **the community and the individual**.⁶

2.41 Based on the metaphysical assumption of the multiplicity of contexts, a community is one among many; so is an individual.

2.42 The epistemological framework of this discussion is based on the three-phase **belief acceptability spectrum** of:

SUBJECTIVITY > *INTERSUBJECTIVITY* > *OBJECTIVITY*⁷

3.0 The Analysis

3.1 Moral values, seen *a priori*, are absolute—across the board—because of their transcendent origin.⁸

3.2 Using our epistemological framework⁹, *a priori* moral values are posited as an objectivity at the contextual locus of the community where they are intersubjectively accepted.

3.3 However, deviation from some of these moral values is committed at the locus of the individual.

3.31 Such an act is one of subjectivity, wherein some moral values which are originally absolute become relative by the process of **relativization**.

3.32 In other words, relative moral values are actually relativized *a priori* moral values rendered as such by the subjective act of an individual.

ABSOLUTE VALUES > *RELATIVIZED VALUES* > *RELATIVE VALUES*

⁵ Cf. Berger and Luckmann, p.21.

⁶ Cf. Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principle of Morals (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

⁷ Cf. Kathleen M. Haney, Intersubjectivity Revisited (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1994), p.1.

⁸ An origin that transcends human experience. Cf. Immanuel Kant's "Categorical Imperative."

⁹ Cf. 2.42.

OBJECTIVE > *INTERSUBJECTIVE* > *SUBJECTIVE*

COMMUNITY > *INDIVIDUAL*

4.0 Moral values, seen *a posteriori*, are basically relative to the subjective desires, intentions, aspirations and significations of individuals as they perceive, interpret, and act on the reality they experience individually.¹⁰

4.1 However, living together in the contextual locus of a particular community, higher desires, intentions, aspirations and significations have to be satisfied on the level of the intersubjective.

4.11 Hence, standardization of moral values agreed upon on the intersubjective level becomes objective in the form of principles and laws that at this point are more identified with the community.

4.12 In short, basically subjective moral values have already attained the level of the absolute by the process of absolutization.

4.121 Therefore, absolute *a posteriori* moral values are actually absolutized moral values.

RELATIVE VALUES > *ABSOLUTIZED VALUES* > *ABSOLUTE VALUES*

SUBJECTIVE > *INTERSUBJECTIVE* > *OBJECTIVE*

INDIVIDUAL > *COMMUNITY*

¹⁰ Re *a posteriori* (or empirical) moral values: Cf. Leszek Kolakowski, Positivist Philosophy: From Hume to the Vienna Circle (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972), pp.224-225.

5.0 From the above discussion, it is affirmed that moral values, whether *apriori* or *a posteriori* are standard and standardized respectively, in the contextual locus of the community. And moral standards (standardized morals) are moral absolutes or to put it in the language of formal logic,

“For any x such that if x is standard (Sx), then x is absolute (Ax).”

Which is equivalent to:

“It cannot be that x is both a standard and not an absolute.”

5.1 Considering the relational discrepancy between the contextual loci of community and individual, the community standardizes and hence absolutizes whereas the individual relativizes. The question now is: Isn't it possible for a community to relativize, and for the individual to absolutize?

5.2 Further extending the use of our inferential point of reference which is the principle of contextual dependence¹¹ in its recognition of the metaphysical assumption of the multiplicity of contexts, relativization can occur at the contextual locus of the community if we consider it not as a sole logical universe but rather one among many in the logical universe of a set of communities.

5.21 We have here a case of the multiplicity of contexts wherein each community is a self-sufficient context with its own absolutes.

5.211 Hence, the logic of this assumption goes like this: “If there is a multiplicity of contexts, there is also a multiplicity of absolutes. And in a multiplicity of absolutes, one set of absolutes becomes relative in the face of other absolutes of their respective contexts.”

5.212 Hence, the absolutes of a particular context are rendered inapplicable to the other contexts.

¹¹ Cf. 2.3.

5.3 In the same vein, an individual relativizes in a multiplicity of individuals but absolutizes in the context of his or her own specific locus as an individual.

6.0 The Conclusion

6.1 The linguistic analytic paradigm has led us to satisfy the twofold aim of meaning clarification and understanding facilitation¹² by allowing us to conclude with the statement that “Moral values are absolute and relative” without committing logical contradiction.

6.2 All in all, the entire exercise is but an affirmation of the inferential point of reference: **The Principle of Contextual Dependence.**¹³

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¹² Cf. 2.2.

¹³ Cf. 2.3.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION IN A CULTURE OF TRUST: A PARADIGM OF LEADERSHIP IN AN ERA OF POST-MODERN REALITIES

Introduction

Our era is known in the intellectual circle as “the post-modern age.” And the zeitgeist of this age has encompassed practically almost all—if not all—sectors of our life on this planet. The earth has “shrunk” and we are literally living in a small world. From the primitive past of traveling “short” distances in days—even months—through the “crudest” means of transportation, we can now encircle the globe in hours. From the days of pony express in the U.S., surface mail, par avion, and telegram, even communication has come of age in this era of electronic mail (e-mail), “chatting,” and teleconferencing through the magic of information technology (IT). The second wave civilization or the era of industrialism brought forth by the spirit of the age of modernism has not only “impersonalized” society but likewise “depersonalized” humanity through standardization and massification. But the paradigm shift from the modern age to the post-modern has brought human relations to the commanding heights of “ultra-personalization” of society and “super-personalization” of humanity. In the language of the social critic Marshall McLuhan of *The Medium is the Message* fame, ours is a “global village.” This is the post-industrial era; the stage of humanity’s progress which the futuristic sociologist and philosopher Alvin Toffler (1990) calls “the third wave civilization.”

The Paradigm Shift

The spirit of this age has been seriously reckoned now as a strong influencing factor that enlivens and “reengineers” structures, organizations, and processes in the political, civil, and corporate sectors of society. Old structures are being collapsed, obsolete paradigms are introduced which according to the reengineering guru of the 21st century, Michael Hammer, is “the fundamental

rethinking and radical redesign of processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance.” (Hammer and Champy, 1993)

Six (6) major fronts (Beatty and Burkholder, 1996) have been observed as actual events indicative of such a paradigm-shift in organizations:

1. Attention to the primacy of the constituency as the focus of service.
2. The drive to “reengineer” processes.
3. More concise (or flatter) organizational structures and a widespread use of self-managed teams.
4. Cross functional integration of activities.
5. An altered relationship between “superiors” and “subordinates.”
6. Greater emphasis on innovation.

This paper is an attempt to explore these events: discover the élan that animates these events; and make known this élan in definitive and unequivocal terms. For present purposes, this paper generally focuses on organizations of the contemporary era as they are made to respond, adapt, invent, and innovate in the context of post-modern climate, conditions, and processes. Specifically, the organizational component of leadership, among other components, is the highlight and concentration of this paper’s discussion. This is organization leadership in the context of the post-industrial, post-modern, third-wave era of human civilization.

Leadership Styles in Flux: Toward a Culture of Trust

“Great leaders through out history have used a number of styles: personal bravery (Alexander the Great), fear (Attila the Hun), eloquence (Churchill), charisma (T.E. Lawrence), coalition building (Franklin Roosevelt), autocracy (Patton), and ideas (Martin Luther).” (Beatty and Burkholder)

General George Patton, as a case in point, was a model of leadership considered among the most effective, successful and admired in the annals of world military exploits. Patton’s significance for our present purposes lies in the fact that he was not actually a born leader as there is very

little evidence to back up the claim that true leadership is an inherent quality, rather than acquired through will and effort in the locus of experience. Certain accounts of this great general's life inform us that Patton "transformed himself from soft-spoken, mild-mannered person, into the fiery dynamo whose name became legend among his troops and his opponents. While he may have lacked a winning personality, there is no denying his effectiveness as a military leader." (Beatty and Burkholder, p.48)

Patton's autocratic flair used to be the dominant model of effective leadership in modern organizations. Such style of leadership aimed to direct people to accomplish what had been determined by such leadership as a necessary end to accomplish. It was configured in a setting where one individual issued orders while others were deemed to follow such orders. That was autocratic leadership: domineering, tenacious and unrelenting. Difference in view or opinion was construed as an affront to authority. Leadership of this category is preoccupied with the serious thought and effort of maintaining the distinct boundaries between superiors and subordinates. Contrary views, dissimilar opinions, departures from the rules and instances of clashing principles and agenda are looked upon as ominous challenges to the established order and to the authority of the powers that be. In technical terms, this type of leadership, which is of military origin and character, is called bureaucratic and hierarchical. The animating factor of this type of leadership is the spirit of fear and selfishness in a culture of suspicion.

Now, in the age of post-modernism, the paradigm shift has effected a redefined leadership role.

The role is changing from the old autocratic model based on fear to one proposed 2,500 years ago by Lao Tzu: "To lead the people, walk behind them." Today, motivating factors other than fear must be taken into consideration. People's need for competency, for recognition, for meaning and dignity have become overriding considerations. People today have enlarged capacity to be self-motivated. It is up to business leaders to develop and nurture this capacity for self-direction, creativity and talent in their work force. This model of leadership depends less on direction from the top than on providing a vision for others to follow, and on inspiring others to do their best in the pursuit of that vision. It is a leadership model that is more in keeping with

non-hierarchical organizations of today than with the command and control organizations of the past. (Beatty and Burkholder)

The animating factor of this type of leadership is a spirit of vitality and courage in a culture of trust. A leadership that perceives the need to empower its constituency to maximize and optimize the “capacity for self-direction, creativity and talent of [its] work force” is operating within the confines of a culture of trust. A leadership cannot share “a caring, respectful, and responsible attitude”; cannot have “flexibility about people and organizational structure”; cannot utilize “a participative approach to management and the willingness to share power” (Beatty and Burkholder) unless such leadership is shaped by the instrumentalities of a culture of trust.

In his insightful discussion on the issue of the changing styles of leadership, Harvard professor John Kotter observes in his powerful book *A Force for Change: How leadership differs from management* that exceptional leaders make it a point that an organization maintain a definite and meaningful path toward a desired end goal by facilitating to conceive a vision to all levels and sectors of the organization as an act of intensifying the people’s sense of meaning, responsibility and commitment. (Kotter in Gibson, ed., 1997) For a leadership to accomplish a Herculean task like this, it is deemed that the arena of its successful operationalization be permeated by the floodlights that can only emanate from a culture of trust.

The prominent leadership guru, Warren Bennis, comments that the communication of a vision requires more than words. Says he: “It’s not a question of giving speeches, sending out memos, and hanging laminated plaques in offices. It’s about living the vision, day in day out—embodying it—and empowering every other person in the organization to implement and execute that vision in everything they do. In other words, you have to anchor it in organizational realities, so that it becomes a template for decision making. If ever there was truism, it’s that action speaks louder than words.” (Bennis in Gibson, ed.)

Bennis further says that another significant aspect of vision communication is generating trust. “Leadership will have to be candid in their communications and show that they care. They’ve got to be seen to be trustworthy human beings. That’s why I believe that most communication has to

be done eyeball to eyeball, rather than in newsletters, on videos or via satellite broadcasts. The leader will have to be able to generate and sustain trust and that also means demonstrating competence and constancy.” (Bennis in Gibson, ed.) The logical source, therefore, from which the materials to construct a culture of trust in an organization is its very leadership.

Reengineering guru Michael Hammer defines a leader “not as someone who makes other people do what he or she wants, but as someone who makes them want what he or she wants. A leader doesn’t coerce people into change that they resist. A leader articulates a vision and persuades people that they want to become part of it, so that they willingly, even enthusiastically, accept the distress that accompanies its realization.” (Hammer and Champy) The realization of this view of leadership can only happen and thrive in an organization whose working principles of leadership are firmly grounded on a culture of trust.

The Dynamics of Leadership in a Culture of Trust

The essence of leadership in a culture of trust is a “principle-centered leadership.” This type of leadership transcends the “human relations” and “human resource” model whose main concern is treating people well and then using them well. Principle-centered leadership goes beyond the said earlier model because it is more focused on the issue of facilitating people to find meaning and fulfillment in what they are doing. Inherent in this model is the objective to create an empowered work force motivated by a shared sense of meaning and vision within the confines of a value system that is grounded on principles.

In the era of post-modern realities, efficiency and effectiveness, productivity and creativity, cannot simply be realized if the leadership paradigm is not located, nurtured, and enhanced in a culture of trust. It is this very culture that fosters trustworthiness throughout the organization. And trust can only emanate from principles.

The principles which are the focal point of this leadership model are actually the basic universal principles useful and time-tested in all human relationships and organizations; the likes of justice and fairness, honesty and integrity, trustworthiness and impeccability. These principles operate

like natural laws, i.e., whether we obey them or not. They are principles with which no one dares argue. Humanity's sense and understanding of them is universal.

The leadership and human relations authority, Stephen Covey comments: The great value of a high-trust culture is that it brings together idealism and pragmatism. It becomes the basis for both empowerment and quality. How are you going to get people empowered if you don't have high trust? When there's low trust you've got to use control. You can't empower people in a culture like that, otherwise you'll have loose cannons all over the place. . . . They don't have a common vision and a common set of values based on principles that they all buy into. You also won't get quality, because quality requires that everyone up and down the entire process has quality in their heart and in their mind. They have to really believe that 'quality begins with me,' and they need to make their decisions based on the right principles and values. So empowerment and quality are totally integrated in a high-trust culture. Trustworthiness precedes trust which precedes empowerment which precedes quality. (Covey in Gibson, ed.)

Conclusion

The paradigm shift discussed in this paper requires enormous patience for its process has to work from inside out. Post-modern organization leadership generates change right in the hearts and minds of people. The culture of trust which provides the right climate for the leadership to grow is likewise enhanced by the dynamics of that very type of leadership. Besides, it is important for us to be constantly reminded that even a principle-centered leadership is brought to its realization through the recognition of a trusting people who have entrusted the well-being of their organization, their society, to such leadership. Post-modern organization leadership in a culture of trust is in itself a trust which is sacred and has to be protected and faithfully observed.

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Resolving the Objective-Subjective Conflict in Moral Valuation

An inquiry into the problems of the origin of values in general and of moral values in particular

Introduction

The context of this discussion is focused on values specifically appreciated by humans. This clarificatory introduction is important to distinguish human values from things ‘valued’ by other living species in the animal and plant realms. The issue of value enters at this particular consideration as humans observe how plants and animals are benefiting from their environments. Under these circumstances, it may be assumed that animals and plants ‘value’ the things from which they benefit in terms of survival and life sustenance. We say that water, plants and air are valuable for animals because the latter depend on them in these animals’ need to drink, eat, and breathe. However, we as humans are limited as to the access to evidence pertaining to whether animals really ‘value’ these things or not in the same way that we do. In other words, do these animals really consciously exercise a sense of appreciation in the act of ‘valuing’ the things that are useful to them? Is such an act really a valuation? Is there a way for us to find certain answers to these concerns? Is it worthwhile to deal with this matter seriously in the context of this particular treatise’s main inquiry? These questions being unanswered at this point in time (or may even be unanswerable at any point in time), a better course is to proceed on the path that has been beaten to resolve the major burden of this treatise.

Are Values Basically Objective in Origin?

There are people who claim that values have external sources — points of origin distinct from us. In many cases, these external origins are even considered to be of a higher nature such

as God, Bathala, Allah, the Absolute Reality, Brahman, Nature, etc. With these sources, values emanating from them are deemed to be thoroughly objective. This perspective assumes the non-necessity of the human factor in the existence of values. In other words, humans are not necessary in the formation of values, so that values exist independent of humans. In this sense, it is said that values are basically objective and it specifically means that (1) values are factual properties regardless of whether there are humans or not, or (2) values emanate from supernatural origin, or (3) values are inherent in nature.

Regarding the first, it doesn't make sense at all to say that humans could not have valued things if these things were not to the least inherently valuable. It is a most basic assumption that things are deemed valuable based on the appreciation that humans extend to them so as to satisfy or achieve human purposes. In short, things of this world are axiologically neutral by and in themselves and can only be said to be either valuable or insignificant depending on the purposes that humans have determined for their usefulness or uselessness. The words of Wittgenstein at 6.41 of the Tractatus agree to this point:

...In the world everything is as it is and everything happens as it does happen; in it no value exists — and if it did exist it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must be outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.[1]

A further clarification of this view is revealed by the pericope where it is located in the Tractatus:

6.373 The world is independent of my will.

6.374 Even if all that we wish for were to happen, still this would only be a favour granted by fate, so to speak; for there is no logical connexion between the will and the world, which would guarantee it, and the supposed physical connexion itself is surely not something that we could will.

6.43 If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world not the facts — not what can be expressed by means of language. In short, the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. The world of the happy man is different from that of the unhappy man.[2]

The whole point being presented here is summarized in Wittgenstein's Notebooks (p. 77): 'Ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic.' [3]

Things of this world can only become valuable as humans attribute values to them. This matter of values further extends particularly more strongly to aesthetics and ethics, the latter being our focus of concern in this treatise. We can then say based on the presuppositions that we have already established—that in matters of ethics and morality, the stronger can the claim be that moral values can never be found inherent in states of affairs or events without humans to value them. Moral values are therefore strictly basically human in origin. Values in general and moral values in particular are basically of human origin; hence, they are basically subjective in terms or origin.

The entirety of the previous discussion can be essentially presented via the following logical arguments:

1. 'Values are basically either inherent to things valued or human-attributed. If values are basically inherent, then, they are not basically human-attributed. Hence, if values are basically human-attributed, then, they are not basically inherent.'

2. 'Values are basically either inherent to things valued or human-attributed. If values are basically inherent, then, they are basically objective in origin. If values are basically human-attributed, then, they are basically subjective in origin. Therefore, values are either basically objective or basically subjective in origin.'

3. 'Values are basically either objective or subjective in origin. If values are basically objective in origin, then, they are not subjective in origin. Therefore, if values are not basically objective in origin, then, they are subjective in origin.'

Now that the first argument supportive of the objective origin of values has been debunked, could the next be a tenable claim? Do values emanate from a supernatural origin? [The term 'supernatural' used in the context of the succeeding discussion is different in meaning from the context of its use in Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics.' In the latter context, the term 'supernatural' is linguistically contrasted with the 'natural' which is the realm where the sciences operate. The contrast being linguistic in character does not in any way imply an affirmation of the reality of a higher dimension of existence inhabited by more intelligent and more powerful

denizens. Says Wittgenstein: 'I can only describe my feeling by the metaphor, that, if a man could write a book on Ethics which really was a book on Ethics, this would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world. Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, natural meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water and if I were to pour out a gallon over it. I said that so far as facts and propositions are concerned there is only relative value and relative good, right, etc.']

Perhaps it could still be safely said that the majority of people in this world believe in a supernatural entity they call 'god' or even many of this type of being which are called 'gods.' They generally believe that values, specifically moral ones, emanate from or dispensed by this 'supernatural reality' or 'ultimate reality,' if you will. He (if we want to personify this reality) has formed the world as well as the things found in this world, and has established values—both artistic and moral—for all creation, more specifically humans, to obey. Of course, it is not logically impossible for such supernatural entities to exist and have done such dispensation of values. However, we can neither make any final conclusion or affirmation as to certainty of their existence. We should definitely opt to exercise strong belief -- which could be construed as 'faith' in religious language game--but such cannot be considered as objective proof.

Looking at the problem now of which of the set of moral laws or moral bans we ought to obey, the complication has been created by the differences among groups of people or communities of people who recognize different 'gods' or supernatural beings: the Judeo-Christian tradition; the Hindus; the Confucians; the Taoists, etc. These supernatural beings as well as the thought systems and religions honoring and worshipping them have accompanying systems of morality. There could be some points of similarity, but in a lot of instances, differences are so pronounced and oftentimes very wide. It is, therefore, difficult if not really impossible for us to ascertain the most accurate supernatural foundation. This factor tells us that no evidence is available to prove the necessary supernatural origin of objective moral values. At this point, nothing is left in our minds but the impression that even the so-called morality of supernatural origin is subjectively attained by people who needs and wants are determined out of a common goal to live and enjoy life in a peaceful and productive milieu rather than having been 'commanded' to be and to do so from a supernatural dimension.

What about the third option now -- are values inherent in nature? Those who hold the notion that values are inherent in nature promote the argument that moral laws are within the realm of nature and hence, part of the natural world. It is further held by them that anything that violates or goes contrary to nature is therefore wrong. But there seems to have some confusion here in treating 'moral laws' at par with what science tells us as 'natural laws' like the law of gravity, the law of buoyancy, and others. There is a difference in meaning when the word 'law' is used in relation to nature and when the same word is used in relation to morality.

Natural laws are descriptive, whereas moral laws are prescriptive. Natural laws, on the other hand, are generalizations based on contrast regularities discovered in events or states of affairs. On the other hand, moral laws are 'invented' for the maintenance of order and to promote acceptable behaviors and attitudes or conducts in human relations. In H.O. Mounce's discussion of Wittgenstein's view of ethics in the Tractatus, Mounce says: 'The ethical problem is not to determine what is so but what to do, what attitude one is to adopt.'^[4] For those who affirm the reality of 'natural moral laws,' one thing should be proved: that there are laws discovered and discoverable (or observed and observable) in nature telling humans the way they ought or ought not to behave. But it seems to be difficult, if not impossible at all, to prove it because nothing prescriptive actually issues out of nature. In other words, nature does not demand morality to be acted on by humans. It is a reconfirmation that moral values are not basically objective in origin even if we appeal to nature. To 'see' in nature some events or states of affairs that move or lead us to behave morally is but an interpretation of an entire gamut of experience involving human interest in favor of and advantageous to our circumstances, needs, desires, objectives and satisfaction. In this sense, moral values formed out of our relationship with nature are therefore basically subjective. In the article 'Naturalism,' Charles R. Pigden says: 'In the famous Principia Ethica, G.E. Moore contended that most moralists have been naturalists and that all naturalists are guilty of a common fallacy. They have confused the property of goodness with the things that possess that property or with some other property that good things possess. This is what naturalistic fallacy is: a mixing of two distinct items.'^[5]

The Basic Subjective Origin of Values, Particularly Moral Values

The notion that values have a basic subjective origin doesn't necessarily mean that they are always subjective through and through, i.e., at all times. Hence, when it is argued that values

have a basic subjective origin, what is hereby contradicted is the opposite notion that values have a basic objective origin -- not that values are objective. It only means that even if it is claimed that values have a basic subjective origin, such a claim does not necessarily contradict the notion that values may be objective. This matter is a vital aspect of the thesis of this treatise which in the progressive development of the discussions about it will ultimately unveil the non-contradictory character of what is being proposed as an ethics that is both objective and relative. Relativity of values in general and moral values in particular is however an offshoot of subjectivity and this matter will be discussed later to summarize the points being raised here. In logical terms, we say:

1. 'Values either have a basic subjective origin or a basic objective origin. It has been demolished that values have a basic objective origin. Hence, values have a basic subjective origin.'

2. 'Objective values may issue out of values whose basic origin is subjective. Values are really of basic subjective origin. Therefore, it cannot be that objective values will not issue out of values whose basic origin is subjective.'

3. 'Objective values may issue out of values whose basic origin is subjective. Relative values may also issue out of values whose basic origin is subjective. And the basic origin of values are really subjective. Therefore, it can be that values are both relative and objective.'

4. 'If values can both be relative and objective, then, it cannot be that there is contradiction between relative values and objective values.'

Going back to the issue of the basic subjective origin of values, particularly moral values, it is simply the idea that the starting point or the begin-all of valuation is a person's expression of his/ her personal desires or feelings. Nevertheless, the Humean view that reason doesn't play any role in the function of moral judgment is not hereby affirmed. This writer believes otherwise. [James Rachels observes in his article 'Subjectivism': '[T]he function of moral judgment, says Hume, is to guide conduct, but reason alone can never tell us what to do. Reason merely informs us of the nature and consequences of our action and of the logical relations between propositions... Hume concludes that in the final analysis, 'Morality is determined by sentiment.'][6] Reason plays a vital role in such function because the acceptability of someone's personal feelings or desires demands rationality from a moral agent and reasonableness in a

moral act. Perhaps, the rhetorical statement of Blaise Pascal applies here: ‘The heart has its reason that reason does not know.’

However, that which we consider subjective may evolve towards the direction of the objective. Yet an ‘evolved’ value seen in the objective realm doesn’t have the ‘natural’ characteristics inherently found in the original properties of matters of fact located in this realm. At this point, let us further discuss the complexities surrounding the issue of the subjectivity of values so that a smooth transition could be effected from subjectivity to relativity which are actually so much related between each other. In fact, value relativity issues out of value subjectivity. In other words, value subjectivity effects value relativity and there could be no value relativity without value subjectivity.

Logically we say, ‘There is value relativity if and only if there is value subjectivity. And there is value subjectivity. Therefore, there is value relativity.’

From Simple to Critical Subjectivity in Ethics: James Rachels’ Analysis

Simple Subjectivism

In James Rachels’ discussion of subjectivity in his article, ‘Subjectivism,’ he distinguishes between two types of subjectivism: the simple one and the improved version called emotivism. This is the way his discussion goes:

The historical development of ethical subjectivism illustrates a process typical of philosophical theories. It began as a simple idea — in the words of David Hume, that morality is more a matter of feeling than of reason. But as objections were raised against the theory, and as its defenders tried to answer those objections, the theory became more complicated. So far, we have not attempted to formulate the theory very precisely — we have been content with a rough statement of its basic idea. Now, however, we need to go a bit beyond that.

One way of formulating ethical subjectivism more precisely is this: we take it to be the thesis that when a person says that something is morally good or bad, this means that he or she approves of that thing, or disapproves of it, and nothing more...

We might call this version of the theory simple subjectivism... However, simple subjectivism is open to several rather obvious objections, because it has implications that are contrary to what

we know to be the case (or at least contrary to what we think we know) about the nature of moral evaluation.

For one thing, simple subjectivism contradicts the plain fact that we can sometimes be wrong in our moral evaluations. None of us are infallible. We make mistakes and when we discover that we are mistaken we may want to change our judgments. But if simple subjectivism were correct, this would be impossible — because simple subjectivism implies that each of us is infallible.

...In the face of such difficulties, many philosophers have chosen to reject the whole idea of ethical subjectivism. Others, however, have taken a different approach. The problem, they say, is not that the basic idea of ethical subjectivism is wrong. The problem is that ‘simple subjectivism’ is too simple a way of expressing that idea. Thus, these philosophers have continued to have confidence in the basic idea of ethical subjectivism and have tried to refine it — to give it a new, improved formulation — so that these difficulties can be overcome.

The improved version was a theory that came to be known as emotivism...[7]

The criticism towards simple subjectivism is a valid one if this type of subjectivism really creates difficulties to clearly determine the rightness or wrongness of moral evaluations. In this situation, everybody becomes entitled to his or her moral views and opinions without the obligation of testing whether his or her moral evaluation is right or wrong. (We could sense a situation of relativism here, but this is not the type of relativistic position that is advocated in this treatise.) In other words, there is really right or wrong moral evaluation and under this condition, everybody really becomes ‘infallible.’ Some critiques of simple subjectivism who do not intend to totally reject the whole notion of ethical subjectivism but to salvage its more basic idea are, however, correct in their intention to transcend its prominent errors and make a refinement of it.

As has previously been discussed, the basic subjectivity of values in general, and moral values in particular, owing to the fact that values have a basic subjective origin, is an empirically defensible and logically coherent position. This is the basic idea of ethical subjectivism which is salvageable. But is emotivism the truly critical alternative to transcend the errors of simple subjectivism? Let us look at emotivism closely.

Emotivism: An Improvement from Simple Subjectivism

The starting point of emotivism is the recognition that humans use language in so many ways. We use it not only in expressing factual statements whereby we give information that may either be true or false. With language we may also issue requests and commands whose objective is not to give information or describe a state of affairs but rather prescribe an action or attitude. The statement, 'President Macapagal-Arroyo is against human rights violations,' is descriptive, whereas, 'Let us condemn human rights violations!' is prescriptive.

Looking at the issue of moral language, emotivism holds that 'moral language is not fact-stating language; it is not typically used to convey information. Its purpose is entirely different. It is used, first, as a means of influencing people's behavior: if someone says 'You ought not to do that,' they are trying to stop you from doing it. And second, moral language is used to express (not report) one's attitude.' [8]

Comparing simple subjectivism with emotivism at this point, we say, on the one hand, simple subjectivism grasps ethical statements as factual statements reporting the speaker's attitude. So that when President Macapagal-Arroyo says that she is against human rights violation, such is tantamount to saying, 'I (Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo) do not approve human rights violation' — a factual statement about his attitude. On the other hand, emotivism disagrees that Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo's words are an expression of fact. According to emotivism, what Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo says is simply, 'Damn human rights violation!' or 'To hell with human rights violation!'

Regarding this view, Rachels observes that the difference between simple subjectivism and emotivism is not a superficial hair-splitting matter but an important one. Simple subjectivism says that statements of moral judgment are statements about feelings, whereas, emotivism says that they are statements of feelings. Thus, they cannot be subjected to truth-value analysis. If I believe that X acted alone in plotting the assassination of Ninoy Aquino and another person believes that X was ordered or commanded by a group of conspiring Marcos cronies to plot the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, such a disagreement is over facts. However, if I advocate the view that capital punishment or death penalty is an effective deterrent to the commission of heinous crimes while another believes otherwise, the disagreement is in opinion or views. The first type of disagreement can be solved by an appeal to facts which in turn will determine which

of the two beliefs is true (because both cannot be true). The second type, however, is a matter of making a choice based on desires or feelings, i.e., making one of the views desirable over the other according to the particular individual's perspective, barring the possibility of choosing both.

Rachels rightly echoes the points made by the American philosopher C.L. Stevenson (the most prominent spokesperson of emotivism) in his classical book on the subject of emotivism, *Ethics and Language*, that such an opposition is a 'disagreement in attitude and contrast it with disagreements about attitudes. Moral disagreement, says Stevenson, are disagreements in attitude. Simple subjectivism could not explain moral disagreement because once it interpreted moral judgments as statement about attitudes, the disagreement vanished.' [9]

There has been an expression of a similar view prior to this in a chapter of an earlier work by Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, entitled 'Critique of Ethics and Theology':

Thus, although our theory of ethics might fairly be said to be radically subjectivist, it differs in a very important respect from the orthodox subjectivist theory. For the orthodox subjectivist does not deny, as we do, that the sentences of a moralizer express genuine propositions. All he denies is that they express propositions about the speaker's feelings. If this were so, ethical judgments clearly would be capable of being true or false. They would be true if the speaker had the relevant feelings, and false if he had not. And this is a matter which is, in principle, empirically verifiable. Furthermore they could be significantly contradicted. For if I say, 'Tolerance is a virtue,' and someone answers, 'you don't approve of it,' he would on the ordinary subjectivist theory, be contradicting me, because in saying that tolerance was a virtue, I should not be making any statement about my own feelings or about anything else. I should simply be evincing my feelings, which is not all the same thing as saying that I have them. [10]

However, not all is secured yet for emotivism's place as a formidable position having transcended the loopholes of simple subjectivism. Rachel makes the criticism that emotivism has also faced some rough sailing. Says he: 'Emotivism also had its problems and they were sufficiently serious that today most philosophers reject the theory. One of the main problems was that emotivism could not account for the place of reason in ethics.' [11]

Rational Subjectivism

Rachels who is a subjectivist would classify his variety of subjectivism as rational. According to him, there ought to be good reasons to support value judgment of any kind in general and moral judgment in particular. We tend to evaluate actions as either right or wrong. Mere expressions of personal likes and dislikes may not need supporting reasons. Without the latter, such expressions amount only to arbitrary statements. Rachels says, '[A]ny adequate theory of the nature of moral judgments and the reasons that support them. It is at just this point that emotivism falters.' [12]

In conclusion, Rachels comments:

Thus, as our final attempt to formulate an adequate subjectivist understanding of ethical judgment, we might say, nothing is morally right if it is such that the process of thinking through its nature and consequences would cause or sustain a feeling of approval toward it in a person who was being as reasonable and impartial as is humanly possible (*italics supplied*). [13]

An Evaluation of J. Rachels' Analysis

The central issue brought out by Rachels in his critique of emotivism and in the formulation of his 'rational' brand of subjectivism is the importance of reason as the determinant of the moral rightness or wrongness of an action. Basically, there should be no quarrel at all regarding this matter. The only problem here is that it is difficult to establish objective rationality or reasonableness in matters of ethics or morality on the individual plane. In other words, the only meaningful rationality on that plane is subjective considering the fact that an individual A's moral choice of x is rational or reasonable depending on circumstances that led him/ her to make such a moral choice. Whereas, in the case of individual B's moral rejection of x, such is likewise rational or reasonable from his/ her perspective and in his/ her own right. So that, A and B are rational or reasonable in their own respective decisions, even if they are opposite to or contrasting each other.

The element of 'thinking through' that is being proposed here by Rachels is an acceptable aspect of making moral judgments rational or reasonable. But again, such a process -- if we call it a process at all -- is done on the individual plane. Hence, the function of which is still

subjective, i.e., depending on the circumstance and conditions surrounding the individual person making the choice or decision.

All in all, the basic subjective origin of moral judgments has been proven once and for all a formidable assumption in the tracing of the rootage of morality and ethics. This assumption is also the foundation of moral or ethical relativity which is the bridge that ultimately leads us to a more realistic type of ethical or moral objectivity that is far different from an ethical objectivity that depends on moral facts. The type of moral or ethical objectivity that is herein being proposed dialectically develops from the subjective rootage and evolves therefrom along relativity until it reaches the point of objectivity. In short this type of moral or ethical objectivity cannot really be formulated without making any basic and initial recognition of the twofold reality of its subjective-relative beginnings.

We cannot actually underestimate the basic importance of subjectivity in its universal applicability. Even science basically starts off from subjectivity. In this regard, let me quote Prof. Claro Ceniza, the eminent symbolic logician and analytic philosopher of De La Salle University--Manila, in his article 'Logic of Confirmation and Objectivity' that appears in SOPHIA, vol. XXV, 1995-96:

Subjectivity can be helpful in producing preliminary hypotheses, even in science. In fact, there is no other way of producing preliminary hypotheses except by ways that are affected and influenced by subjectivity. We tend to advance preliminary theses to which our personal experiences and cultures direct us. Science, however, and everyday life cannot remain on that level. There is always an objective way of finding out what the object in question really is either by common consent or better through the process of confirmation and disconfirmation.[14]

ENDNOTES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, **Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus**, as quoted in **Wittgenstein's Tractatus** (ed.) H.O. Mounce (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.94.
2. Ibid., pp. 95-96.
3. Ibid., p. 95.
4. Mounce, **Wittgenstein's Tractatus**, p. 97.
5. Charles Pigden, 'Naturalism' in **A Companion to Ethics** (ed.) Singer, Peter (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), p. 426.
6. James Rachels, 'Subjectivism' in **A Companion to Ethics**, p. 433.

7. Ibid., pp. 434-436.
8. Ibid., p. 437.
9. Ibid., p. 438.
10. A.J. Ayer, **Language, Truth and Logic** (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 144.
11. Op. cit., Rachels, p. 438.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 440.
14. Claro Ceniza, 'Logic of Confirmation and Objectivity' in **SOPHIA, Journal of Philosophy**, Vol. (ed.) Elwood, Brian Douglas (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 1995-1196), p. 40

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The Dynamics of Love as Fertility, Formity and Formality in Ancient Mythologies

A Critico-Structural Excursion into the Classics

I. Introduction

The mythology of a people is a serious and conscious presentation of stories that reflect culture. It is the collective memory that heightens a people's sense of cultural identity, social dignity and national pride. Myths are a cultural "road map" that takes us to the socio-existential terrains of the human soul. Myths reflect the uniqueness of the culture of a people as well as the frame of mind of each individual denizen in that cultural context. They are actually "dramatic stories that form a sacred charter either authorizing the continuance of ancient institutions, customs, rites and beliefs in the area where they are current, or approving alterations." [1]

However, there is something technical about "myth" or "mythology": It is fundamentally ancient Greek (i.e., Hellenic) in origin. And so, the question being triggered now is: Does it therefore mean that the terms "myth" and "mythology" do not have significant bearing outside of the ancient Greek civilization? The French scholar Jean-Pierre Vernant says otherwise:

To be understood themselves, the Hellenic legends must be compared to the traditional stories of other peoples from very diverse cultures and periods, whether ancient China, India, the Middle East, the Pre-Columbian Americas, or Africa. The comparison is necessary because those narrative traditions, however they differ, display enough common elements, both with one another and with the Greek example, to establish kinship among them. [2]

These so-called common elements discovered in various mythologies are structural milestones that speak of a universal anthropological reality critically affirmed and put forward in the scholarly works of the proponents of the philosophico-anthropological school of thought called Structuralism or the Structuralist Theory in the academic orbit. One of its renowned patrons was the French intellectual and scholar Claude Levi-Strauss who

can declare [such commonality] as indisputable observation that no matter where it comes from, myth is instantly recognizable as such with no risk of confusion with other kinds of story. It bears a marked distinction from the historical story, which in Greece grew up somewhat in contrast to myth, insofar as it was meant to be the accurate account of events recent enough to be confirmed by trustworthy witnesses. As for the literary story, it is pure fiction presented frankly as such, whose value derives primarily from the talent and skill of the person who made it. These two types of story are normally attributed to an author, who answers for them and who offers them under his name, as written texts, to an audience of readers.[3]

Structurally, we can thus say that the terms "myth" and "mythology" have a wider — even universal — scope of meaningfulness farther beyond its parochial origin.

II. Scope and Limits

This paper specifically focuses on the issue of the dynamics of love in ancient mythologies in both Near Eastern — particularly Mesopotamian and Egyptian — and Indo-European — particularly Greek — traditions.

Love in these mythologies — more pronounced in the Mesopotamian tradition — is viewed as a primal life-force characterized by 1) **fertility** (possibilizing-of-being); 2) **formity** (molding-into-being); and 3) **formality** (ordering-of-being).

In the Greek tradition, it is a primeval energy that cyclically flows from a universal timeless ocean — the Primordial EROS — to the "lakes" of gods/goddesses-in-time-and-space — *Aphrodite* and *Eros* — to the "rivers" of human passion and back to the universal timeless ocean.

Egyptian mythology dramatizes that in the "rivers" of human passion, love expresses itself as 1) physical desire (*ka* love); 2) sharing of the soul (*ba* love); and 3) commitment of the spirit (*akh* love).

Ontologically, the love portrayed in ancient classical mythologies cannot be boldly signified if not viewed as the spirit that "inspires" the embracing arms of creation and destruction, order and chaos, peace and violence. In Greek mythology, love (*Eros*) is the intensifying passion that calls into being the sting of destruction/violence (*Eris*).

Love is, hence, an ancient wave that vibrates, interpenetrates, and interconnects the divine and the human in an eternal cosmic dance that makes life dangerously exciting, poignantly challenging and desperately imminent in its expression of a "longing for itself".

III. Love as Primal Life-Force in Mesopotamian Myths

Mesopotamian religion and culture span a very long period of four millennia. Materials of both archeological and literary significance may be generally availed of from almost every era of this ancient past. The Sumerian[4] gods and goddesses were embraced and enshrined by the dominant Semitic races — the Akkadians[5], the Amorites[6], and the Assyrians[7] — in the area.

Dumuzi-abzu[8] is a Sumerian god of the marshes in the earliest Mesopotamian mythology. Generally, he is viewed as a fertility deity whose sister, Geshtinanna[9], is the power in the grape, and whose companion, Inanna[10], symbolizes the "storehouse of dates." Dumuzi (in Semitic, Tammuz) is the central figure of a myth and cult whose manifestation of fertility is in the power of the date palm that appears in the spring. A **fertility** deity in an ancient myth is a well-spring of the creative energy of love that possibilizes being. Everything in the world springs naturally from the creative power of love represented in the activities of a **fertility** deity. The sexual expressions of Dumuzi's covenanting with and marriage to Inanna, the occurrence of his tragic and lamented death, as well as the effort of his sister and mother to venerate him and look for him in the underworld, are within the corpus of this myth. The myth and cult of Dumuzi in the Mesopotamian religion reveals the typical weaknesses of humanity in its encounter with the appearance of holiness in the forms of nature.

There is a sustained, though subdued, stability of the fertility motifs in the myths of Mesopotamia's middle period (ca. 2500 — ca. 1900 BCE)[11]. Fertility's symbolism from the simplicity of sexual intercourse is transformed now to one of cosmic significance — the powerful aggressiveness of the thunderstorm that pushes the river's course. The god Enlil — "lord wind" — is the cause of the storm. As wind-power, he leads over and controls actions intended to benefit humanity. The supreme deity in the pantheon is Anu, the sky-power. His relationship with his wife, Ki — the earth — has produced trees, reeds, and the rest of nature's vegetation. Anu is the father of Enki — "lord of the soil" — who epitomizes the sacred character

of the waters of rivers (the Tigris and the Euphrates), rain and marshes. As lord of the soil, Enki symbolizes the necessary intention of fresh water to bless the soil.

There has been more written about Enki than any other Sumero-Akkadian deity. The importance of water in a particularly arid climate may explain why Enki, the water-god, played such a prominent role in the creation myths of Sumer (Kramer & Maier).

In addition to being the water-god, Enki was the god of wisdom and craftiness. It's possible that wisdom and craftiness spawned from his designation as water-god. The building of irrigation canals on the otherwise arid plains of southern Mesopotamia are what allowed Sumer to burgeon into humankind's first known urban civilization. For this very reason, it is possible that water was associated with the genius of harnessing it — through the use of irrigation — thus the supreme god of water would also be envisioned as wise and crafty.[12]

Hence, Enki, whose activity leads to the formation of clay out of water and soil, likewise represents the human semen. Enki, being a deity who forms and gives shape — **formity** deity — is a molder. He is typically understood as the archetype — the original form.

Also during the middle period, the form of Inanna (Ishar in Semitic) changes. Added to her **fertility** symbolism is that of a war goddess, the rain-power, the evening and morning star, and the harlot. This period is also characterized the display of dynamic energies that excitingly inspire brisk interactions between humans and divines. The myth aims for cosmic order and the gods and goddesses — **formality** deities — projects themselves as intrinsic participants in the context.

The Goddess Inanna ruled the people of Sumer, and under Her rule the people and their communities prospered and thrived. The urban culture, though agriculturally dependent, centered upon the reverence of the Goddess — a cella, or shrine, in her honour was the centerpiece of the cities. Inanna was the queen of seven temples throughout Sumer. Probably the most important Sumerian contribution to civilization was the invention and creation of a standard writing and literature; the Sumerians even had libraries. Their literary works reveal religious beliefs, ethical ideas, and the spiritual aspirations of the Sumerians. Among these works are the hymns and stories of Inanna — important here because they were recorded at a time when the patriarchy was beginning to take hold, and the position of the Goddess, although strong, was changing.[13]

IV. The Egyptian Mythological Vehicle of The Same Primal Life-Force called Love

The identification of love as a primal life-force in the forms of **fertility**, **formity**, and **formality** are likewise structurally conveyed in ancient Egyptian mythology. The element of love as fertility is present in the Old Kingdom[14] mythology through the sun-god Atum (a.k.a. Aten or Ra) who appears as the first creator. The deities Shu and Tefnut (air and moisture) come out of Atum. Later, Shu and Tefnut produce Geb and Nut (earth and sky). From the latter couple emerge Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. The cosmos is established from the first four deities and the later four take the role of mediators between humans and the cosmos.

Love as **formity** and as **formality** is most pronounced in the theology of Memphis which is recorded on the Shabaka Stone. In the Memphite theological tradition[15], all local and former mythological traditions converge in the god Ptah. The text presents a cosmology wherein creation of the world (love as formation) and the unity of the land of Egypt constitute a process in the eternal ordering of the world (love as formalization). From ideas in his heart pronounced by his tongue, Ptah creates everything: the universe; all living things; virtues like, justice, beauty, honesty, honor, dignity, etc. Even the gods are created in this manner. They initially come forth as ideas in the mind of Ptah. Then, they take the form of this world's materiality which have also been equally created out of Ptah.

V. The Developmental Flow of Love from Primordial Divinity to Its Humanized Form in Ancient Greek Mythology

The movement of events that projects love in the structural vehicles of **fertility**, **formity**, and **formality** seen in the ancient Greek mythological tradition undergoes the process of revelation that flows from the primordial eternity of divine presence to the temporal orbit of human reality. Love as **fertility** is solely of divine prerogative and responsibility. Love as **formity** is characterized by interactions among gods/goddesses and humanity in space and time where the former enjoy power advantage (being divine) over the latter. Love as formality brings us to the exciting drama of human passion and aggression that characterize the signification of socio-existential events in human terms.

In the beginning, there is only the Void and Chaos until Gaia (Earth) comes into being. The seed of love that is not yet conscious of itself (non-thematic Love) appears as Gaia. It is love-fertility whose appearance is actually a "possibilizing-of-being". Gaia, in other words, is "pregnant" with being.

The earth appears. The Greek call it Gaia. Earth rises up in the very heart of the Void. And here it is: born after Chaos, and in some respects its opposite. Earth is not the realm of falling, dark and boundless and undefined; Earth has a distinct, separate, precise form. Against the confusion and shadowy vagueness of Chaos stand Gaia's sharpness, firmness, stability. On Earth everything is outlined, visible, solid. Gaia can be defined as the entity upon which the gods, men, and beasts can walk with confidence. It is the floor of the world.[16]

After Chaos and Gaia comes Eros — Old/ Primordial Love (thematic Love). Primordial Eros[17] is love that is not located within a sexual framework because in the most ancient times, there was no gender yet. Primordial Eros being the original love is not the one who will later appear in the era of humanity.

The original Eros expresses a new thrust in the universe: In the same way that Erath emerged from Void, from out of Earth there springs what she contains within her own depths. What was in her, as part of her essence, comes forth and out: She gives birth to it with no need for sexual congress with anyone. What Earth delivers and reveals is precisely the thing that had dwelled darkly within her.[18]

Now that love has become thematic in Primordial Eros, Gaia gives birth to Uranus[19] whose place in Greek mythology is especially important. Uranus inaugurates a dramatic phase in Greek mythology that flows from **fertility** to **formity**. Uranus (Sky) is born out of Gaia and is originally the same dimension as she is. Gaia is covered by Uranus in full entirety. The Uranus that Gaia produces precisely corresponds and symmetrically duplicates her. Now, a pair of opposites — male and female — is present. In Uranus, we have the Male Sky and the Female Earth in Gaia. Love is now at the transition point between **fertility** and **formity**. From the union of these two forces emerge beings distinct from both of them.

But Gaia can no longer bear the difficulty of being closely attached with Uranus. So she comes up with a cunning scheme. She carries it out by shaping a sickle inside her womb where one of

her offspring, Cronus, is trapped. Cronus will use the sickle to castrate his father, Uranus, while having intercourse with Gaia. While Uranus is emptying his seed in Gaia, Cronus grabs his father's sexual organ and slices it off. Upon its occurrence, Uranus instantly separates from Gaia and his severed sex organ is thrown by Cronus and lands into the sea.

In castrating Uranus, on his mother's advice and through her shrewd tactics, Cronus brings about a fundamental stage in the birth of the cosmos: He separates the earth from the sky. Between sky and earth he creates open space: Everything the earth produces, everything living beings engender, will now have room to breathe, to live. Space is liberated — but time is transformed as well.[20]

The blood spilled out of Uranus upon his castration produces three distinct types of beings that personify violence, retribution, war, and slaughter: Eris. Eris is the opposite of Eros and he signifies all types and forms of hostility and disorder. Eris, on the one hand, is the internal turmoil in a single unit of relationship. Eros, on the other hand, is harmony and mutual agreement between two beings as distinct: masculine and feminine.

Now the sex organ that Cronus threw into the sea does not just sink into the water of the ocean; it drifts about and the sperm in it mixes with the sea. From there emerges a magnificent woman: Aphrodite[21]. Now the phase of love as formity has come.

As she walks on the sand, the most fragrant and beautiful flowers spring up beneath her steps. In Aphrodite's wake, hard on her heels, come Eros and Himeros, love and desire. This is not the original Eros, but a later one who demands that there be a masculine and feminine in the world from then on: he is sometimes said to be Aphrodite's son. This Eros has a different task; it is no longer what it was at the very beginning of the cosmos — drawing forth what lay contained in the dark interior of the primordial powers.[22]

As Uranus moves away from Gaia, he inaugurates the way to a non-stop sequence of generations. In each generation, as gods are seen in a situation of constant war, it is predicted that there will be no relenting of conflicts in the world. It is therefore hoped that the war of the gods must stop to establish once and for all world order. This is love's expression of the need for **formality** (order and harmony). The need is, in fact, perennial as the movement of the story goes to the realm of humanity that is generally characterized by war, disorder, hatred, treachery,

violence and crime. And so the focus now moves to the level of individual humanity where the concrete existentiality of love becomes authentic.

VI. The Existentiality of Love in the Individual Person: Ancient Egyptian Interpretation

Individual human love is understood in ancient Egyptian mythology in reference to the three components of the individual human person: the Ka, the Ba, and the Akh.

Our selves consist of several parts which experience life as well as death in different ways:

A. The Akh (or Khu) is our exalted divine self, the spark of divine matter which knows only gradually deepening awareness as our series of lives progresses. It is almost unaware of life and death. The ancients visualized it as a star, or as a high soaring white bird.

B. The Ba, or astral body, is our dream self, which carries life experience to the Akh. This body can become a ghost, and lives for some time after the body dies. (Some seers describe a Sahu, or magical body, similar to and in addition to the Ba).

C. The Ka, or conscious/sexual body. This generally dies at the same time as the body, although in, for instance, Alzheimer's disease, it dies before the body. It embodies our alertness, logical mind, our desires, our fears, and our lusts, our prides; it is the part by which we deal with everyday life. It perceives the experiences and transactions which the Ba reports to the Akh.
[\[23\]](#)

Love may be understood in these three perspectives. Ka-love is physical engagement expressed in sexual desire, ownership, capitulation or ascendancy. Ba-love is soul-encounter where facilitation stands face-to-face with distress and need. It offers a vision of eternal sharing of human existence. Akh-love is a spiritual embracing that attends to the fulfillment of certain virtues that elevate humanity to the level of the divine. Akh-love aims for the eternal unity of all existence and of our very own individual divine spark.

VII. A Reluctant Conclusion

This paper is by no means exhaustive and complete. It is a simple introduction to prime the intellectual's interest to seriously pursue the search for invaluable wealth that still needs to be discovered in mythological traditions of the ancient world. We have barely scratched the surface.

It is therefore unlikely at this point to end this study.

ENDNOTES

1. Robert Graves & Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 11.
2. Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Universe, the Gods, and Men: Ancient Greek Myths* (New York: Perennial, 2002), p. ix.
3. Ibid.
4. Among the earliest civilizations were the diverse peoples living in the fertile valleys lying between the Tigris and Euphrates valley, or Mesopotamia, which in Greek means, "between the rivers." In the south of this region, in an area now in Kuwait and northern Saudi Arabia, a mysterious group of people, speaking a language unrelated to any other human language we know of, began to live in cities, which were ruled by some sort of monarch, and began to write. These were the Sumerians, and around 3000 BC they began to form large city-states in southern Mesopotamia that controlled areas of several hundred square miles. The names of these cities speak from a distant and foggy past: Ur, Lagash, Eridu. These Sumerians were constantly at war with one another and other peoples, for water was a scarce and valuable resource. The result over time of these wars was the growth of larger city-states as the more powerful swallowed up the smaller city-states. Eventually, the Sumerians would have to battle another peoples, the Akkadians, who migrated up from the Arabian Peninsula.

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/MESO/SUMER.HTM>

5. The Akkadians were a Semitic people living on the Arabic peninsula during the great flourishing period of the Sumerian city-states. Although we don't know much about early Akkadian history and culture, we do know that as the Akkadians migrated north, they came in increasing conflict with the Sumerian city-states, and in 2340 BC, the great Akkadian military leader, Sargon, conquered Sumer and built an Akkadian empire stretching over most of the Sumerian city-states and extending as far away as Lebanon. Sargon based his empire in the city of Akkad, which became the basis of the name of his people. This great capital of the largest empire humans had ever seen up until that point later became the city of Babylon, which was the commercial and cultural center of the middle east for almost two thousand years.

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/MESO/AKKAD.HTM>

6. After the last Sumerian dynasty fell around 2000 BC, Mesopotamia drifted into conflict and chaos for almost a century. Around 1900 BC, a group of Semites — Canaanites — called the Amorites — had managed to gain control of most of the Mesopotamian region. Like the Akkadians, the Amorites centralized the government over the individual city-states and based their capital in the city of Babylon, which was originally called Akkad and served as the center of the Amorite empire. For this reason, the Amorites are called the Old Babylonians and the period of their ascendancy over the region, which lasted from 1900-1600 BC, is called the Old Babylonian period. The Amorites were an ancient tribe of Canaanites — but who were technically not of Canaanite ethnicity — who inhabited the region northeast of the Jordan River as far as Mount Hermon.

<http://www.crystalinks.com/amorites.html>

7. The Assyrians were Semitic people living in the northern reaches of Mesopotamia; they have a long history in the area, but for most of that history they are subjugated to the more powerful kingdoms and peoples to the south. Under the monarch, Shamshi-Adad, the Assyrians attempted to build their own empire, but Hammurabi soon crushed the attempt and the Assyrians disappear from the historical stage. Eventually the Semitic peoples living in northern Mesopotamia were invaded by another Asiatic people, the Hurrians, who migrated into the area and began to build an empire of their own. But the Hurrian dream of empire was soon swallowed up in the dramatic growth of the Hittite empire, and the young Hurrian nation was swamped. After centuries of attempts at independence, the Assyrians finally had an independent state of their own since the Hittites did not annex Assyrian cities. For the next several hundred years, the balance of power would shift from the north to the south.

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/MESO/ASSYRIA.HTM>

8. Dumuzi — the shepherd king of Uruk who came to be known as the first ruler to wed the goddess Inanna in the Sacred Marriage Rite. Literally translated as 'Faithful Son' Dumuzi-Abzu — literally Dumuzi of the deep.

<http://www.chronofus.net/inanna/concepts.htm>

9. Geshtinanna, a daughter of Duttur, was Dumuzi's sister. ♦ Geshtinanna, was a spinster, living alone in the Arali Desert in southern Eden. ♦ ♦ In Dumuzi's flight from the galla, when Inanna told them to carry away her husband and take him down to the Netherworld, he ran to Geshtinanna for help. ♦ She tried to hide her brother but her efforts did little good. ♦ Dumuzi was found by the galla. ♦ It was then that Geshtinanna learned her brother had been sentenced by Inanna, his wife, to the Netherworld, never to return again to the Great Above.

<http://www.jameswbell.com/geog0050gnames.html>

10. Related to Inanna's identification with growth, abundance and fertility is her association with sex. Her presence is revealed in the attraction between the sexes. In her absence, sexual desire is non-existent. [refer Descent Saga] Many songs and hymns describe Inanna herself as eager for sex and is sexually active. In a hymn entitled 'The Sister's Message', Dumuzi's sister, Geshtinanna, tells of meeting Inanna and of how Inanna invited Geshtinanna to her house and in her bedroom confessed of her longing for Geshtinanna's brother.

<http://www.chronofus.net/inanna/inangesh.htm>

11. Appearance of the Sumerians: the oldest cities in Sumer were founded around 3000 BC. ♦ By the third millennium (2800-2370), Sumerian dynastic city-states had appeared; they fought a lot. Eventually they were consolidated by war into a unified kingdom, and then conquered by the people upstream from them.

The Assyrians, a Semitic people (their language group), ♦ absorbed Sumerian culture, and established their capital at Akkad — near the later site of Babylon. ♦ They were henceforth known as the Akkadians. ♦ The Akkadians were powerful warriors, and conquered in every direction under the command of their greatest king, Sargon.

(<http://www.loyno.edu/~seduffy/mesopotamia.html>)

12. <http://home.nycap.rr.com/foxmob/enki.htm>

13. <http://inanna.virtualave.net/inannanew.html>

14. While the unification of Egypt in the Archaic period was the single most important event in Egyptian history, it was a long and drawn-out affair. Although Narmer is credited with unifying the country, all the kings of the first two dynasties had to fight constant wars against considerable opponents all along the Nile. But the third dynasty of Egyptian kings began powerfully; the second king of that dynasty, a man named Netcheriche or Djoser (or Zoser) became powerful enough to control the whole of the country. Egypt had, meanwhile, prospered and grown beyond everyone's wildest dreams. Agricultural production had been revolutionized by the building of massive irrigation projects; trade had ballooned to super-human proportions; the population had swelled exponentially. Suddenly Egypt found itself wealthy; the country literally exploded with creativity for the next several generations. This period, from 2650-2134, the Old Kingdom, was the richest and most creative period in Egyptian history. All the pyramids were built at this time; the growth in population and wealth allowed the kings to apportion vast amounts of labor and materials to these monuments to themselves.

(<http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/EGYPT/OLD.HTM>)

15. The Memphis theology is based around Ptah (equivalent to the Greek Hephaistos, the divine blacksmith), (shown above on the left), who himself becomes the primordial fire and gives it substance. ♦ This cosmological system was developed at Memphis, when it became the capital city of the kings of Egypt. ♦ Ptah is the creator-god of Memphis, and during the long period the city served as the capital of Egypt it was known as Het-ka-Ptah or "House of the Soul of Ptah". Ptah is one of several Egyptian deities attributed with a myth about fashioning creation. Ptah, as the god Ta-tenen (the primordial mound), creates in the so-called "Memphite Theology" the world, its inhabitants, and the kas of the other gods. ♦ Reference is again made to the Ennead, this time with Ptah at its head.

(<http://www.kheper.net/topics/Egypt/Memphis.html>)

16. Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Universe, the Gods, and Men: Ancient Greek Myths*, pp. 3-4.

17. The early arrival of Eros in the origin myth not only offsets the other rather gloomy siblings of Tartarus, but also establishes his function for further creation. Eros is the cause of love and creation and thence, all life. From the origins of consciousness, humanity has sought to understand the mystery of creation — in myths the cosmic creator takes fantastical forms, but that we still use the term 'eros' in our language means we must look back at Eros' original intent.

(http://www.erinsullivan.com/articles/eros_aphrodite_article.htm)

18. Vernant, p.5.

19. Uranus, also known as Ouranos, was the embodiment of the sky or heavens, and known as the god of the sky. He was the first son of Gaia (the earth) and he also became her husband. According to Hesiod, their children included the Titans: six sons (Oceanus, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus and Cronus) and six daughters (Theia, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe and Tethys). There were other offspring: the Cyclopes, (who were named Brontes, Steropes and Arges and were later known as "one eyed giants"), and also the three monsters known as the Hecatonchires, who each had one hundred hands and fifty heads. Their names were Briareus, Cottus and Gyes. Other offspring of Uranus and Gaia were the Erinyes, who were spirits of punishment and goddesses of vengeance. The Erinyes avenged wrongs which were done to family, especially murder within a family. After Uranus had been castrated, his blood fell to earth (Gaia) and conceived the Giants. These were of monstrous appearance and had great strength . Similarly, in some versions Aphrodite is believed to have risen from the foam created by the sex organs of Uranus after they were thrown into the sea by his son Cronus.

(<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/u/uranus.html>)

20. Vernant, p.9.

21. In Greek mythology, Aphrodite is the goddess of love, beauty and sexual rapture. According to Hesiod, she was born when Uranus (the father of the gods) was castrated by his son Cronus. Cronus threw the severed genitals into the ocean which began to churn and foam about them. From the aphros ("sea foam") arose Aphrodite, and the sea carried her to either Cyprus or Cythera. Hence she is often referred to as Kypriis and Cytherea. Homer calls her a daughter of Zeus and Dione.

(<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/a/aphrodite.html>)

22. Vernant, p. 12.

23. <http://members.aol.com/amanitae/ces/relstud/relstud2.html>

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PHILOSOPHY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

AIRSOFT, PHILOSOPHY AND THE WARRIOR

The “Philosophical”—Mirrored in the Game of Airsoft

The "philosophical" enhances human meaningfulness in a world where meanings are invented/re-invented, created/re-created, and shaped/re-shaped by the human being himself who doesn't allow the Nothing to end up to nothing but finds in the Nothing an exciting challenge in the manner that a creative artist is challenged by the blank canvas on an easel. In this sense, human meaningfulness is something that authentically depends on human creativity. It shouldn't be misconstrued as something bestowed in a silver platter by a supernatural power. The reality is there is no such power. The power that humanity possesses emanates from her/him alone and this reality makes one's humanity exciting. In this excitement resides one's desire to improve and develop his/her talents and make good use of them to make the world a better place to live in.

This conception of the "philosophical" is reflected in the game of airsoft for the game's excitement is a re-creation of human meaningfulness. The game enhances such meaningfulness to the point of *desiring* to improve one's skills in playing the game: strategy-planning, tactical maneuvering, terrain-exploration, opportunity-discovery, teamwork-building, trial-and-error experimentation and behavior-observation. So that, in the game of airsoft, nobody relies on *suerte*. It's all skills through and through.

Yet, though there's a simulation of death in the game by way of being *hit*, such a situation still spells human meaningfulness even *at the point of death* for an event like that instantly becomes a lesson for you and for the others in the game. Besides, the event of being hit is also an expression of one's courage to do an honest act: Being able to shout "*Hit!*" after having been actually hit is a test of one's honesty which is a rare thing nowadays. In other words, since there are very few honest people in the present dispensation when so many call themselves God-believing, born-again Christians, honest people is a rarity. But what is amazing is you find many of them in

airsoft games. Though it's not always the case for there are still legions of airsofters who are *makukunat na zombies*.

What makes the game of airsoft more meaningful and more into the enhancement of human meaningfulness than that which we find and experience in the actual *Lebenswelt* is, in the former, there is a very serious/sincere effort/endeavor to promote, institutionalize and defend HONESTY while in the latter, dishonesty/ *palusot/ panggugulang /pandurugas* is standardized. There is therefore an upholding of the "philosophical" mirrored in the game of airsoft; very much diametrically opposed to the actualities we find in this very "unphilosophical" world controlled and run most of the time by agents of irrationality, insanity, stupidity and barbaric inutility.

The Excitement is Humanizing—Not Bestializing: Where Appearance is not Reality

What actually appears in every game of airsoft is the trappings of violence: Guys--even gals--armed to the teeth; "weapons of death and destruction"; fierce eyes of suspicious warriors; silent and fast movements always going for the kill. You find them all in a war as well as in a wargame. The difference is: In a real war, appearance is reality; in a wargame, appearance is NOT reality.

In a wargame--particularly airsoft--the reality is that the protagonists are fun-loving aficionados of the exciting life--which is their definition of the good life--who have been burnt out and bored by the routine of weekday responsibilities in offices, board rooms, clinics, field works, production plants, school rooms, etc. Definitely none are warfreaks--in fact, it's even safe to say that these guys and gals are the most peace-loving denizens of the globe. Many are professionals: medical doctors, lawyers, engineers of all sorts, professors in universities/colleges, accountants, businessmen/women, artists, etc.

Yes, the whole set-up gives us the picture of military life: boots, uniforms, guns (BUG). But there is nothing military in the equality of treatment among airsofters who address each other "Sir"/"Ma'm" regardless of age, gender, race, and status in life and career. There was even a time in the recent past (it was a couple of years ago) when as a **lone wolf** I joined my eldest son who

is a seasoned airsoftener and member of the elite Special Warfare Airsoft Group (SWAG) to play in a big game in Naic, Cavite. I was assigned to join a team composed of Philippine Navy and Marine officers and soldiers and the leader of the group was a military doctor carrying the rank of a Rear Admiral (2-star General). I was sort of elated when in the course of a conversation, he addressed me "Sir". The natural but amusing reaction from a greenhorn like me was a feeling of elation with the idea that probably this guy thought I was a Vice-Admiral. Well, of course, I was just kidding. But on the serious side, I was really impressed that a real military officer did not hesitate to level himself with a simple non-military entity in a mil-sim (military simulation) event. (Constitutionally, that was quite accurate because during peace time, the civilian is supreme over the military.)

Well, yes, there are also real warriors who play the game of airsoft. But once in the gamesite, they must shed off their real identities and be gamers.

Airsoft and the Will of a Warrior

In every human being hibernate an artist, a scholar and a warrior. But due to the exigencies of time and locale, in most instances, only one or two of these three aspects are developed to the extreme while the other(s) remain(s) in the sea of forgetfulness. In the context of modern reality dominated by science and technology, we have witnessed the flourishing of the scholar and the artist—to be more specific, the scientist and the technologist. I am talking here of what is tangibly seen on the externals. But in every advancement we experience is the persevering presence of the will that pushes progress onward. The accomplishments of the will may not be as tangible as those of the intellect which sustains the scholar and the feeling which moves the artist, but in all of these undertakings, the will cannot simply be left behind and neglected for it is the source of the artist's and the scholar's courage to go on with their dreams, desires and wishes. The will is the warrior in us. There is no point in living without the activation of the will.

When times seem hard and discouraging, it is the warrior in us—the will—that presses us on to continue, to pursue what the intellect has decided to be the best course of action and what our feeling has promised us to be satisfying. There is so much of wasted time and inactivity that lead to loss of precious opportunity and further failure because of the weakness of one's will. And in

the process, so many people suffer because of one's inability to be decisive. Decisiveness is an act of the will.

In the game of airsoft, it is the will that is at the forefront. Decisiveness and the courage to carry out the decision made count the most. In the game of airsoft, the warrior in the airsofter is led out of the shell. As a microcosm of humanity, the airsofter as a strategist is a scholar and as a tactician is an artist. But to carry out a decision and deliver the kill in swift and calculated motion makes the airsofter a warrior. It is the will of the warrior that pushes the strategist and the tactician in the airsofter to achieve his/her goal, to reach his/her aim, to accomplish his/her objective as a team player in a particular game.

The game of airsoft is one most fitting training ground to enhance the will and hence the warrior in each of us. It also makes us realize the fact that we should acknowledge the importance not only of intellect and feeling but more than anything else of the human will.

It is the will of the warrior in us that grants us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change and bestows us the courage to change the things we can after the intellect and the feeling have given us the wisdom to know the difference. In the language of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, these are "the Apollonian and the Dionysian spirits" that interplay and interact for humanity to give way to the emergence of "the *Übermensch*" and let the "Will to Power" take its course as we "Say yes to life" on a moment-by-moment basis within the limits of a reality that is in a state of "Eternal Recurrence."

Let the game of airsoft be a most significant field to edify the will and hence honor the warrior in everyone of us.

* The author is an airsofter whose nom-de-guerre is *Warlock*.

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THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-ATTACHMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN MEANINGFULNESS

The principle of non-attachment in the context of human reality—why, are there other contexts in this case?—is a principle of human freedom. It is a potent acid test to prove in definite terms the reality of human will which is inherently free—for to talk of “free will” is a redundancy. The will is necessarily non-attached with anything. Hence, an “attached will” is a contradiction in terms. In that case, the will is the single vital component that makes humanity human. On this basis, authentic humanity is established in and by itself not in a context but as a context. The whole situation could therefore be the “presuppositionless presupposition”—the bottom line—of being and meaningfulness whether in terms of the being of meaningfulness or the meaningfulness of being.

Attachment is the situation where the human being’s understanding of her/his humanity is generated by factors of power that emanate and flow from sources that are not in—hence outside of—the human person’s individuality. Attachment, in this sense, occurs as the strong force that draws a human individual to the fold of a system characterized by interconnected demands, invented obligations and institutionalized mandates. Through these considerations, the human being circumvents the meaning of freedom in artificial and alienated—even alienating—terms for such terms are imposed from the outside of the human individual and not something that is felt and willed from within her/himself. Very often, we sacrifice our own humanity by capitulating to certain demands and expectations of legal, moral, social, political and economic natures among others. These are situations when the will is de-activated and in the process even our very humanity is held in abeyance. We therefore temporarily lose our humanity.

Attachment is caused by a paradigm that has led us to accept without any question an interpretation of being and life fully submitted to the dominance of an all-encompassing system and the more specific subsystems within it. In this connection, the meaningfulness—as well as

meaninglessness—of a human life is therefore entirely determined by that very system itself. Attachment is attachment to the concrete constituents/elements of a system both in general and specific terms.

The system has conditioned humanity—and has been reinforcing the conditioning—that the meaningfulness of the human being's humanity rests on how s/he attaches her/himself with the states of affairs that obtain in the system. Such derivation of meaningfulness alienates the very unique individual existence of the human being for in that sense human signification is precluded unless reckoned as inherently a part or an aspect of a larger system, a network of interconnected elements, events, factors and conditions. The basic question at this point is: Is there no way to get to an understanding of human meaningfulness isolated/detached/unattached/non-attached from a systemic locus? Or, on the contrary, one can only truly capture the meaningfulness of humanity if and only if it is viewed in the “purity” of human individuality that has the inherently unique capability to exercise her/his will in the act of choosing, decision-making, creating, even destroying?

Human meaningfulness becomes real only by way of acts affirming one's autonomous existence non-attached with the demands, mandates, obligations, conditions set and put forth by a system that can never generate and claim an iota of necessary connection between itself and the human individual. In other words, even if human conventions have established and continued to sustain the connection between the human individual and whatever systemic context s/he finds her/himself, that connection can never be rendered as necessary in absolute terms.

It is the non-attachment of the human being with a system that affirms her/his humanity for such humanity is not defined in social, political, economic or whatever terms but only in terms of human freedom expressed in and through her/his will. It is therefore the will that defines the meaningfulness of the human being. The will is the substance of humanity and the only factor of humanity's non-attachment with a system.

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The Artist as a Philosopher (or the Philosopher as an Artist) before the Canvas of Nothing

What is so philosophical--deeply philosophical--about the artist but her/his enormous capability to be excited/elated/exhilarated by the challenges of the Nothing. S/he looks at the blank canvas before her/him not as nothing but as a space of unlimited possibilities--a Nothing, a not-yet, a Becoming--that belongs to the future. The present Nothing promises a future Being--*Nothing Becoming Being*.

And all depends on a creativity that is purely human--a creativity that merges with a sense of the future that is likewise absolutely human, no more no less. Had this not been so, humanity couldn't have seen the wonders of comfort, sophistication, information and ease that revolve around the present reality like a merry-go-round in a seemingly endless carnival of life.

Human creativity . . . a sense of the future . . . a philosophical defiance of certain programmed limitations where nothing is nothing, where zero is nothing. Rather, a philosophical affirmation that Nothing is something--that Zero is significant in the formation of hundreds, thousands, millions . . . *ad infinitum*.

The artist guides the philosopher. . . . May the former find inspiration in the latter.

At the end of the day, may the artist find a common convergence point with the philosopher so that the two become one.

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PHILOSOPHY AND ECOLOGY

THE EARTH IS ALIVE

The Earth is alive . . . yet.

The Earth is alive and yet she is in a very serious condition.

The Earth is alive, yet she is likewise dying.

The Earth is dying and unless we do something imminent at this point in time, we shall surely perish with her.

This is the most pressing and present reality we face in the 21st century. Unless we reverse this tragic flow of events, we are heading toward disaster.

A foreboding atmosphere of impending devastation dominates the landscape for we have gradually systematically poisoned the Earth: prevalent pollutions of the air and waters; holes in the ozone layer; massive destruction of the flora and fauna. We—Earth and humans—are in the worst of times.

Through generations, we have failed to acknowledge the fact that the Earth is a living Super-Organism—a macro-mirror of our own delicate humanity that should have been taken extra care of with the best of our tenderness and protected with the resoluteness of a kindred spirit always ready to defend one of its flesh and blood.

The Earth has always faithfully sustained the most basic of our needs, wishes and desires. The Earth has constantly been a trustworthy patron of our sacred humanity making her the source of that very sacredness.

Yet, we have not positively responded to her loving kindness with sincere gratitude. Instead, we have become purveyors of abuses and exploitative acts. In the modern era, humanity has declared war against nature. In the process, modern technology has been harnessed for exploitative purposes leading to heavy environmental devastations and ecological imbalance to the detriment of the human species. In the final analysis, we humans are at the losing end.

Now is the most fitting moment to reconcile with nature. Now is the most proper chance for us to bow down in humility and accept the magnitude of our misdoings with repentant hearts and total mindfulness of a new worldview that will at last redeem us from the mire of an

impending destruction. Now is the era of a new world order pushed and carried by a responsible humanity with all the willingness to renew what is yet renewable on Earth.

The challenge before us therefore is to work together and let a new Earth—now an Eco-system where humanity becomes a part of nature—evolve and metamorphose to create a new humanity that does not only appreciate the spiritual but also the natural for they are not two but a unity.

Post-Industrial Humanism: Transformative Humanization of Nature (or “Naturization” of Humanity) Toward a Moral Technology

Prelude

Technology as transforming and transformative is human interpretation and pragmatization. It is an appropriation of the scientific for human purposes. The act of appropriation, by the way, is one of interpretation and pragmatization that responds to a human responsibility. Hence, technology ideally carries the value of responsibility. And responsibility in this sense is measured in human terms. On such basis, the morality of technology is reflected on how technology humanizes, empowers, and elevates the human being. Moral technology should, in that sense, be a transforming/ transformative instrument to: (1) alleviate sufferings; (2) resolve conflicts; and (3) promote happiness.

The Rise of Modern Science and Technology

The modern era in world history is characterized by the widespread dominance of science and technology at the expense of the ecosystem. Such dominance is a narrow and shallow signification of human service and facility – a shortsighted attempt to satisfy human needs and wants without considering the tragic consequences of devastating the natural resources.

The destruction of the ecosystem has been perpetrated by the immoral technology of the modern world. ‘Worldwide in scope and profligate in its ill effects, deforestation stands as a symbol of the environmental degradation that concerns us so much. Many other stresses vie for our attention: depletion of the ozone layer, with its threat of harmful ultraviolet radiation; loss of reefs and wetlands, so rich in their variety of life-forms; contamination of the air with emissions and the waters with pollutants; and all aggravated by the pressures of a global population rising by a million every four days’ (Canby, 1994).

Such losses and destruction in the modern/ industrial era are the major concerns being addressed now by the morality of the post-industrial era. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess provides us with certain normative principles that characterize a type of humanism that humanizes nature and ‘naturizes’ humanity, if you will:

- (1) ‘The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.**
- (2) ‘Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.**
- (3) ‘Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.’ (Anker, 1998)**

The Weltanschauung of the Industrial Era

At this point, we should deem it necessary that a better understanding of the worldview of the post-industrial era can be effectively laid out if viewed in contrast with the kind of worldview that has empowered the events and personalities of the industrial era.

The celebrated futuristic theorist of the ‘70s and ‘80s, Alvin Toffler enumerated three key concepts that animated the industrial era: the war with nature, the importance of evolution, and the progress principle. Regarding the war with nature, Toffler says in *The Third Wave* (1990):

‘The idea that nature was there to be exploited provided a convenient rationalization for shortsightedness and selfishness: There has been so much destruction in nature, so much brutality towards the earth’s ecosystem, because of this worldview. And this worldview has created a sense of arrogance in man who has developed the notion that he is the principle of a long process of evolution’ (Toffler, *ibid.*).

With the first two key concepts of the industrial era, the third key concept which is the progress principle is now well entrenched. It is ‘the idea that history flows irreversibly toward a better life for humanity’ (Toffler, *ibid.*). Adam Smith in his *The Wealth of Nations* and Karl Marx in his *Das Kapital* had their own respective theories of human progress.

In the industrial framework, time is linear and space is concentrated to satisfy the demands of the progress principle. The very idea of progress entails the linearity of time. And since

industrialization is the highest stage of progressive evolution, its centers being the urban cities are the most important space concentrations.

On the metaphysical question of ‘What are things made of from the perspective of the industrial era?’, reality is looked upon not as a fused or integrated entity but as a structure built upon a multiplicity of components. This is known as the atomic view of reality and this is the foundation of the principle of individualism. As the old agricultural civilization decayed, as trade expanded and towns multiplied in the century or two before the dawn of industrialism, the rising merchant classes, demanding the freedom to trade and lend and expand their markets, gave rise to a new conception of the individual—the person as atom.

The Weltanschauung of the Post-Industrial Era

In the post-industrial era or the third wave civilization (as this is called by Toffler), humanity is reconciled with nature. ‘There is no such thing as either man [i.e., human] or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machine together’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977). And the war is against those who have declared war against nature in the industrial era. Now is the age of ‘ecosophy’ or ‘eco-philosophy’ whose leading proponent is the Norwegian thinker Arne Naess. ‘During the last thirty years philosophers in the West have critiqued the underlying assumptions of modern philosophy in relation to the natural world. This development has been part of an ongoing expansion of philosophical work involving cross-cultural studies of worldviews or ultimate philosophies. Since philosophical studies in the West have often ignored the natural world, and since most studies in ethics have focused on human values, those approaches which emphasize ecocentric values have been referred to as eco-philosophy. Just as the aim of traditional philosophy is Sophia or wisdom, so the aim of eco-philosophy is ecosophy or ecological wisdom. The practice of eco-philosophy is an ongoing, comprehensive, deep inquiry into values, the nature of the world, and the self’ (Drengson, 1999).

In the post-industrial era, the seemingly omnipotent notion of uninterrupted linear evolution has already lost its momentum. There has been a wholesale breakdown in the most basic key concepts of the industrial era’s worldview which gives the final death blow to the progress principle that animates the entire infrastructure of the industrial era.

Finally, the paradigm shift has been felt as the concepts of time and space change and as the atomic model of reality is displaced by the holistic model.

Postlude

The direction now of post-industrial technology aimed to humanize nature and ‘naturize’ humanity is one of synthesis: the non-subversion of the ecosystem whereof humanity is subsumed to be a part. Human progress is therefore construed in the post-industrial sense as a bi-condition of ecosystem protection and defense. In this condition, there is no viable way to come up with a real workable human development program in isolation of certain considerations affecting the ecological network. Deleuze and Guattari say:

[We] make no distinction between man and nature: the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man become one within nature in the form of production or industry, just as they do within the life of man as a species. Industry is then no longer considered from the extrinsic point of view of utility, but rather from the point of view of its fundamental identity with nature as production of man and by man. Not man as the king of creation, but rather as the being who is in intimate contact with the profound life of all forms or all types of beings, who is responsible for even the stars and animal life, and who ceaselessly plugs an organ-machine into an energy-machine, a tree into his body, abreast into his mouth, the sun into his asshole: the eternal custodian of the machines of the universe (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977).

Further human development that is proper or morally defensible is possible only if there should be immediate and concerted conservation and/ or preservation measures instituted for the world’s remaining natural resource base, if there is to be continuing but sustainable use of it by mankind. Such continuing human development should be with the end in view of more equitable sharing and benefits distribution. A simple enough prescription, but one that is quite a tall order to do from any perspective—historical, political, economic, social, etc.—even under the best of circumstances. And, truth to tell, the actual condition of the world today is anything but the best of circumstances.

Therefore, ‘moral technology’—if indeed there is such a thing existing or even forthcoming anytime soon—sure has its work cut out for it. But whether or not technology is or becomes moral and thus transforming or transformative, still it is just an instrument to alleviate sufferings, resolve conflicts, and promote happiness. Ultimately, it is still man himself who determines the

fate of his environment and the destiny of his own species. The synthesis that fully integrates human development with earth's ecological network glimmers in the horizon, beckoning.

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METAPHYSICS

**“Fragments of Philosophy” (or “Philosophical Fragments”)
on the Sensitivity and Sensibility of Human Life Towards
Transformative Philosophizing¹⁴
(with apologies to Kierkegaard)**

Ruel F. Pepa

“Truth is subjectivity.” Soren Kierkegaard

“There are no facts, only interpretations.” Friedrich Nietzsche

“One should write philosophy only as one writes a poem.” Ludwig Wittgenstein

“Humanism is centered upon the agency of human individuality and subjective intuition, rather than on received ideas and approved authority.” Edward W. Said

**Part I
Introduction**

LIFE GETS UNEASY when you feel you seem to be at the end of the road. Forces pull you to the wayside—to the left, to the right. There’s no going onward. You tell yourself, the visible reality has done so much to your sanity. “I am here right now because the things I have been doing are within the light of consciousness. I have met lonely events and joyful ones and I have learned lessons from them in the light of that consciousness.” The radical perspectivist Friedrich Nietzsche says:

After having looked enough between the philosopher’s lines and fingers, I say to myself: by far the great part of conscious thinking must still be included among instinctive activities, and that goes even for philosophical thinking. We have to relearn here, as one has had to relearn about heredity and what is “innate.” As the act of birth deserves no consideration in the whole process and procedure of heredity, so “being conscious” is not in any decisive sense the

¹⁴ Approved and accepted for presentation at the International Congress on Person and Society: Perspective for the XXI Century @ the Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, Braga, Portugal, 17-19 November 2005.

*opposite of what is instinctive: most of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by his instincts.*¹⁵

Consciousness meets this world of the senses and we hitch our dreams, our aspirations, on it. We shed real tears in the deepest moments of our tragedies. Our laughter echoes in the loftiest moments of celebration. And then, the sober moments of reflection as we consider going on in life. Well, it surely doesn't end here right now. But my gut-feeling doesn't intend to give up yet. At least, not now... not yet.

Ideas... ideas... ideas glide into my mind, coming from so many directions. Appeals from the depth of the scientific and the analytic convince the intellect to sing paeans of praises to the comfort and delight bestowed by the achievements of modernity—the wonders of technology, the life that has been made easy by a myriad of gadgets, instruments and equipment that rule households, offices and workplaces, even classrooms and game-boards of the modern age.

Yet, appeals of equal magnitude emanate from the spirit. That which sustains the human in me brings me to the innermost recesses of my being and convinces me that the ocean of feelings is far deeper than the superficiality of what may be quantified and measured, analyzed and captured by the senses in the one-dimensional segments of time... in the three-dimensional character of space. What gives excitement to life, what makes me consider the significance of it, what leads me to an appreciation of the beautiful, the good, and the true, lies deeply in the core of my being. It is solely the depth of my spirituality that has access into it. No instruments of modern technology can ever scratch even the outermost filament of its covering. It is only the authentic me that has the power to embrace the rise and fall of the waves in this ocean of feelings. It is the untaught spirit of life in me that breathes meaning in the celebration of eternity amidst the dances of change, amidst the weaving and unweaving of colors that burst in the skies of rejoicing and fall on the ground of defeat and disappointment.

But life goes on in transcending the here and now. The overcoming continues. After the fall, we want to rise. This is the *elan* of life. The most primal life-force persists and that's the drive of life. The single outstanding request brought about by the consciousness that comes out of it is a sincere appreciation of this life-force's delicate operation in the sensitivity and sensibility of

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, ***Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future***, trans Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), #3, p. 11.

humanity. It is not the scientific and the analytic that have guided us to chart the deepest corners of the realm of the spirit. None of the five senses can access even the periphery of its threshold.

But the scientific and the analytic, the spiritual and the emotional are all human. And it is so lamentable that there are forces that have torn them all apart. What could be philosophical at this point is to ask questions, however heart-rending and passion-filled these questions may be: Is there no center where a convergence point is located? Isn't a sense of elation expressed in triumphs as humanity appropriates the achievements of science and technology? Can we heighten our spirituality as we positively relate with the wonders of science and technology? Is there a way whereby the workings of modern science and technology can effect physico-chemical changes for the human organism to have a positive attitude towards life? Where do we focus now the eyes of meaningful philosophizing—towards the greatness of science and technology and the force of objectivity that animates them, or towards the dignity of human spirituality that exalts the interiority of the human in the depth of subjective being? In what area can philosophizing be truly transformative in consideration of these sides?

Part II

Transformative Philosophizing and the Subjectivity of Philosophy

TRANSFORMATIVE PHILOSOPHIZING is basically subjective interpretation of individual human experience. In this case, philosophy is not concerned with the problematization of the analytico-mathematical and the scientific. Modern philosophers have mixed matters of the objective and matters of the subjective and fit them altogether in an objective mold. Of course, two plus two will never become five in any possible world. Neither can matters of scientific experimentation be of interest to the philosopher as a philosopher. Kierkegaard says:

Modern philosophy has tried anything and everything in the effort to help the individual to transcend himself objectively, which is a wholly impossible feat; existence exercises its restraining influence, and if philosophers nowadays had not become mere scribblers in the service of a fantastic thinking and its pre-occupation, they would long ago have perceived that suicide was the only tolerable practical interpretation of its striving. But the scribbling modern philosophy holds passion in contempt; and yet passion is the culmination of existence for an existing individual—and we are all of us existing individuals.¹⁶

¹⁶ Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David F. Swanson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 176.

Practitioners of the sciences and the mathematical fields have dabbled into the things of another dimension—the philosophical. We are now in an era where we can more meaningfully distinguish between the scientific (objective) and the personal (subjective). Our contemporary philosophers are more intense and penetrating to perceive and understand the dynamics of the time. Listen to the words of the great Indian sage Rabindranath Tagore:

What is the truth of this world? It is not the masses of substance, not in the number of things, but in their relatedness, which neither can be counted, nor measured, nor abstracted. It is not in the materials which are many, but in the expression which is one. All our knowledge of things is knowing them in their relation to the Universe, in that relation which is truth. A drop of water is not a particular assortment of elements; it is the miracle of a harmonious mutuality, in which the two reveal the One. No amount of analysis can reveal to us this mystery of unity. Matter is an abstraction; we shall never be able to realize what it is, for our world of reality does not acknowledge it. Even the giant forces of the world, centripetal and centrifugal, are kept out of our recognition. They are the day-labourers not admitted into the audience-hall of creation. But light and sound come to us in their gay dresses as troubadors singing serenades before the windows of the senses. What is constantly before us, claiming our attention, is not the kitchen, but the feast; not the anatomy of the world, but its countenance. There is the dancing ring of seasons; the many-coloured wings of erratic life flitting between birth and death. The importance of these does not lie in their existence as mere facts, but in their language of harmony, the mother-tongue of our own soul, through which they are communicated to us.¹⁷

The issue of philosophy is actually the issue of meaningfulness—the meaningfulness not of anything else but life—of my life specifically (subjectively) and of human life in general (inter-subjectively). Meaningfulness as an issue is all-encompassing, i.e., objectively and subjectively. However, in philosophy it is definitely focused on the subjective personal experiences of individual human beings.

The meaningfulness of my life is not dependent on what science or mathematics tells me. Life's meaning transcends the scientific and the mathematical. In **The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard**, the Danish rebel thinker records:

What would be the use of discovering so-called objective truth, of working through all of the systems of philosophy and of being able, if required, to review them all and show up the inconsistencies within each system; what good would it do me to be able to develop a theory of the state and combine all

¹⁷ Rabindranath Tagore, "Creative Unity" in Great Works of Rabindranath Tagore (Delhi: Rose Publications, ____), p. 489.

the details into a single whole, and so construct a world in which I did not live, but only held up to the view of others; what good would it do me to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had no deeper significance for me and for my life; what good would it do me if truth stood before me, cold and naked, not caring whether I recognized her or not, and producing in me a shudder of fear rather than a trusting devotion? I certainly do not deny that I still recognize an imperative of understanding and that through it one can work upon men, but it must be taken up into my life, and that is what I now recognize as the most important thing. That is what my soul longs after, as the African desert thirst for water.¹⁸

Philosophy brings us to more exciting terrains of life where the wind of freedom blows incessantly, and carries us to new discoveries in uncharted milieus—unstructured, rustic, pregnant with mysteries; open to be molded by the power of the subjective mind, challenging the human spirit, defiant of the dictates of meta-narratives imposed by over-confident systematizers coming from the alien territories of science and mathematics.

Philosophy empowers us to be in perfect control of our personal individual lives. Philosophy brings us to the deepest recesses of our individuality. Philosophy affirms our humanity that has its being without any necessary connection with the objective. Philosophically, the objective is trivial, given, may be done away with, in the process of subjective signification. Philosophy transforms us in ways that can never be done by the sciences and mathematics. Philosophy is an expression of human freedom. Philosophy is in a dimension unlimited by the hard boundaries of objective requirements. Philosophy is subjective freedom in a situation of praxis—the subjective reflection of human experience which, individually, is of subjective character.

I think... I believe... I feel what I believe. I believe what I feel.

Part III

Transformative Philosophizing and World Construction

THE WORLD IS A CONSTRUCTION of the human mind. The world as a matter of construction is a reality that passes through interpretations. The world as reality—or reality as the world—is, therefore, a construction based on interpretations, i.e., interpretations provide the “materials” for construction.

¹⁸ Soren Kierkegaard, The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard, trans. Alexander Dru, in A Kierkegaard Anthology, ed., Robert Bretall (New York: Modern Library, 1946), p. 5.

In “world-construction,” the initial task of interpretation is done in relation to the objective: the objective is interpreted and, in the process, is subjectified. Subjectification is the process whereby the objective is appropriated into and becomes subjective by signifying it in the act of interpretation. The objective, per se, is devoid of meaning, usefulness and relevance. Hence, it lacks the character “material” to the shaping up of what would later develop as history.

The sciences also make use of and seriously attend to the objective. In fact, it is the life-blood of the sciences. But even the sciences go through the process of subjectification as their achievements are pragmatized in technologies. It is the process of pragmatization that signifies the sciences. Pragmatization could also be construed as an interpretation. When science and technology are appropriated in the world, they undergo the process of trans-signification and are hence subjectified.

The American philosopher Nelson Goodman in his **Of Mind and Other Matters** talks of a constructivist philosophy. According to fellow constructivist philosopher, Jerome Bruner: *“It’s central thesis ‘constructivism’ is that contrary to common sense there is no unique ‘real world’ that pre-exists and is independent of human mental activity and human language; that what we call the world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world.”*¹⁹

Part IV Conclusion

TRANSFORMATIVE PHILOSOPHIZING takes us into the depth of the distinction between the objective and the subjective. In the context of how we deal with reality through the predominantly modernist approach of our generation, the scientific and the analytico-mathematical are generally taken to be objective. Objective considerations are defined not only

¹⁹ Jerome Bruner, ***Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*** (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 95.

in terms of the observable but more so in terms of the measurable/ quantifiable and the experimentable. If certain aspects of reality are deemed to be objective, it is therefore assumed that to do justice to their objectiveness/objectivity, the most appropriate step to an inquiry into or an exploration of it is via the scientific and/or the analytico-mathematical terrains. In other words, the objective is best analyzed and evaluated in scientific and/or analytico-mathematical terms. In modernist terms, we cannot really disengage the objective from the scientific and/or the analytico-mathematical.

On that basis, it is truly difficult to deal with the objective in other terms. And since on the other side of the reality divide, the subjective rules, another field of human intellectual endeavor should be appropriated for its signification: the philosophical. The philosophical, therefore, associates itself with the subjective and vice versa. Matters of value and virtue, the choice of anything that suits individual, subjective preference, are matters of philosophy. Kierkegaard writes:

For an objective reflection the truth becomes an object, something objective, and thought must be pointed away from the subject. For a subjective reflection the truth becomes a matter of appropriation of inwardness, of subjectivity, and thought must probe more and more deeply into the subject and his subjectivity.²⁰

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²⁰ Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 171.

The Matrix Movie Series: A Berkeleyan Affirmation of Reality

Ruel F. Pepa

The Meaning of Berkeleyan Idealism in Relation to the Notion of Virtual Reality

This paper evaluates the Matrix movie series (The Matrix; Matrix Reloaded; and Matrix Revolutions) in the philosophical light of Berkeleyan subjective idealism. The 17th/18th-century Irish empiricist George Berkeley generally held that physical objects we basically call solid in the context of the three-dimensional world are nothing but fictional. They apparently present themselves before our senses, but in reality, they do not have actual existence independent of our perception of them.

In terms of the digital technology of our contemporary world which Alvin Toffler calls the “third wave” era, the Berkeleyan paradigm is closest to the notion of “virtual reality.” As we know it within the limits of present-day developments in digital technology, to get into virtual reality, one puts on a helmet, a pair of goggles fitted with mini-screens for the eyes, a pair of sensitive gloves that react to hand and finger movements and earphones. One’s movements are connected to the computer which spontaneously adjusts the projected pictures to create the illusion that the said movements occur right within the space the pictures depict. The world that this virtual reality creates may best be described in Berkeleyan terms as “all in the mind.”

Berkeley’s Reality: A Denial of Matter’s Existence

Berkeley’s conception of reality denies the existence of matter. He simply believes that matter, as this concept is used in physics, does not exist. Berkeley’s subjective idealism doesn’t necessarily affect the form of words we use in day-to-day conversation. So that even if we say the Bermuda Triangle exists, Berkeley will not contradict us with the words, “It’s only in the mind.” The existence of the Bermuda Triangle is only specifically meaningful if we were to go to the area of the Atlantic Ocean off southeast Florida where an imaginary line is formed from Melbourne, Florida to Bermuda to Puerto Rico and back to Florida. Yet, the empirical meaning

of the verb “to exist” doesn’t apply on the concept “matter,” for the simple reason that matter in itself cannot be subjected to observation.

This point may be made clearer if seen through the Wittgensteinian idea of language-games. In the language-game of daily life, it may be meaningfully and soundly said that the Bermuda Triangle really does exist because the existence of anything in such language-game simply means certain states of affairs are observed by the senses in the world. This is the “empirical” sense of the concept of existing. Whereas in the language-game of the physical sciences, the matter that comprises the area called Bermuda Triangle exists in the sense that violent storms and downward air currents frequently occur there causing the disappearance of ships and airplanes on a number of occasions due to unexplainable turbulence and other atmospheric disturbances. We should not confuse the language-game of daily life and that of the physical sciences thereby making the metaphysical claims that matter really exists independent of the mind. In this light, Berkeley’s flat denial of matter’s existence is simply a denial of the metaphysical claim that “matter” (as is meant in the physical sciences) can “exist” (as is meant in the empirical sense).

Berkeley’s Reality as Virtual Reality

Berkeley’s reality—the world we experience around us on a daily basis—is a virtual reality. In this reality, the “computer” that processes data is God whose power is far more immense than what we limited humans could come up with directly absorbing and processing all our experiences and sensations in our minds. We, in fact, actually explore and move around in the world that God has created in the same manner and capability that we can explore and move around in the spatio-temporal milieu of a man-made virtual reality. Yet, both these worlds—in the Berkeleyan sense—are nothing but illusory. Reality, therefore, rests alone on one’s experience of them and on the power that processes information to generate them.

In daily life, we normally say things around us are real and we have a way to distinguish them from dreams, or hallucinations, or imagined objects. The reality of these ordinary objects is simply determined on the basis of a constant and regular conjunction to the laws of mechanics. There are spatio-temporal limitations in our movements in this world and memory serves us well to make sense out of life’s regularity--states of affairs distinctly absent in the “absurdities” and disconnection characteristic of dreams and hallucinations. This point makes Berkeley’s

conception of reality logically intact in the presence of a God who maintains constancy and regularity in this world through an eternally sharp memory of locations and appearances. So that even if you leave your house and you no longer see it, God's eternally sharp memory has always maintained a mental configuration of how it appeared when you left it, and when you return to it, it will instantly reproduce in the same exact configuration. However, your house, per se, i.e., considered as a reality independent of perception, doesn't really exist. We say, its reality is virtual, not actual.

The Matrix Movie Series as A Berkeleyan Affirmation of Virtual Reality

The Matrix series of sci-fi action movies produced by Warner Brothers is founded on the notion that the material world as defined in terms of paramount reality is illusory. In other words, there is no paramount reality. The Matrix series is pregnant with the idea that we are heading towards a future that is created, generated, interpreted, and realized by the unbounded thrust of fast-paces development in digital technology. It belongs to an age run and controlled by the explosive dynamics of unrestrained information flow and mind-blowing stream of knowledge-invasion never seen in past civilization. In the present run of computer-enhanced events, an inverse relation between paramount reality and virtual reality gradually occurs leading to the final demise of paramount reality in the fast approaching era.

The computer technology right amid us is seen in all its multi-variagated forms of optical computer, the DNA computer, the molecular and dot computers, and the quantum computer, along with the complementary development of nanotechnology, robotics, and the human genome project. They constitute the Matrix that will ultimately stamp out paramount reality and lead virtual reality to its point of no return.

The George Berkeley of 17th/18th-century Enlightenment who was taken lightly to the point of ridicule has slowly gained ground since the inception of the post-industrial era. With the aforementioned technology of this era, the Matrix has already been set up to affirm once and for all the reality theorized, advanced, and fought for by George Berkeley.

PHILOSOPHY AND LANGUAGE

Wittgenstein and the Problem of Meaning

Introduction

In philosophy, the issue of meaning is a classical problem and in the re-structuring of academic philosophy in contemporary times, this issue has been assigned to philosophy of language. The development of philosophic thoughts in historic time saw how the issue of meaning has been approached from the time of Plato and Aristotle to the contemporary period. Although we can say that more recent approaches have been proposed by philosophical theories of post-modern (or post-structural) era, the concern of this presentation specifically focuses on the significance of the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's contribution to the age-long discussions of this issue. An evaluation of what has occurred through time as philosophers continue to deal with the issue of meaning places the achievement of Wittgenstein over and above his predecessors and contemporaries. It could even be reasonably said that such an uncontested achievement of a single philosophical genius beyond his lifetime has been used not only as a take-off point but even as a solid bridge to inaugurate the forms and concerns of what we now call post-modern philosophy. Others may be critical of this view, believing that the developments of post-modern thoughts in contemporary philosophy were ushered into the intellectual and scholarly scene independent of Wittgenstein. But a careful and serious reading of Wittgenstein's post-Tractatus writings (mostly post-humously published) will tell us that as early as that period, Wittgenstein's thoughts had already been pregnant with "post-modern" tendencies and ideas. So that, at this point, we could simply say that Wittgenstein was in a way and in his own right a prophet of what would soon come up in the realm of contemporary philosophy.

The Problem of Meaning in the Pre-Wittgenstein History of Philosophy

A. Plato and Aristotle's Theory of Meaning

Both Plato and Aristotle held the referential theory of meaning. By this theory, we mean that the meaning of a word is found in what the word refers to. As far as Plato was concerned, he proposed that words function like proper names. So that even if a word is what we grammatically call a common name, its meaning must be found in the referent which it is supposed to name. For

example, the word “chair” in grammar is a common name but its supposed referent that gives it meaning is not just any chair in particular; the referent that grants it meaning is the perfect, ideal “chair” that can only be found in the Realm of Universals. However, in Aristotle’s view, the same word is meaningful because it refers to all the chairs that may be found in the world. It is common knowledge among students of philosophy that Aristotle didn’t quite bite the idea of Plato’s Realm of Universals as it is advanced in the latter’s Theory of Forms.

In passing, we can say that the referential theory of meaning has some real practical value in the casual affairs of life. A human child starts to learn the language of his/her people by way of the referential method wherein the meaning of a word is known by pointing to the thing or object that it refers to. The meaning that is known by this manner is called ostensive definition. Bertrand Russell explains,

“Ostensive definition” may be defined as “any process by which a person is taught to understand a word otherwise than by the use of other words.”...

Ostensive definition, in its earliest form, requires certain conditions. There must be a feature of the environment which is noticeable, distinctive, emotionally interesting and (as a rule) frequently recurring, and the adult must frequently utter the name of this feature at a moment when the infant is attending to it. Of course there are risks of error....

In general, though not universally, repetition is necessary for an ostensive definition, for ostensive definition consists in the creation of a habit, and habits, as a rule, are learned gradually...(1)

B. Gottlob Frege’s Challenge o the Referential Theory of Meaning(2)

The German mathematician Gottlob Frege challenged the referential theory of meaning in his philosophical treatise, “Sense and Reference.” He contends that the meanings of the complex terms “the morning star” and “the evening star” are not the same, yet, they have the same reference and that is the planet Venus. Hence, if the meaning of a word or a term is its reference as the referential theory assumes, then there is no difference at all between the terms “the morning star” and “the evening star” because both refer to Venus. But this claim is obviously unacceptable because mere common sense tells us that the word “morning” in “the morning star” and the word “evening” in “the evening star” are definitely distinct from each other.

In his theory of meaning, Frege affirms the notion that complex terms like the abovementioned ones are proper names. (Proper names could also be single terms.) Every proper name, in turn, expresses a meaning and designate a reference.

C. **John Stuart Mill's Challenge to Frege's "Proper Names"**(3)

The British philosopher J. S. Mill precede Frege by almost half a century. Yet, prior to Frege's theory, Mill had already advanced a more complex distinction between "proper names" (which he calls "singular names") like Saint Paul, Socrates or Frege, and "general names" like red, mammal, human, or house. Mill used the categories of denotation and connotation to differentiate between singular names and general names. According to him singular names are merely denotative, meaning, a singular name denotes a referent whereas general names are mainly connotative, meaning, a general name connotes an attribute. For example, the singular name "Saint Paul" denotes its proper referent but it does not connote any attribute pertaining to this early Christian apostle. However, the general name "dog" denotes all the animals called by this name in the past, in the present and in the future. It also connotes the attributes possessed by all dogs.

Faced with this distinction, the question that comes up now is: Where does meaning reside—in the denotation or in the connotation? If we listen to Mill, meaning is in the connotation, not in the denotation. Hence, in this sense, singular names, having only denotations in terms of their referents, are deprived of meanings and only general terms are meaningful.

D. **Russell's Theory of Meaning as Denotation**(4)

The British mathematical philosopher Bertrand Russell (who incidentally was a baptismal godson of J.S. Mill) took the contrary position by asserting that meaning resides in the denotation and not in the connotation. In his treatise, "On Denoting", Russell sustained the survival of the referential theory of meaning in the present century.

It also marked the beginning of a confusion that had haunted philosophical empiricism for decades whose systematic expressions are found in the works of the Logical Positivists of the Vienna Circle. This was the confused treatment of the difference between meaning and truth. In Russell's "On Denoting", he asserts that terms like "The present King of France" is meaningless because it doesn't denote any referent at all (i.e., considering that during Russell's time, France

was already a republic and the monarchical period was but a thing of the past). Actually, the term is meaningful but devoid of truth. Hence, meaningless is not dependent on truth, though truth must be based on meaningless. Presented logically, we say,

All true x are meaningful, but not all meaningful x are true.

In an enlightening evaluation of the referential theory of meaning, U.P. philosopher Andresito Acuña in his *Philosophical Analysis* has the following to say:

In fairness to those who subscribe to the referential theory of meaning in the early 20th century empiricism, the theory has many accomplishments. When the theory was applied to some major branches in Philosophy, Ethics, Metaphysics or Theology, numerous objectionable concepts were uncovered such as concepts like intrinsic good, being, God, mind, material substratum, the absolute, etc. These concepts purport to have referents while in fact they have none. As a consequence, these concepts were committed to the limbo of meaningless utterances. When applied to the budding science of psychology of many mentalistic concepts like ego, spirit, soul, intention, and volition. As a result, psychology today has acquired a technical language analogous to the language of physics.(5)

The Problem of Meaning in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Development

A. Wittgenstein's Pre-Tractatus and Tractatus Conceptions of Meaning

Ludwig Wittgenstein's pre-Tractatus conception of meaning is of the classical referential type. Such is reflected in his Notebooks 1914-16. Regarding this, the Wittgensteinian scholar P.M.S. Hacker of Oxford comments that before Wittgenstein fully crystallized his more complex conception of meaning in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, he had the classical notion that "names to have a determinate meaning they must be uniquely and unambiguously correlated with simple constituents of the world. . . . The meaning of a logically proper name is a simple object, the object is the meaning. The essential point is that there must be unanalyzable non-composite objects if language is to be related to the world. These simple objects must be indestructible; they are the substance of the world"(6)

Wittgenstein—being a student of Russell in Cambridge and whose great influence shaped Wittgenstein's philosophical formative years—was initially a natural heir of the Russellian referential theory of meaning.

However, further development enhanced by his readings of Gottlob Frege's works and others related thereto and culminated in the writing of the *Tractatus* marked a dramatic change in Wittgenstein's conception of meaning which now became deeper in form and more complex in presentation. In the *Tractatus*, meaning is no longer determined through things or objects per se. Meaning is determined in propositions or statements about the world, and in 1.1 of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein says: "The world is the totality of facts, not of things." (7) It means that "To say that the world is a totality of things would be to leave out that things fit together. Things exist only in facts." (8) Now, what is a fact? Further in the *Tractatus*, he says:

2. What is the case—a fact—is the existence of a state of affairs.

2.01 A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things).

2.011 It is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs.

2.012 In logic nothing is accidental; if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself. (9)

Regarding this, *Tractatus* commentarist and Wittgensteinian philosopher H.O. Mounce explains:

To illustrate this, consider the propositions 'Socrates is fat' and 'Plato is thin'. These, we shall suppose, represent states of affairs. These states of affairs hold in the world; but notice that they might not have done so. Socrates might have been thin and Plato fat. Now what this shows is that states of affairs are complex. For we can imagine them rearranged, the elements appearing in combinations different from those in which they actually appear. But in logic, says Wittgenstein at 2.012, nothing is accidental; if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself. Thus it is written into Socrates and into Plato that each can be fat and thin. There is a range of possible states of affairs into which Socrates and Plato fit. Which of these states of affairs are actual is not a matter of logic; but it is a matter of logic which states of affairs are possible. Whether Socrates is fat or thin is a matter of fact, but it is a matter of logic that he can be either one or the other. (10)

In other words, facts are states of affairs and states of affairs are not only what is actually in the world but what can possibly be sustained by the things found in the world. So that a statement of fact is not necessarily meaningful only on the basis of its one-to-one correspondence with what is actually found in the world but on the basis that it is also possible to occur in the

world, given the things that we know are in the world. This theory of meaning, Wittgenstein called, “the picture theory of meaning and representation.”

What we are trying to say here is that in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus, the initial importance of an actual object as reference in the world to establish the meaning of a word-or name—is not repudiated. “At some point there must be objects, and therefore names, which are absolutely simple. Otherwise, there would be no contrast between language and the world and nothing could be said.”(11) However, it does not imply that meaningfulness ought to be always checked against what is actually found in the world. We only come to the world if we want to know the truth or falsity of a statement where such a word or name occurs as a constituent of a state of affairs. At this point, it is necessary for us to make a distinction between meaning and truth. “... [I]n order to be true (or false) a proposition must already possess a sense. The sense of a proposition, in short, must be independent of whether it is in fact true or false.”(12)

B. Wittgenstein’s Post-Tractatus Analysis of Meaning Expressed in His Philosophical Investigations

Ludwig Wittgenstein’s post-Tractatus conception of meaning comprehensively expressed in the pages of his monumental Philosophical Investigations is not only an attempt to improve and transcend the theory that he proposes in the Tractatus. It is rather a rigorous criticism of the classical referential theory of meaning in general.

In the P.I. Wittgenstein convincingly destroyed the theory in a disarmingly simple yet profound discussion of two counter-examples. The first is about the word “Excalibur.” According to the referential theory, the meaning of this word is supposed to be the actual object called “Excalibur.” The following however, is Wittgenstein’s penetrating critique found in # 39 of the P.I.:

...The word “Excalibur”, say, is a proper name in the ordinary sense. The sword Excalibur consists of parts combined in a particular way. If they are combined differently Excalibur does not exist. But it is clear that the sentence “Excalibur has a sharp blade” make sense whether Excalibur is still whole or is broken up. But if “Excalibur” is the name of an object, this object no longer exists when Excalibur is broken in pieces; and as no object would then correspond to the name it would have no meaning. But then the sentence “Excalibur has a sharp blade” would contain a word that had no meaning and hence the sentence would be nonsense. But it does make sense; so there

must always be something corresponding to the words of which it consists....
(13)

Regarding the second counter-example, Wittgenstein further discusses in # 40 of the P.I.:

Let us first discuss this point of the argument: that a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it. –It is important to note that the word “meaning” is being used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that ‘corresponds’ to the word. That is to confound the meaning of a name with the bearer of the name. When Mr. N.N. dies one says that the bearer of the name dies, not that the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that for if the name ceased to have meaning, it would make no sense to say “Mr. N.N. is dead.”(14)

In demolishing the referential theory, what Wittgenstein imparts to us is a better and more realistic way of looking at the whole problem of meaning. This he succinctly puts in # 43 of the P.I.:

For a large class of cases—though not for all in which we employ the word “meaning” it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.

Moreover, the meaning of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its bearer. (15)

It tells us that a name really denotes a bearer but this does not imply that the meaning of such a name should be identified with the bearer but rather with its use in a statement that signify a certain or definite context.

C. Wittgenstein’s “Use” Theory of Meaning

We use words in a lot of ways. We name persons, things, or places by means of words. A syntactical combination of words may give an information, ask a question, express a desire or give a command. In Wittgenstein’s theory of meaning the use of a word is an act that is done by human beings in certain linguistic situations. In the P.I., Wittgenstein says:

But how many kinds of sentences are there? Say assertion, question, and command?—These are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call symbols, words, sentences. And the multiplicity is not something fixed given once for all, but new types of language, new language-games as we may say come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a rough picture of this from the changes in mathematics.)

Here the term “language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.(16)

Being “part of an activity or of a form of life”, speaking a language is something that is done naturally by people in flesh and blood in actual situations. Wittgenstein is being critical here of some, specifically philosophers, who have been used to using specialized terms in a very artificial way. Well, these terms like, the absolute, essence, substance, etc., are surely part of a language-game. But the fact that they are not used by people in real events of daily living in the sense that they are specially used by philosophers (in this particular case) makes them artificial, i.e., they have no form of life. The meaning of a word is therefore determined in the context of its usage which Wittgenstein calls “language-game.” Say, for example, the word “bachelor”; we need to determine the particular language-game where it is used. In the language-game of the academe, “bachelor” is a collegiate-level academic degree granted by a school (university or college) to a student who successfully finished four year of undergraduate studies. The same word in another language-game would mean a male who is still single inspite of the fact he is already of marriageable age. Another word is “club.” In one language-game it means an organized group of people. In another language-game it is a hard stick used to beat people.

Regarding the Wittgensteinian use theory of meaning contextually applied in language-games, P.M.S. Hacker comments:

Philosophical problems arise out of ordinary language and are, in general, to be resolved by looking into its workings by considering the diverse uses of expressions. The Tractatus had pursued the real logical form of the proposition. The new method in philosophy demands a clarification of linguistic use, but not in order to achieve an use understanding for the first time, but to eliminate misunderstanding. We words without first giving or even being able to give rules for their use just as we use money as a means of exchange and store of value, without being able to describe the underlying conversations, rules and laws which enable it to fulfill these functions. One can find one’s way around a city although one may be unable to draw a map of it. Being able to use words correctly, as well as recognize correct and incorrect use of them, is to understand them, to know their meaning. (italics supplied.)(17)

Regarding the Wittgensteinian concept of “language-game”, every Wittgensteinian scholar has his/her own interpretation. Hence, we are confronted here with a myriad interpretations. However, I have found the interpretation of U.P. philosopher Acuña simpler and easier to understand. Says he in his Philosophical Analysis:

I want you to try to imagine an activity that cannot be done without the use of language. Can reporting an event be done ithout the use of words? I don’t

think so. Similarly, can giving orders and obeying them be done without the use of words? I think not The point is: If you have an activity that cannot be done without language, then you have a genuine language-game. And if another person can play your language-game, then your language-game has a form of life.(18)

ENDNOTES

- (1) Bertrand Russell, **Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits** (new York: A Clarion Book, Published by Simon and Schuster, 1967), pp.63-66
- (2) Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference"
- (3) John Stuart Mill, "Of Names"
- (4) Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting"
- (5) Andresito Acuña, *Philosophical Analysis* (4th Edition) (Quezon City: U.P. Department of Philosophy 1998), p.24.
- (6) P.M.S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion, Wittgenstein on Philosophy and the Metaphysics of Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 41.
- (7) L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*,
- (8) H.O. Mounce, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus, An Introduction*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.18.
- (9) Op. cit., *Tractatus*
- (10) Op. cit., *Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, p. 20.
- (11) Loc. cit.
- (12) Ibid., p.21
- (13) Ludwig Wittgenstein, **Philosophical Investigations**, trans. By G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1968),#39.
- (14) Ibid., #40.
- (15) Ibid., #43.
- (16) Ibid., # 23.
- (17) Op. cit., *Insight and Illusion*, p. 124.
- (18)Op. cit., *Philosophical Analysis*, p. 31.

PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION

INTERWOVEN THOUGHTS ON PEDAGOGY AND ACADEMICS: A[(n) almost] PHILOSOPHICAL RUMINATION

1. The Philosophy of the Art of Teaching

The art of teaching is facilitative and liberating. It is learner-focused and ideally aims to provide the best opportunity to give release to the most creative expressions of the learner. In the process what is definitely magnified is of course the learner's humanity because one precise manifestation of humanity is creativity. It is hence appropriate to further assert that teaching is a humanizing art. Corollary to this notion is the idea that if the so-called teaching fails to facilitate, liberate and humanize the learner, such a situation reverses the very ideal of what teaching should actually be. This view is important to be raised because if teaching is too stiffly structured within a very narrow perspective and programmatic scheme, the very essence of releasing the creative in the learner is utterly defeated. In this connection, teaching requires a certain degree of honest-to-goodness dynamicity grounded on the sensitivity of the teacher as far as the changing needs of the time as well as the sensibility to generate enhancements in the programming of materials, activities and resources relevant to the subject matter being taught are concerned. This state of affairs makes teaching responsive not only to personal demands but more so to social and national prospects toward development.

In The Heart of Teaching Issue 84 of the series "Facilitative Teaching — Releasing Control and Empowering Students," the following statements buttress the present concern:

The facilitative teacher begins by offering students as many resources as possible and imparting information about where everything is and how it is used. Acting as a guide, the facilitative teacher offers practice sessions in whatever skill is being taught, gradually backing off until students conduct their own learning. Studying alone or in groups, students themselves find and determine how the content of what they're learning is meaningful to them. Research on the human brain shows that imbuing information with personal meaning is essential for retention. Once students are learning on their own, the facilitative teacher actively monitors the process, which may involve a certain amount of noise or even what may appear to be chaos. The facilitative teacher

*is ever observant, available for questions, and ready to step in if necessary, but remains in the background as much as possible. One important function of the facilitative teacher is to see that everyone is involved in the process, recalling off-task students with a meaningful glance or a non-confrontational question about how things are going.*²¹

This state of affairs makes teaching responsive not only to personal demands but more so to social and national prospects toward development.

The entirety of these concerns brings us to a realization that teaching is not aimed to domesticate, exploit and indoctrinate the learner for doing so is a contradiction in terms. Genuine teaching that facilitates, liberates and hence empowers the humanity of the learner cannot afford to create an automaton that simply parrots and repeats information deposited in its mental apparatus. Authentic teaching as the main instrumentality that defines the basically ambiguous notion of education is triumphantly achieved in the person of a learner who confidently stands in life poised to face its light and heavy complexities with creative determination, moral integrity and indomitable courage. “To liberate teaching and for teaching to be liberating, the learner in oneself must be freed.”²²

In the realization of all these things, one very significant concern must still be dramatically brought out and that is the fact that in teaching where the so-called “teacher” encounters the learner, it must humbly be accepted that on the one hand, the teacher is also a learner and on the other hand the learner is in many ways also a teacher. In this regard, the eminent Brazilian philosopher of education Paulo Freire of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed fame has this to say:

Only insofar as learners become thinking subjects, and recognize that they are as much thinking subjects as are the teachers, is it possible for the learners to become productive subjects of the meaning or knowledge of the object. It is in this dialectic movement that teaching and learning become knowing and

²¹ The Art of Facilitative Leadership, a videotape produced by PLS and available through the PLS Bookstore (insert link to: <http://www.plsbookstore.com>) at 800-506-9996.

http://www.plsweb.com/resources/newsletters/hot_archives/84/empowering_students/

²² Taken from the abstract written for the essay “Liberating Teaching” by Nancy Porter published in the journal Liberal Education, v68 n2 p115-26 Sum 1982.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ271397&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ271397

*reknowing. The learners gradually know what they did not yet know, and the educators reknow what they knew before.*²³

What matters in the whole process of teaching and learning is its dialectical character that inevitably leads to a synthesis of an improved and better level of existence in the context of a world that constantly changes.

II. Formal Education as Pragmatic and Transformative: A Challenge to Academic Decadence

Formal or academic education, to be true to its essence in pragmatic terms, should be individually facilitating, socially empowering, politically liberating and culturally challenging. We can envision here individuals whose true education is attested by their productivity, openness and integrity as expressions of their creativity, responsibility and sensitivity in a challenging, complex and changing world. Bruce Kimball, elsewhere in his *The Condition of American Liberal Education*²⁴ identifies six points of pragmatism²⁵ that characterize genuine liberating education:

- 1. that belief and meaning, even truth itself, are fallible and revisable;*
- 2. that an experimental method of inquiry obtains in all science and reflective thought;*
- 3. that belief, meaning, and truth depend on the context and the inter-subjective judgment of the community in which they are formed;*
- 4. that experience is the dynamic interaction of organism and environment, resulting in a close interrelationship between thought and action;*
- 5. that the purpose of resolving doubts or solving problems is intrinsic to all thought and inquiry; and*
- 6. that all inquiry and thought are evaluative, and judgments about fact are no different from judgments about value.*

This type of formal education is concrete, functional and progressive not in the way it is viewed in the academe but in its solid, significant and substantial contribution to society in general. This type of education is not defined in terms of academic degrees, transcripts of records and diplomas. This is honest-to-goodness education whose bearers are capable practitioners, performers, professionals (in the larger sense of the word) recognized, relied-on and rewarded

²³ Teachers as Cultural Workers - Letters to Those Who Dare Teach, Translated by Donoldo Macedo, Dale Koike, and Alexandre Oliveira, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1998, p. 90.

²⁴ Published by the Ohio State University. Edited by Robert Orrill (1995).

²⁵ <http://www.rollins.edu/colloquy/colloquy1997/philosophy.html>

not because of high fallutin' descriptions whereby one speaks of her/himself in the HRD office of a corporate entity but because of how s/he actually performs effectively, efficiently and, at best, effusively at the workplace. This is academic education whose single proof of meaningfulness is shown in pragmatic instance. Academic education is hence pragmatically substantiated.

Formal education as pragmatic education is fundamentally socially relevant. The social relevance of formal education should be a legitimizing factor to give direction to a person's way of life in spite of the abstractness and artificiality of formal education. The academe that is not a place where current socio-political-economic issues are seriously brought out, discussed and deliberated on defeats the true essence of education in general and obsoletizes academic education in particular. Again, let me quote Freire on this:

To think that such work can be realized when the theoretical context is separated in such a way from the learners' concrete experiences is only possible for one who judges that the content is taught without reference to and independently from what the learners already know from their experiences prior to entering school.... Content cannot be taught, except in an authoritarian, vanguardist way, as if it was a set of things, pieces of knowledge, that can be superimposed on or juxtaposed to the conscious body of the learners. Teaching, learning, and knowing have nothing to do with this mechanistic practice.

Educators need to know what happens in the world of the children with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it.²⁶

In the face of this expectation, the academe could only achieve an acceptable level of credibility as a true bailiwick of pragmatic education if the academe is an actual participant not only in the deliberation about but also in taking actions transformative of certain social, political and economic terrains. The academe in this sense is understood as an arena of praxis where education takes place not only by way of classroom theorizing but also of on- and off-campus actions. In the process, it is basically important to focus on consciousness expansion because truly meaningful actions cannot be achieved unless there is consciousness transformation. Formal education reckoned as pragmatic education concretely responds to the implied challenge to Karl

²⁶ Ibid., p. 72.

Marx's "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."²⁷ Hence from consciousness-transformation emanates the energy that pushes world-transformation.

Based on our understanding of what transformation means and encompasses, it was identified that transformation should be the guiding principle that underpins all educational endeavour. . . .

. . . [E]ducation is essentially about the promotion of personhood and the development of full human potential. While we are confronted by the challenges of different social and educational systems, transformative education may play a big part in helping individuals to become truly human beings. By this, we also mean individuals' development as whole-persons - the development in all aspects of a human being, including the physical, moral, creative, emotional, intellectual and spiritual; as well as the expression of their potential.²⁸

On the other side of this idealized situation of what has been called pragmatic academic education is the reality of an alienating type of education in the context of a society hitched on semi-colonial and semi-feudal presuppositions. The academe is a microcosm of the social realm where it is located and we could almost be certain that the academe short-changes the students and formal education itself as it continues to be insensitive and less-concerned of social realities. Formal education banks on the importance of reflection as a point of entry that leads to action.

However, such could only happen if what is reflected on is not what a generic textbook says but what is experienced in social practice. In fact, textbooks should be products of reflections on social experiences and hence, the teachers and students themselves in an academic location should be the ones to write the textbooks that the next batch of students should use and likewise reflect on in the whole gamut of an uninterrupted dialectics of pragmatic transformative formal education.

²⁷ Theses on Feuerbach, # XI. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm>

²⁸ "Transformative Education for Human Development" a paper delivered during the 3rd Vittachi International Conference held at Al Akhawayn University , Ifrane, Morocco, 1-5 July 2006 with the theme "Rethinking Educational Change".
<http://www.transformedu.org/Conference/Proceedings/AVisionforTransformativeEducation/tabid/70/Default.aspx>

III. The Academic as a Co-Creator of Knowledge

The academic is much typified as someone who calls the shots in the classroom in the manner that we may describe her/him as an instructor who has in his/her disposal references and other subject or course materials formulated and published by other academics whose assumed authority is a given. In other words, we look at the academic as a parrot whose advantage over the real one is her/his ability to consciously “parrot” what the references/course materials say as if they exude the “supernatural” force of a command.

I don't really have a haunting problem here. The problem that I see is the general situation of the instructor's inability to rise above the “authoritative” text and, with the strike of the same “supernatural” power, construct a new and fresh dimension where new and fresh notions, hypotheses, and convictions could inaugurate a totally new and fresh way of looking at the phenomena of reality, a completely different way of expressing the creative impulses, an unflinching march of transcendence to terrains where no angels dare to tread.

Let's not be angels who lack the guts to question “The Unquestionable” and defy “The Omnipotent”. In the academe, the academic should never allow her/himself to be cowed by the profession of the “The Unquestionable” and “The Omnipotent”. They don't actually exist. They are only creatures of habit and fear, trying to terrorize sanity and logic. They are nothing but bluffers who have no recourse but to run away from the challenges posed by passionate intellect and bold scholarship.

Having no fear at all of the established, the given, and even the contextual, the academic stands alone amid the rarified air of the academe, where the creative destroyer/destructive creator emerges not only triumphant but savoring with exhilaration the interweaving flow of destruction and creativity that substantiates, re-substantiates, and transubstantiates new paradigms of knowledge-making, new knowledge itself, even the passion of the intellect to challenge the paradigms and the catapult that has sent the new paradigms to the mental space of both the dynamic and the dramatic, the dogmatic and the defiant.

The academic creates new knowledge not in the linearity of space-time but in the laterality of a reality that is not eternally there but in the multiplicity of realities continually constructed in a dialectical dance of thesis, antithesis, synthesis/thesis, antithesis, synthesis/thesis, antithesis, synthesis/thesis . . . and so on and so forth, ad infinitum--an affirmation and re-affirmation of the Heraclitan presupposition whose anima is further enhanced by the critical spirit of the sensitive and the sensible, by the challenge of defiance, that if turned against this very presupposition itself will only justify endless celebrations to edify the Appolonian and the Dionysian demands of Nietzschean assertiveness.

Let the academic disengage from and transcend the mechanicalities of classroom routines when printed “authorities” and the “authoritative” claims of PhDs, EdDs, DScs, et al, are held high to the point of absolutization and blind deification. The academic as a co-creator of knowledge with fellow academics is a defiant spirit who dares to question and even demolish the “infallible decrees” of hypothesisists/theorists who aim to erect flawed monuments out of their dogmatism and arrogant pontifications.

Let the academics share among themselves in the commitment to create knowledge that upsets the intellectual arena so that the dynamic of unhindered/unlimited/unshackled scholarship where studies in the form of theorizing and pragmatization of ideas eternally flow, are accepted and negated, demolished and resurrected in a totally new form and substance regardless of the chaotic interaction, intermingling and interpenetration of non-integrating notions and non-accommodating voices, conflicting passions and non-cooperating convictions.

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ON THE DIALECTICS OF TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH

Introduction

Spontaneous theorizing should be one outstanding capability of academics to fit into the mold of transformative researchers. Academics in this category should therefore be impulsive writers imbued with a serious commitment to the ideal of perennially upgrading the standard of their profession. Transformative research should be considered a vital component of academic life. The whole process of transformative research in the academe is the actual application of the dialectics of research.

Research as a Dialectical Process

Research follows a dialectical path to make it meaningful and significant in terms of realism, responsiveness, practicability and effectiveness. Dialectics makes a research study/project transformative. Unless research connects with the principle of dialectics, it will just be a superficial theorizing abstracted from the commitment to make things better. Transformative research therefore starts off with what is actually happening—with an actual state of affairs. Using the components of the Hegelian dialectical process, the actual state of affairs is the thesis characterized by certain material forces making such state of affairs the only acceptable type of thesis. Actual happening, actual state of affairs, actual practice performed by real people in such state of affairs, whatever you want to call it, is the material starting point in an honest-to-goodness research study.

An actual state of affairs becomes the starting point of a research study if and only if it is, or it is the location of, a problematic situation that affects a larger context where such state of affairs is part and parcel of. In this connection, the motivation of a research study is generated from a problematization focused on an actual event rather than on the research study itself. In other words, a research study is aimed at resolving a problem, improving a system, developing a better

mindset or having a better understanding of things; not simply a satisfying of a course requirement per se or an institutional requirement just to promote the researcher to a higher position in the hierarchical structure of the institution or to project the image that the institution—which is not really a specialized research institution—is a progressive one, the fact that it has engaged itself in varied and multiple research projects of superficial and trivial impact. A general research climate geared to expanding the frontiers of knowledge and technology

has the defining character of spontaneity and perceptiveness due to a profound concern toward relevant issues or problems of real life. And the persuading influence that draws a researcher to do an investigation or a study of something of significance comes from a sense of immediacy generated in the constancy of a dialectical interaction between the prospective researcher and the issue or problem at hand. Research activity is not an enforced undertaking or an obligatory enterprise artificially created as a superficial form to showcase the message—how contentless and fruitless it may be—that research activity is going on. This type of “research” activity is the prime culprit why so many researches have ended up in uncharted bookshelves engulfed by cobwebs and dust. (Pepa)

The Dialectics of Research as Praxis

The dialectics of research is a praxis (Freire) wherein the researcher involves her/himself and participates in the continuous process of reflection on and action in a state of affairs. The state of affairs which is an amalgam of varied experiences is the thesis and the reflection or theorizing done on such state of affairs becomes the antithesis. The recorded outcome produced out of reflection/theorizing—the theoretical outcome—is afterwards brought back to the realm of actual experience—the state of affairs—for two reasons: 1) to test the correctness of the theoretical outcome, and 2) to make the theoretical outcome useful to its intended purposes.

Honest-to-goodness research is inherently regulated by a dialectics that starts off from significant experience and practice, which is thence reflected upon on the theoretical plane that complements programmed investigation and controlled experimentation along the way. The result of such a research completes the dialectics if brought back to experience and practice, which is precisely its objective. For how can the research actually address the problem(s) it purportedly aims to solve, and how can we test the effectiveness of the solution it offers, if such a research is not brought back to experience and practice? (Pepa)

The transformation effected by its application constitutes the synthesis which completes the dialectical process on this level of specific consideration. The process does not however stop here for in the synthesis is created a new thesis. A fresh level of specific consideration is hence thereby created to start a new round of dialectics.

According to the late Brazilian philosopher of education **Paulo Freire**, this dialectics affirms the significance of human existence:

. . . [M]an is the only one to treat not only his actions but his very self as the object of his reflection; this capacity distinguishes him from the animals, which are unable to separate themselves from their activity and thus are unable to reflect upon it. In this apparently superficial distinction lie the boundaries which delimit the action of each in his life space. Because the animals' activity is an extension of themselves, the results of that activity are also inseparable from themselves; animals can neither set objectives nor infuse their transformation of nature with any significance beyond itself. Moreover, the "decision" to perform this activity belongs not to them but to their species.

In contrast the people — aware of their activity and the world in which they are situated, acting in function of the objectives which they propose, having the seat of their decisions located in themselves and in their relations with the world and with others, infusing the world with their creative presence by means of the transformation they effect upon it — unlike animals, not only live but exist; and their existence is historical. Animals live out their lives on an atemporal, flat, uniform “prop”; humans exist in a world which they are constantly re-creating and transforming. For animals, “here” is only a habitat with which they enter into contact; for people, “here” signifies not merely a physical space, but also an historical space.

Research as a Transformative Endeavor

Research becomes a transformative endeavor through the dialectical process. A research study that is not aimed to transform is an exercise in futility. The task of research to inform is a given. But it cannot really effect transformation unless the person involved in a research study is her/himself likewise transformed in the very act of doing the research and by the effect of its outcome. The involvement factor is very significant in this consideration. It leads to a realization

of wisdom that is imbedded deep in the very humanity of the researcher. And s/he can only access that depth if s/he is convinced that what s/he has been doing is of utmost importance to the point of being crucial. Once this level of awareness has been achieved, the usefulness and relevance of the research outcome can at this point outflow to effect transformation in a wider dimension. This whole event which likewise constitutes a dialectics has been explored by a fellow transformative philosopher **Yasuhiko Kimura**. According to him, three “formations” have to be considered in this transformation model which he calls Triformal Learning Matrix.

In the last several years, I have been teaching a particular model of transformation, which I call the Triformal Learning Matrix. Tri means, of course, three, and so the formational element comprises three formations: information, metaformation, and transformation.

Informational learning is what we normally go through in our educational system and in our own lives. We read books, we listen to people, and we gain knowledge and experience. We develop a more and more comprehensive body of knowledge based on some principle of organization. Metaformation is sometimes called inspiration or intuition; it is a higher form of knowledge that sort of knocks on your door and you become aware of something that is eternal. So when this higher intuition, or metaformation, gets integrated into your own informational learning, you then start to reconfigure the whole context within which you have held the body of knowledge that you already have. And at the same time, you are able to incorporate the higher metaformational knowledge into your own body of knowledge. In this dance between information and metaformation, a transformation takes place. Metaformation is returning to the source of your being, the ground of your being from which you intuit a new form of insight. Then, when that insight is successfully married with the body of knowledge that you already have, transformation takes place. That is my way of understanding transformation.

Conclusion

In conclusion let me propose a method of transformative research which consists of a multi-procedural cycle of progression toward transcendence and renewal. The cycle is constituted by the tasks of 1) translation: the propositionalization of a phenomenon/event; 2) hermeneutics/interpretation: the abstracting intellectualization of the propositionalized phenomenon/event; 3) analysis: an investigation into the salient components or mechanics of the interpreted phenomenon/event; 4) pragmatization: the verification of how the analyzed and

synthesized mechanics of the phenomenon/event are operationalized in human experience; and 5) evaluation: a propositional assessment of the transformative worth of the phenomenon/event, wherein the transformation could effect a new paradigm of existence.

Transformative research is an act of critically “gliding” along the empirico-rational milieu of the cultural apparatus with an aim to effect transformation of being and strength of character in the stability of a well-defined state of affairs through cognitive enlightenment and intellectual empowerment with the instrumentality of transformative research’s multi-procedural cycle of progression toward transcendence and renewal. Transformative research is a reflective act/ active reflection that looks deeply into the ordered chaos/chaotic order of human flexibility/flexible humanity equipped with all the capability of embracing the persistence of the recurrence of eternity/eternal recurrence in space-time/time-space continuum.

Transformative research as a process of knowledge acquisition shows the five distinct steps involved in the entire process of human knowing. The human being who experiences a state of affairs translates—propositionalizes—and interprets her/his experience of such reality. Propositionalization and interpretation constitute an explanation and hence an understanding of a state of affairs. Henceforth, s/he can then move on to the stages of analysis for the purpose of critiquing such understanding of the world. Then s/he moves on to pragmatization—action—based on the emergent understanding. Pragmatization will afterwards trigger further critiques—evaluation—regarding the merit of the pragmatization. These five steps are done to strengthen our knowledge of a state of affairs.

Human beings under normal circumstances have the natural inclination to aim for clarity. They only rest their case about a state of affairs when they are convinced that an answer has already been arrived at. Their deliberate perception provides them with the reasonable medium that distinguishes knowledge from ignorance. This condition is precisely the reason an interpretation of a state of affairs requires the application of analysis.

Experience provides us with information by way of translation/propositionalization and interpretation. Analysis then attempts to formulate a theory to capture a comprehensible

agreement among the propositionalized and interpreted pieces of information. The application of analysis and synthesis intensifies pragmatization to gain further knowledge. Evaluation tries to determine the worth of the structure of the pragmatized event.

A state of affairs which is the subject of a transformative research study becomes better known by way of this multi-procedural cycle of progression toward transcendence and renewal.

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WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE HUMANITIES?

In this consideration, it is more fitting to start off with a historical rehearsal of the Renaissance—that single distinctive moment in human history that recaptured the greatness of the human spirit; a reaffirmation of human nobility; a reassertion of human power to create her/his destiny; a vehement specter of defiance to the religious arrogance of the Medieval Period, a.k.a. the Dark Ages; the threshold that gave way to a new age, the Modern Era.

The Modern Era as we all know has vigorously presented itself in human history by way of the following successive milestones: the Scientific Revolution which was a reclamation of the grandeur of the sciences from the dogmatic excesses of the Middle Ages; the Age of Enlightenment which was a celebration of the immense creativity of the human spirit by way of the Humanities, i.e., the Arts, History, and Literature; and the Industrial Revolution geared to serve the interests and purposes of humanity by pragmatizing the achievements and wonders of science in the instruments of modern technology.

But in the course of time the same achievements generated a whole new way of looking at life which to the detriment of humanity has even recruited the human being to serve the edifice put up and institutionalized by science and technology. A total reversal of the original blue print of Renaissance Humanism: Science and technology serving the interests and purposes of humanity.

Now, it's the other way around. The whole situation saw the emergence of positivistic philosophy that has placed philosophy beneath the wings of science as well as the rise of physicalistic science that has reduced all sciences to the mold of physics. In other words, physics had dominated the sciences. So that if a discipline claimed to be a science, it should be able to translate its propositions, claims and theories in the language of physics. Failure to do so made that discipline a pseudo-science.

But this is not the end of the story. The spirit of philosophical resistance has continued to move onwards. And now, we are in the post-modern era. Modern science and technology has suffocated the very human in us. The defiance has been issued and articulated.

We are now poised to reclaim the spirit of the Renaissance—the spirit of human greatness and the Humanities are strategically on the spot.

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