

TALISIK

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TALISIK - An Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy is the official publication of the undergraduate philosophy students of the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the University of Santo Tomas. It aims to develop critical and academic writing skills of the students and to serve as a training ground for writing philosophical papers. Published annually, it features articles from the members of the Concilium Philosophiae and also accepts contributions from the members of the Department of Philosophy and other philosophical organizations.

Abstracts composed of 200 to 300 words with format set in Times New Roman, size 12, left-aligned, and with one-inch margin on all sides must be sent to talisik.conciliumphilosophiae@yahoo.com

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Creating a publication, a philosophical journal for that matter, is a difficult task. It even becomes more daunting especially if one has to begin from scratch. Six months ago, Kristine Angela C. Surla entrusted that task on me. Despite working for school newspapers for six years, it was very overwhelming for someone trained in journalistic publication to shift to a philosophical journal. I thought I was ready for the task. But when Dr. Paolo A. Bolaños said that writing for a philosophical publication is not like writing for a school newspaper, I realized that I am unequipped for the job. But I have one thing in me: the will to learn.

Honestly, I had doubts if I could fulfil what was expected. I thought that what Kristine asked was nothing serious and she would soon forget that she offered me to become the head of the journal. I thought that if I would let the days pass, people would fail to remember that there is an undergraduate journal of philosophy in the making. But I was wrong. Kristine was so keen about it, she never forgot that she wanted me to do the job, and people were enthusiastic that we would publish. I then resolved in myself, as the editor-in-chief, that the success or failure of this publication lies in my hands.

From coming up with a journal name, the rigor of gathering and editing of papers (include to it the troubles brought by late submissions), to being clueless about creating the Internet site, the thought of giving up came upon me. If it was not for Dr. Alfredo P. Co's words, I would have abandoned the fight. "Come equal to task before your eyes," he would always say. That no matter how big or small a task is, one should never underestimate its difficulty but should always see that he is fit for accomplishing it. Besides, surrendering would only mean that I allowed my doubts and fears to beat me and that I let down those who believed that I can make the publication happen.

But the success of TALISIK did not come from me alone. It is a product of persons who willingly worked together to create the journal. To Bea, Jubs, Joshua, JP, Andrea, Sherlyn, and Raphaella, thank you for sharing your time and talents to TALISIK. This would not have been possible without you. And as I leave the portals of the University, may you be able to continue what we have started.

TALISIK is a Tagalog word. It is a contraction of "*talas* [keenness]" and "*saliksik* [search]". TALISIK then means "*katalasan ng isip na umunawa ng anuman* [keenness of the mind to understand anything]" and "*malaliman at matalinong pagdalumat sa kabulugan ng anuman* [in-depth and intelligent search for the meaning of anything]". With this, I would like to thank those who heeded the call for philosophical papers, the call to keenly search for the meaning of things, for without them, TALISIK would only be a name without sense.

To our advisers, Dr. Fleurdeliz R. Altez – Albela, Dr. Robert A. Montaña, Dr. Jove Jim S. Aguas, and Dr. Paolo A. Bolaños, thank you for accepting to become our advisers and for sharing your expertise in philosophy. We owe our knowledge to you. I would also like to thank Mr. Roland Theuas Pada for giving us an Internet domain for TALISIK. TALISIK would have remained unpublished if not for you.

Thank you also to Dr. Alfredo P. Co. Although he is not one of the advisers of TALISIK, he made sure that the publication is on the right track. Like always, he was able to bring out the best from his students.

To the current administration of the Concilium Philosophiae, thank you for initiating the planning for a journal. There would be no journal to begin with if you did not include it in your projects. The whole staff of TALISIK only helped you in carrying it out. I personally would like to thank Jamila Estelle Alfonso for helping us make TALISIK aesthetically acceptable and the head of Concilium Philosophiae, Kristine Angela C. Surla, for her utmost support and openness to lend a hand. Despite the difficulties the staff faced, we managed to get through it because of your undying motivation and optimism.

Congratulations to the Concilium Philosophiae, to the staff and advisers of TALISIK, to those who submitted their papers, and to everyone who willingly offered help for the success of the journal. To the succeeding staff of TALISIK, may you be able to continue this legacy and with high hopes, to surpass what has been made and improve what is lacking. And no matter how tough the going becomes, do not give up and always remember the words of the Venerable Master, “Come equal to the task before your eyes.”

This is the first issue of TALISIK and hopefully, not the last.

Zhea Katrina R. Estrada
Editor-in-Chief, TALISIK
March 2014

FOREWORD

The Concilium Philosophiae commits itself in promoting critical and analytical thinking of undergraduate Philosophy students as well as providing an avenue for their participation. Aside from seminars and symposia, this year, the Concilium envisioned the revival of Logos (former publication) to encourage the students into writing philosophical papers. But since Logos has been inactive for years and it would be taking much time in tracing its history, Dr. Paolo A. Bolanos suggested to establish a new journal. Hence, the birth of Talisik.

Not later than the end of first semester, we already have the editorial board and the blueprint for the journal. After months of deliberation, here is the fruit of Concilium's humble attempt to revive our publication. Of course, this would not be possible without the guidance of our adviser, Dr. Paolo A. Bolanos; the initiative of the Committee Head on Academic Development, Beatrice Anne D.C. de Guzman and; last but definitely not the least, the patience and persistence of the Editor-in-Chief and a good friend of mine, Zhea Katrina R. Estrada.

With that, I send my warmest congratulations to the editorial board of Talisik for the hard work in establishing an online journal for the Concilium Philosophiae.

Kristine Angela C. Surla
Councilor for Academic Affairs, Concilium Philosophiae
March 2014

About the Contributors

Ranier Carlo V. Abengaña obtained his degree after he was able to defend his undergraduate thesis, “The Unarticulated Cry for Recognition: A Hegelian Rereading of Reynaldo Iletto’s *History from Below*,” which garnered the highest merit. As a student of philosophy, he has been very privileged to sit in the lectures of the pioneers of philosophy in the country, as well as the great minds of the university and internationally-renowned scholars such as: Prof. Dr. Alfredo P. Co, Dr. Leovino Ma. Garcia, and Dr. Paolo A. Bolaños, among others. He also had the privilege of sitting in the seminars and talks delivered by Prof. Dr. Manuel B. Dy, Jr., and Br. Dr. Romualdo E. Abulad, SVD. At the last year of his stay as an undergraduate, he is very much honored and privileged to have engaged with the aforementioned great minds, in lectures, classes, and talks. Thus, in the hopes of being able to meet and discuss philosophy with them again, he plans to pursue his graduate studies in the same university.

Sheena Borja or Sheena Borj as her friends and family call her, is from Dolores, Quezon. Currently, Sheena is already at the end of the senior year of her undergraduate degree in Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas. She is planning to pursue law but she leaves the doors open for attaining masters and hopefully, doctorate degrees in philosophy.

Paul Anthony R. De Leon obtained his bachelor’s degree in Philosophy from the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, the Catholic University of the Philippines and graduated *Magna cum Laude*. In his four-year stay in the Faculty of Arts and Letters, he was a consistent outstanding student for every academic year, making his way to the Dean’s list. He also qualified as a Santo Tomas scholar (Valedictorian) when he entered the University in 2010. He was also a member of student organizations for philosophy and for scholars, local and university-wide, namely the Concilium Philosophiae and the Becarios de Santo Tomas (BeST), respectively. As he obtains his degree in philosophy on 2014, he hopes to pursue postgraduate studies in the field of social sciences, specifically in history. He also hopes to succeed in the teaching profession in the secondary level and later on in the tertiary level.

Ronald Hennessy C. Esguerra has contributed for his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy degree a thesis entitled *Religious Language as a Method of Introspection in The Confessions of St. Augustine*. In that thesis, he worked on the critical analysis of the philosophical theology of St. Augustine as means for introspection which focuses on his work *The Confessions*. Under his college degree program, he has attended a number of seminars which focused on topics involving the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and also on Special Questions in Philosophy particularly on Ethics. His fields of interests are on Christian Philosophy and Theology, Classical Literature, Art and Literary Criticism and Theory, World History, and Ancient Archeology.

Joshua Mariz B. Felicilda is currently in his third year as a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy student in the Faculty of Arts and Letters. He finished high school being the top student in his class from Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary in 2011. He is a consistent Dean’s lister since his first year.

This paper entitled “The Emergence of Taglish as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon in the light of Foucault’s Archaeology of Knowledge” was presented *Kapiban II Praxis: From Theory to Practice* last January 25, 2014. He also served as a reactor in the Philosophical Circle of the Philippines Panel Discussion on “Aesthetics, Oppression and Justice” which was held in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines last February 28, 2014.

Lyka Marie B. Gumanay applied for the philosophy program hoping to become a lawyer but it soon changed as she found that her passion is teaching. She was privileged to learn from great minds like Dr. Leovino Garcia, Dr. Alfredo Co, and Dr. Michael Anthony Vasco. When she was younger, she lived in a rough neighbourhood and their family was not that well-off. This made her begin to question why God was not more generous in giving her family blessings of wealth and health. When she failed some subjects she had during her secondary, she started to question why these things happened to her.

Jessie Joshua Z. Lino is a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy student at the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines. His research interests is consisted of topics concerning Comparative Philosophy (East-West), Experimental Philosophy, Critical Theory, Cynicism, and the works of philosophers such as Plato, Arthur Schopenhauer, Max Horkheimer, Jürgen Habermas, and Slavoj Žižek. His undergraduate thesis is entitled *Possibility of Good Life: A Revisionist View of Schopenhauer’s Pessimism*.

Edward John C. Ponce, Jr. is currently in his second year of studying for his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy degree. He is the incoming Vice President for Internal Affairs of the Thomasian Debaters Council. One of his hobbies is playing chess and one of his greatest aspirations in life is to be a successful human rights lawyer.

Slavoj Žižek and the *Return to Hegel*: Return, Repeat, and Overcome

Ranier Carlo V. Abengaña

Abstract: Slavoj Žižek claims that when a true historical break occurs, there is an impossibility of return. What I hope to do in this paper is to provide an explication of Žižek's idea of a *Return to Hegel*. In the general sense, a return may only be possible when there is a successful act of departure. However, this act of departure may simply be an illusion—as in the case of Hegel, whose contemporaries (and rivals) Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Marx have proclaimed their post-Hegelian anti-philosophical break. When there is a false break, then the possibility of return is once again opened. I shall try to elucidate the idea in the following steps: 1) to give a generally accepted account of Hegel today; 2) to introduce Slavoj Žižek; 3) to dwell on the topic of return; and 4) to answer the question, “Is it still possible to be a Hegelian today?” I claim that Žižek's version of a *Return to Hegel* is manifested in three steps: return, repeat, and overcome. The act of return leads us back to examine closely the historical transition wherein we may find the theoretical fault somewhere along the line (leading us to dismiss Hegel as the “absolute idealist” who claimed to have possessed “absolute knowledge”). The act of repeating gives us a fresh take on the text of Hegel. Hence, Žižek's unorthodox reading of Hegel. The act of overcoming, as Žižek fondly describes, is “to become more Hegelian than the master himself.” This means that there is a need to read Hegel through contemporary lenses and context for him to fit in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Hegel, Re-evaluation, Return and Žižek

Introduction: A basic conception of the generally accepted account of Hegel today

“I don't much like hearing that we have *gone beyond* Hegel, the way one hears we have *gone beyond* Descartes. We go beyond everything and always end up in the same place.”¹

Suppose that we metaphorically describe the historical epoch of modern philosophy, as if it were a mountain of some sort. We find four significant parts: the

base, the upward slope, the apex, and the downward slope. Following this line of thought, we can plot three of the most important figures of modernity (including Enlightenment) to represent the aforementioned parts or the features of the mountain. We have René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Firstly, we can consider Descartes as the foot of the mountain—the base—the foundation and the seemingly unquestioned presupposition (as Gadamer and MacIntyre criticizes²) that the Enlightenment

rested upon. Following Descartes, the next significant figure is Kant, whom we can consider as the upward slope of the mountain, given the Kantian Revolution and his immense contribution to the history of thought. The last of our personages, and surely not the least, deserves (and you may disagree), two spots in the hypothetical ‘mountain of modernity.’ Indeed, at one point, Hegel was considered the apex—the peak of modernity. But it was also in him that modernity declined. The period of modernity reached its highest point and sooner, its downfall, with the philosophy of Hegel.

After the decline, what follows is an era entirely dedicated as a movement against Hegel (to put it quite ironically, a negation of a thesis). Michel Foucault was correct in saying that the age following the decline of modernity is an age wherein “whether through logic or epistemology, whether through Marx or through Nietzsche, has attempted to flee Hegel.”³ The only haunting thing, however, is that we are not entirely sure if Hegel’s contemporaries were indeed able to develop a philosophy of their own, outside of Hegel’s shadow. When we think of it, it is common in philosophy and the history of thought that a contemporary thinker reacts upon his predecessor. This reaction may be for or against him. However, what is most intriguing in the phenomenon is the reason why Hegel’s contemporaries exerted much effort just to distance themselves away from him. Although, of course, there are those who claim and profess their indebtedness to Hegel, a rather large number of the thinkers of the postmodern era did try to renounce him, as if Hegel’s period was likened to the *dark ages* of the medieval era.

Now, let us not be mistaken. Postmodernity is largely a reaction against Hegel, and although a large part of the critique is directed towards

Hegel, postmodernists claim that they are offering a critique against Enlightenment in general. The condition of postmodernism, according to Jean-François Lyotard, as written in *La condition postmoderne* (1979) is characterized by “incredulity towards metanarratives.”⁴ In other words, it gives us an idea that the era is against grand narratives, totalization, or the abstract universalism that was offered to us by the Enlightenment rationalism. This is very characteristic of Hegel’s philosophy. It is a grand philosophic system that was construed by someone who seemed to have claimed, by the very existence of the system, that he understood everything. Hence, it gives us an idea (an idiotic one, as Žižek often remarked in his lectures) of Hegel as that “German bureaucrat who thought he knew everything.” Two general characteristics of Hegel’s philosophy thus emerge from these critiques: the first is that Hegel’s philosophy is obscure *par excellence* and the second is that his project of a grand system was ambitious, more so (or if not), a misplaced arrogance.

The first of the two aforementioned characteristics were very general in secondary literatures concerning Hegel. It was always at the introduction of every, if not, most secondary books aiming to provide a user-friendly companion reader or guide to Hegel’s philosophy. The second characteristic may be rooted back to his early rivals, one notable of which, is Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer provided the most invective and vehement of all the criticisms ever thrown against Hegel. For some time in the past, esteemed historians of philosophy would customarily give to the immediate contemporaries of Kant (such as Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel), as “much honor and space” as to all of Kant’s predecessors from the pioneers of Continental Rationalism, Empiricism, and Romanticism.⁵ It is quite

different with the case of Schopenhauer, who did not just disagree with Hegel, but with whom he also shared a self-induced professional and academic rivalry. For Schopenhauer, it is important to take note that any philosopher worth his salt must place emphasis on good and clear style of writing. For him, obscurantism immediately destroys the integrity of any philosopher. Schopenhauer criticized Kant for this, but nevertheless, he says that “the public was compelled to see that what is obscure is not always without significance.”⁶ However, such reassuring tone changed as soon as he talked about Hegel. In the continuation of the quote, it says: “. . . consequently, what was without significance took refuge behind obscure language.”⁷ Schopenhauer dedicates the latter quote to Fichte and Schelling, but with great effort, as he spoke of Hegel, he continues:

But the height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had previously only been heard in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most barefaced general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity and remain henceforth as a monument to German stupidity.⁸

Schopenhauer hated Hegel beyond his criticism.⁹ Through such comments of Schopenhauer, perhaps, in one way or another, it had helped in the formulation of the idea of how we regard Hegel today, especially for those uninitiated readers of Hegel. Although presumably, that in part, Schopenhauer’s magnum opus serves as a precursor to Nietzsche and other contemporaries, a large part of that work still remains to display a huge hate and displeasure directed towards Hegel. If one continues to browse more through the pages of Schopenhauer’s other works, we may find various descriptions directed to Hegel such

as: “[A] commonplace, inane, loathsome, repulsive and ignorant charlatan, who with unparalleled effrontery compiled a system of crazy nonsense that was trumpeted abroad as immortal wisdom by his mercenary followers. . .”¹⁰ Furthermore, he regards Hegel as “[T]hat clumsy and nauseating charlatan, that pernicious person, who completely disorganized and ruined the minds of a whole generation. . .”¹¹

While we may find more hate than criticism of content, in actuality and truth be told, there is indeed an undeniable level of obscurity in Hegel’s works, something that not even Heidegger (even if he tried to) could match. Thus the point is to dig deeper, and laboriously engage with the text. This is not to say that those who read Hegel in the past did not try to unearth meanings from the “constant mazes of words.” But perhaps, Schopenhauer’s words played a large part in the reader’s appetite, so to speak, in reading Hegel. Of course, beyond all these, we have to draw the line between profoundness and charlatanism. In other words, we have to determine to which extent may we categorize Hegel’s philosophic system as either *grand*, or simply, *grandiose*.

Howard Kainz, a Hegelian scholar and a founding member of the Hegel Society of America, tells us that to choose whether Hegel’s system is grand or merely grandiose is not an easy task. Further, he writes:

Hegel offers so much that is valuable and immensely insightful that even his enemies and critics—Kierkegaard, Marx, Sartre, and others—have ended up borrowing from him. But anyone who studies Hegel also comes across hairsplitting sophistries, non sequiturs, bad science, chauvinism, and prejudices.¹²

Kainz tells us that to choose on the grandness or grandiosity based from these factors alone would be making a poor decision. He argues

that for us to find out whether it is grand or grandiose, a thorough examination of Hegel's system is necessary. For Kainz, he presumes that the result would lead us to an idea of "something like a middle ground between 'grand' and 'grandiose.'"¹³

This is perhaps the reason why contemporary philosophers are urging for a project which was generally known to them as *The Return to Hegel*. From a lecture given by Slavoj Žižek to the now defunct Philosophy Department of Middlesex University in London (as a part of Saving the Middlesex Philosophy Department program), which was prior to the publication of his magnum opus (as he claims the work to be) in 2012, *Less than Nothing*, Žižek says that we have to read, or reread, in this case, Hegel in detail. He warns that you do not take one quote that you think isolates the basic structures and principle of an idea. You do not proceed then to take one passage from, say, negativity, substance, subject, and then with ultra-deep reading of those passages you claim to have understood Hegel. Žižek strongly tells us that in reading Hegel, we have to go step by step—engaging ourselves through all argumentations.¹⁴ This provides a justification for the calling of a project of return. Maybe we have not really understood Hegel, or maybe our understanding of Hegel is greatly distorted by prejudices against him. However, whether it is to establish him as the precursor for postmodernity, or to re-enthroned him as a towering figure of modernity and enlightenment, or even to give justice to his works, there are surely more reasons than one when it comes to the project of a *Return to Hegel*. In the succeeding sections of this paper, let us now try to explore the idea behind this project, and what Žižek precisely means when he calls for a *return*.

To the point of no-return: Going back (?) to Hegel

To say that we are returning implies a successful action of leaving. In placing the idea within the context of the topic, we now ought to ask: *if we are returning to Hegel, does this mean that we have successfully left him, in the first place?* Well, if to say that there is a 'successful departure from Hegel' means that his contemporaries have successfully moved out of his shadow, then this paper begs to differ. If this project of return proves to be successful, to which we shall "proudly" rejoice, "Hegel is back!" we can only do so—to proclaim that Hegel is indeed back, but only because he never truly left. When we try to examine the works of Hegel's contemporaries, the general theme of their project was to distance themselves away from Hegel. This may also be recognized as the project of western philosophy for the past two centuries. However, they could never deny the imprint of the work of their philosophical forebear on their respective works. Stephen Houlgate, a celebrated Hegelian scholar tells us that:

[Hegel's] thought has left its mark on the existentialism of Kierkegaard and the historical materialism of Marx and Engels, as well as on British Idealism, American pragmatism, Frankfurt School social philosophy, Heidegger's 'history of Being,' Gadamerian Hermeneutics and Derridean deconstruction. . . . Even such notorious critics of Hegel as Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell acknowledge a debt to their German Idealist forebear—Nietzsche praising 'the astonishing stroke of *Hegel*, who . . . dared to teach that species concepts develop *out of each other*,' and Russell declaring his own early *Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* to be the work of a 'full-fledged Hegelian.'¹⁵

Now, with all these project of moving away and distancing ourselves from Hegel, it seems that Foucault's rather ominous warning creeps up our shoulders. He says:

[Truly] to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to

detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies a knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.¹⁶

If such is the case, then our point of return is actually towards a *point of no return*.¹⁷ It seems at this point that Hegel already anticipated that his system will be criticized, and albeit facing the toughness of each criticism, his contemporaries nevertheless flatter him by borrowing and using ideas that we consider *Hegelian*. We are now haunted by another question: *what if this very escape is a necessity for the fulfillment of Hegelian Philosophy? That in doing so, the dialectic moves on.* This phenomena reminds us of certain Hegelian principles. If we consider Hegel as the *thesis*, would it not then be, that the postmodern age is the *antithesis*?¹⁸ More so, in terms of this move against Hegel, do they really negate Hegel? If we examine the occurrence more closely, we find that Hegel is not necessarily negated or cancelled, but rather *sublated*. Hegel uses the term *Aufhebung* to denote an act of sublation or subsumption. Sublation generally means to *deny* or *negate*, however, in the Hegelian sense of the term, it also means *preservation*. If we look at the phenomena as a dialectical process, Hegel as the thesis is sublated—he was overcome, but what is in his philosophy was not lost, but preserved into a higher level. This concept of *aufhebung* may very well justify why Hegel's contemporaries, despite their negative attitude towards him, still owe a great debt to him.

Nevertheless, let us try to follow Žižek in his journey towards the *Return to Hegel*. If we are to go back and try to study Hegel without the bias of his contemporaries, this entails a new reading

of Hegel—a new and unfamiliar reading that Slavoj Žižek offers.

Slavoj Žižek: The Academic Rockstar

At the onset of this section, it is important to take note that the project of *Return to Hegel* was not a new or exclusive project of Žižek. In fact, a very similar project has been done by the first generation of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. The Frankfurt School, or more formally, the Institute for Social Research (*Institut für Sozialforschung*), was primarily preoccupied with returning to Kant's critical philosophy and its contemporary, Hegel's philosophy. Max Horkheimer led the other theorists at that time when he was the Director in the 1930s. Other notable thinkers are Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, to mention some. Setting this aside, we shall now bring into focus, a contemporary philosopher and social theorist, Slavoj Žižek.

Firstly, Žižek has been mentioned for a number of times in the earlier parts of the paper. There is already perhaps, a question situated in the reader's mind: Who is Slavoj Žižek?

Slavoj Žižek is not a name unheard of in the philosophical arena today. Perhaps it is safe to say that he is past the point wherein people consider him a "rising star" in the field and discipline of philosophy. He is already an established figure and one of the most notable and respected minds of today. He is a leading figure in contemporary thought, with over fifty books (as he writes at a rate of one book per year according to some of his commentators) and more than a hundred lectures in Asia, Europe, and the United States. Despite such fame, it is still necessary to map out a brief biographical content for the purposes of thoroughly introducing him. We shall find later on that much of Žižek's life and experience has

a great amount of impact in the formulation of his philosophic theories.

A good primer, perhaps, may be read in *Introducing Slavoj Žižek: A Graphic Guide* (2011). The book offers a biographical note on Žižek, intertwined with the development of his philosophical ideas. As in the case of some philosophers, Žižek's life experiences have much to do with the development of his thought. Žižek was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia in the year 1949.¹⁹ During that time, the town was still part of the Communist Yugoslavia, until its disintegration in the 1980s. Žižek's engagement with French philosophy and psychoanalysis is brought about by his reaction against the ideals of communist orthodoxy. As an undergraduate in the University of Ljubljana, he studied Lacan, Derrida, and other French philosophers whose writings did not seem to favor communist and socialist ideals. In a way, Žižek was a rebel of some sort. He was supposed to have a teaching spot at the same university, after obtaining his Master's degree, but he was set aside when the administration considered a candidate whose ideals are closer to that of the party.

In the 1970s, Žižek became a part of what was soon to be a gradually rising group, *The Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis* in Ljubljana. As Žižek pointed out, there was a certain popularity and acceptance for Psychoanalysis in Slovenia simply because "there was no established psychoanalytic community to hamper or mitigate their interest in the usually controversial subject."²⁰ By 1980s, the start of Yugoslavia's gradual disintegration, Žižek became active in politics. He ran during the first "free" elections of the Republic of Slovenia as President. Two years after the publication of Žižek's first major work in English, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), Slovenia became

independent from Yugoslavia. It was in the year 1989 that marked the start of Žižek's international fame and academic success.²¹ He currently holds academic posts in Europe and in the United States. He also travels across the world as a visiting professor, and to deliver lectures, which will in turn receive thousands of hits in the popular video sharing website, *Youtube*.

An important note may be taken from Kul-Want's account. With regard to the general characteristic of Žižek's writings, he writes:

Žižek's writings are primarily concerned with politics, but he often explores this issue through a wide range of topical subjects and interests. Just a few of Žižek's many interests about which he has written are: Hollywood films . . . Popular fiction . . . "High" literature . . . "18th- and 19th-century opera . . . [and] Biogenetics, neuroscience, and quantum physics.

Žižek writes on a plethora of ideas. Imagine that from the aforementioned, Žižek incorporates Hegelian, Lacanian, and Marxist theories. This is one of the main reasons why he has already established himself as a well-respected philosopher, psychoanalyst, and cultural critic, with more or less 50 titles at hand, and a lot more still to come. Producing fifty books in a couple of decades was not really the factor that made Žižek popular to the people. His ideas, how radical they may seem, are only a part of how the people come to know him. He has this characteristic that is uncommon in philosophers, to say the least. Indeed, for the past several years, he has been called "the Borat of Philosophy," "the Marx Brother," and "the Elvis of Cultural Theory." At some point, when one gets the chance to view his lectures, one gets a grasp of his constant insertion of jokes (a huge number of which are obscene). It may be disagreeable, but often, jokes in philosophy are very hard to come about, more so, they are

quite hard to formulate. There is a risk that people may not take you so seriously,²² but Žižek has bravely faced that risk perhaps because there is more to his jokes than the desire to make his audience laugh. Humor is a very delicate ingredient in philosophy. It is either make or break, wherein a small mistake in a context of a joke could lead everything to be wrong. This is one trait that makes Žižek very notable among his colleagues. He has the ability to make people laugh, while he also makes them think very deeply and critically. Indeed, as Wittgenstein once said, “A serious and good philosophical work could be written consisting entirely of jokes.”

Seriously speaking (no pun intended), it is important to take note that Žižek’s philosophy is basically drawn from French psychoanalysis and German philosophy. Specifically, from Jacques Lacan (psychoanalysis), G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx (German philosophy). This mixture, so to speak, gives us an interesting and fresh take on the theory of ideology and subjectivity, courtesy of Žižek.²³ This fresh interpretation or rather, formulation, of theories coincides with the condition of contemporary capitalism and the postmodern age. However, at this point let us be warned: although Žižek offers a close reading of French psychoanalysis and German philosophy, we may soon find that his Lacan is not *our* Lacan, and so is his Hegel and Marx. This led Parker to remark that while Žižek uses ideas from Marx, he is not a *Marxist*²⁴(or at least, not the traditional one).

Parker tells us that Žižek, as it would seem, is a “Slovenian Lacanian Hegelian.” Parker suggests that on “how one shuffles those three descriptive terms, and how one places the final one as the theoretical anchor or final destination, is not so easy to determine though. . .” As the issue of those three descriptions is still

debatable today, let us primarily assume first, not a spatiotemporal nor a logical succession, but an interrelation among the three.

Many of Žižek’s writings and lectures calls about for a “*Return to Hegel*.” The phrase is not as easily understood as it may sound. A number of Žižek’s works significantly draws from Hegelian theories and terminology, and he sometimes correlates and applies this with theories and terminologies from Lacanian psychoanalysis to analyze certain phenomena. Nevertheless, it is the aim of this paper to be able to explicate such project of a “*Return to Hegel*.” *What does it mean? And why is there a need to?* Moreover, as an age old Žižek question goes, “is it still possible to be a Hegelian today?” We shall, try, from hereon, to explore on the subject-matter.

The dialectic continues (?): Slavoj Žižek’s idea of a *Return to Hegel*

Alfred North Whitehead once wrote that: “The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.”²⁵ Perhaps, with a little bias (and again, of course, it may be disagreeable), in today’s times, we could say that the general characterization of contemporary philosophy is a tradition that consists largely (not necessarily totally) of a series of footnotes to Hegel. Be it words for or against him, Hegel has undoubtedly influenced his critics and contemporaries more than they will ever admit. Nevertheless, for the past two centuries, the philosophical tradition in the west tried to grow out of Hegel’s wing. This is why they would like to distance themselves from Hegel. Yet despite all that, they seem to have never been able to get out of it. Žižek’s project of the *Return to Hegel* may be influenced by Foucault’s ominous warning, however, they seem to see this “Hegelian remainder” in different ways. For

Žižek, this inescapable remainder of Hegel does not try to haunt us back in the sense that it was always with us in the first place. For Žižek, Hegel and Hegelian philosophy is something that we cannot easily eliminate despite efforts, claims, and pretensions to the contrary.²⁶ Thus, in an article written by Žižek, he warns us to beware of all too easy attempts at overcoming metaphysics. He writes:

There are three (and only three) key philosophers in the history of (Western) metaphysics: Plato, Descartes, [and] Hegel. The proof of their privileged status is their extraordinary position in the series of philosophers: each of the three not only designates a clear break with the past, but also casts his long shadow on the thinkers who follow him - they can all be conceived as a series of negations/oppositions of/to his position.²⁷

Furthermore,

It was already Foucault who noted that the entire history of Western philosophy can be defined as the history of rejections of Platonism: in a homologous way, the entire modern philosophy can be conceived as the history of rejections of Cartesianism, from subtle corrections (Malebranche, [and] Spinoza) to outright dismissals. With Hegel, things are, if anything, even more obvious: what united all that comes after Hegel is the opposition to the specter of Hegel's "panlogicism."²⁸

Hegel's *panlogicism* made him the *bête noire* in philosophy for the past two centuries. Nevertheless, to claim to have gone beyond him and overcome him is not so much as an easy task as one could think of. Cliché as it may sound, but it is easier said than done. One does not overcome Hegel by denouncing him, yet flattering him by using his ideas. They may have, by word, renounce Hegel, but a part of them remained largely Hegelian (they think against Hegel, of which, according to Foucault,

remains Hegelian)—and in so, they have never escaped out of the specter of Hegel.

Although it was remarked that many of Žižek's writings and lecture indeed speak of a *Return to Hegel*, the idea was actually consummated in what he calls his magnum opus, a one thousand-page thick book, entitled, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (2012). Žižek calls this his "masterwork on Hegelian legacy." When one comes to think of it, it is quite ironic to call a thousand-page book "less than nothing." Anyhow, returning to the point, Žižek's close reading on Hegel composes about a third of the book. In the fourth chapter of the book, it explicitly asks, *is it still possible to be a Hegelian today?* At the onset of the section, Žižek writes:

The main feature of historical thought proper is not "mobilism" (the motif of the fluidification or historical relativization of all forms of life), but the full endorsement of a certain impossibility: after a true historical break, one simply cannot return to the past, or go on as if nothing happened—even if one does the same practice will have acquired a radically changed meaning.²⁹

Žižek agreed with Adorno who provided an example of a clear historical break. After Schoenberg's atonal revolution took place, it was and still is, of course, possible to go on composing in the traditional tonal way, but the new tonal music has lost its innocence, since it is already 'mediated' by the atonal break and thus functions as its negation.³⁰ In other words, while it is possible to continue something after a clear historical break, there would be an element of fakeness into it, once we decided to do so.

Going back, it has been remarked that there can only be a possibility of return, when there is a successful act of leaving or departure. However, given the case, the return is no more than an

unreal experience if what was present was a true and clear historical break (remember Adorno's example). Moreover, Žižek tells us that if however, there is a false break, then the idea of a return is once again possible. Žižek implies that there may be a possibility of return, since his stand is that the "official" post-Hegelian anti-philosophical break of Schopenhauer-Kierkegaard-Marx, is no more than a false break.³¹ Žižek further writes:

Although it presents itself as a break with idealism as embodied in its Hegelian climax, it ignores a crucial dimension of Hegel's thought; that is, it ultimately amounts to a desperate attempt to *go on thinking as if Hegel had not happened*. The hole left by this absence of Hegel is then, of course, filled with the ridiculous caricature of Hegel the "absolute idealist" who "possessed Absolute Knowledge." The re-assertion of Hegel's speculative thought is thus not what it may appear to be—a denial of the post-Hegelian break—but rather a bringing-forth of that very dimension whose denial sustains the post-Hegelian break itself.³²

Žižek in a way, tells us that trying to escape from the shadow of Hegel—and when one claims that he has successfully done so—cannot be equated to overcoming Hegel. There is a need for return because something was missed. In other words, something went wrong in this historical transition from traditional metaphysics to post-metaphysical nineteenth and twentieth century anti-philosophy. This gives us a preliminary idea that Žižek's call for a *Return to Hegel* is not simply a dramatic call to revisit and study him again. In *Less than Nothing*, Žižek tries to map out the historical transition and strive to find the theoretical fault somewhere along the line.

Žižek explains that there is a clear historical break before and after Hegel. This places him in a unique position in the history of philosophy. As Žižek tells us:

The ultimate anti-Hegelian argument invokes the very fact of the post-Hegelian break: what even the most fanatical partisan of Hegel cannot deny is that something changed after Hegel, that a new era of thought began which can no longer be accounted for in Hegelian terms of absolute conceptual mediation; this rupture occurs in different guises. . . . Something happened here, for there is a clear break between the before and after, and while one can argue that Hegel already announces this break, that he is the last idealist metaphysician and the first post-metaphysical historicist, one cannot really be a Hegelian after this break, for Hegelianism has lost its innocence forever.³³

Nevertheless, one can argue that we could, at least, in the empirical sense, return. One could pick up *Phenomenology* or *Logic*³⁴, and engage with the text, (pretend to understand), and then proclaim oneself to be a Hegelian. However, Žižek says such act is similar to writing tonal music after Schoenberg: it is there, but there is an element of fakeness in it. In other words, today, we can play as Hegelians all we want, but it will always be fake. So, the question now is, *how will we be more Hegelian than Hegel himself, if we could not even be Hegelians today in the first place?* Žižek says that while it is true that there are Hegelian imprints on contemporary philosophy, particularly Hegel's contemporaries, the historical break nevertheless occurred in different guises. Of this, Žižek writes, we find Schelling's abyss of the *pre-logical Will* (which was later vulgarized by Schopenhauer according to Žižek); Kierkegaard's insistence on the uniqueness of *faith* and *subjectivity*; Marx's assertion of the socioeconomic life process; autonomization of mathematized natural sciences, and Freud's motif of the "death drive."³⁵

The post-Hegelian break may thus be categorized into two: of the first, it appears that what we need is a return to some "pre-logical positivity of being, as true productive force."

This is exhibited in Schelling's Will, Marx's actual life process, and Kierkegaard's belief. But then, we also discover another aspect of the break, which turns out as the second category—the full autonomization of the mathematized natural sciences, up to Freud's motive of death drive, as “a repetition which insists beyond all dialectical mediation.”³⁶ On the one hand, we have the positivity of being, and on the other hand, we have this formalist repetition (pure repetition) as exhibited by Kierkegaard and Freud.

Let us review the historical passage. Prior to Hegel, we have something called traditional metaphysics. After Hegel, the post-Hegelian break, we have the nineteenth and twentieth century anti-philosophy in addition to the post-Hegelian take on the positivity of being. Hegel is situated in between the two—he is between the “before” and the “after.” No longer the before, but not yet the after. Now, granting that Hegel's period was considered by his contemporaries as the dark ages of modernity, something very traumatic, according to Žižek, happens to Hegel. To cover up this in-between, a ridiculous image of Hegel was propagated. In psychoanalysis, Žižek recalls that, Freud calls this *Screen-Memory (Deck-Erinnerung)*. It is a “fantasy formation destined to cover up a traumatic truth.”³⁷ Hence, the scarecrow image of Hegel. Here, we have an idea of Hegel as that “crazy guy” who thought his *interinarium mentis in deum* (not to invoke Bonaventure) was successful, and thus he thought he knew everything, etc. This take has something to do with the moments of historical passage. A dialectician, according to Žižek, basically knows that in the moment of passage, one sees something that in the moment of the old, previous order, they were not able to see. However, what was seen becomes invisible, the moment the new order settles in.

Žižek teaches that there are vaguely two schools of Hegel: 1) the conservative Hegelians; and 2) the radical Hegelians. However, a contemporary wave of Hegelian scholars—the Pittsburgh Hegelians—claimed that their greatest revolution was to subject Hegel to the ambit of liberalism (something that Hegel was known to be against). Žižek's problem is that this Pittsburgh Hegelians “concede to the critics of Hegel too much.” As a result, perhaps in an effort to brush off that scarecrow image of Hegel, they offer a “deflated” image of Hegel. This deflated image now provides as a Hegel “freed of ontological-metaphysical commitments, reduced to a general theory of discourse, of possibilities of argumentation.” Here now comes Žižek's thesis:

Such a “deflated” image of Hegel is not enough; the post-Hegelian break must be approached in more direct terms. True, there is a break, but in it Hegel is the “vanishing mediator” between its “before” and its “after,” between traditional metaphysics and post-metaphysical nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought. That is to say, something happens in Hegel, a breakthrough into a unique dimension of thought, which is obliterated, rendered invisible in its true dimension, by post-metaphysical thought.³⁸

There is a need to repeat Hegel, because for Žižek, we are at the same situation today, as Hegel was in, before. Hegel saw something that was not visible to either the order of the before and the after. Moreover, we have to *Return to Hegel* because something was obliterated in his philosophy—something that was later on replaced by a ridiculous, idiotic caricature of Hegel as an idealist megalomaniac.³⁹ Furthermore, Žižek writes that it is crucial to *Return to Hegel* to dispense all the classic anti-Hegelian topics, notably that of Hegel's narcissism, of the idea of Hegel's totality, etc.⁴⁰ We have to remember that beyond Žižek's education and grounding in German

philosophy, he was also an expert in French psychoanalysis. Thus, we have to situate this idea of a *Return to Hegel*, as something patterned after Jaques Lacan's return to Freud. The goal, nevertheless is quite similar: it is to save the philosopher from his contemporaries. This means that Žižek recognizes a need to save Hegel from the thinkers of the post-Hegelian break, and to re-actualize Hegel's speculative thought which could not be simply covered up by post-Hegelian break "Hegelians."

Žižek explains that the contemporary (mis)interpretation of Hegel played a large role in keeping the scarecrow image alive. There are about, as he lists, more or less ten prejudices about Hegel⁴¹, and due to the limitations of this piece, let us, for the moment, be acquainted with three of them, which Žižek highlights in the same lecture at Middlesex University. *First: Hegel as he who patches the loopholes in the world.* Žižek recalls that in rejecting philosophy, Freud once quoted Heinrich Heine who tried to describe the Hegelian philosopher. As the quotation goes: "With his nightcap and his night-shirt tatters, he botches up the loopholes in the structure of the world." Visualizing the description, one could readily see that this is an allusion to that famous portrait of Hegel. Žižek then raises his critique and inquiry: "But is philosophy at its most fundamental really reducible to a desperate attempt to fill in the gaps and inconsistencies in our notion of reality and thus to provide a harmonious *Weltanschauung*?"⁴² Hegel says that as philosophers, we have to defend our discipline from this misinterpretation. Philosophy is not simply patching up things to the diverse *Weltanschauung*. Beginning from Kantian philosophy, Kant already opens up radical inconsistencies. Žižek tells us that Hegel, does not only patch things up, but he radicalizes it even more! One of Hegel's criticism of Kant

was that he was all too gentle: Kant sees an antinomy, and Kant epistemologizes it, hence the antinomies of reason. For Kant, antinomies means that it cannot really affect our reality. From the standpoint of Kant, the whole purpose, according to Žižek was to open up inconsistencies much more radical than what we our already face with: our everyday pluralist and diverse common sense. Philosophy does not patch up things, but rather, it radicalizes it, exposing it. Kant started this opening up of inconsistencies, and Hegel radicalized it even more. While it is true that one finds in Hegel, a "systematic drive to locate every phenomenon within a harmonious global edifice,"⁴³ Hegel's aim was to present how everything fails in some way.

Second: Hegel as the totalizer. Now, we all know the prejudice regarding Hegel's concept of totality. *Das Wahre ist das Ganze* and so on. The problem here is the critique of his contemporaries who seems to ask, *isn't there something in every totality—some indivisible remainder—something that resists to be totalized* (as Žižek quotes Schelling)? Žižek urges us that there is a need to rehabilitate Hegel's idea of totality. Hegel, insofar as totality is concerned, does not mean an ideal movement or structure that tends to sublimate (*Aufhebung*) everything including all inconsistent elements of reality. Žižek argues that on the contrary, to observe an element or structure in its totality, means that you have to account for all its inconsistencies as part of the original whole. Thus, the consistency must be broken: we have to account for everything, including all diversity, inconsistencies, etc. This appears contingent in Hegel's totality.

Third: Hegel and the List der Vernunft (Cunning of Reason). As a general account, we would take it naturally for Hegel to have some sort of idea of a secret, transcendent force (or reason) which

somehow guarantees that beyond all this conflict, confusion, struggle, etc., at the end, everything will turn out well. Žižek argues that a closer reading of Hegel would lead us to understand that *list der vernunft* is “effectively a name for its very opposite.” Žižek tells us that the meaning is practically the opposite of what we think of, for it means that whenever we desire to impose a project on reality, we have to have the assurance that something, at the very least, will indeed go wrong. Again, this is Hegel showing, rather than totalizing, the inconsistencies of reality. Žižek further claims that if there is such a thing as a Hegelian *a priori*, it is that things always go wrong (negativity) in some way or another, and it does so necessarily. At the end of it all, what you get is simply a theory of how things get to be wrong once in a while

If we are to go back to Hegel, we must follow a new reading of him. In order to coincide with the project, one must first be knowledgeable of the prejudices against Hegel, and from there work the way up to reading Hegel. This is why Žižek’s Hegel is not our Hegel. Truly, he offers a different reading of Hegel, in ways that we could never probably think of.

Synthesis: Three steps to return

I claim at this point that Žižek’s *Return to Hegel* is composed of three, albeit unequal steps: 1) return; 2) repeat; and 3) overcome. To *Return to Hegel*, as lengthily discussed before, means to go back to that void in the historical passage. That is, to locate Hegel in between of the before (traditional metaphysics, and pre-modern philosophy) and the after (postmodern philosophy, nineteenth and twentieth century anti-philosophy). There is a need to *Return to Hegel*, because the very theoretical fault at the historical passage was the obliteration of his speculative thought. We could never deny that

there was a break, although we could argue for its inauthenticity. The return was made possible because there is a sense of falseness in the historical break as declared by the trio: Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Marx. Following this step, Žižek ventures on to repeat Hegel. Basically, the steps of returning and repetition are similar in nature, although each possesses a distinguishing trait from one another. Žižek’s repetition of Hegel is his rereading of Hegel. This repetition is uniquely Žižekian because it draws largely from contemporary philosophy and Hegel’s contemporaries. Lacan and Marx are two of the most significant thinkers in Žižek’s reading of Hegel. Next, to overcome Hegel means to have restored what was obliterated. We cannot be Hegelians now, but from my understanding of Žižek, we cannot only be so because the spatiotemporal factor wherein Hegel was situated is no longer present with us. Moreover, we cannot be Hegelians because only Hegel can be Hegelian in the strictest sense. Hermeneutically speaking, this means that when we read Hegel, something of our own bias will be imprinted in our reading. And so therefore we find that there are Hegelians who are Marxists, existentialists, conservatives, liberals, radicals, etc. From what I understand when Žižek tells that at the post-Hegelian break, Hegelianism lost its innocence, Žižek tells us that we can simply be no longer Hegelian’s in the same sense that Hegel was a Hegelian given all the conditions present.. This does not mean that we can no longer use Hegel in the contemporary debates. In fact, the very reason for returning to Hegel is to reevaluate our understanding of him. For the past two centuries, although Hegelian philosophy remained to be a well-established academic study in philosophy, Žižek nonetheless dismisses it still as blinded by the scarecrow image of Hegel.⁴⁴ Žižek offered us a radical

interpretation of Hegel—a Hegel that can no longer fit in the before and after of Hegel’s time, but a Hegel that was constructed to understand the problems of today. Žižek tells us that “this obliteration [of the Hegelian dimension of thought] leaves an empty space which has to be filled in so that the continuity of the development of philosophy can be re-established.”⁴⁵ The very argument of post-Hegelianism may be generalized into an argument from incredulity. Since Hegel’s philosophy is too incredible (that a project of this large is either ambitiously arrogant or a work of a madman), then therefore, Hegelian philosophy is dismissed as such. Žižek’s point is that you can only try to ignore Hegel, after you have laboriously and wholeheartedly engaged with the text and studies. Considering Hegel’s place in the history of thought, one cannot afford to continue philosophy as if he did not exist. While there may be differences, it again reminds us of Foucault’s warning.

Concluding Remarks

I hope that in the foregoing sections of this paper, I was able to bring about at the very least an introductory idea on Žižek’s project of the *Return to Hegel*. The limitations of this paper would not provide ample space for me to discuss Žižek’s unique Lacanian reading of Hegel, which, as he claimed that “the only way to save Hegel is through Lacan.”⁴⁶ In order for us to have a basic idea of the project of return, I have mapped out the paper into several sections. I have provided an account of how we generally conceive Hegel today, which is then followed by a preliminary analysis on the project of return. Afterwards, I have indicated an introductory note to Žižek, which, in a way, may help us to understand the project somehow better. Following this, I have given an explication on Žižek’s project of return drawn

largely from his book, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (2012). Although, as I have already mentioned, the idea of the project is scattered throughout what we can call Žižek’s philosophy, the grand narrative (ironically) of it is found in *Less than Nothing*. After the exposition on Žižek’s account, I bring about my claim which is that the process of returning is a project composing of three steps, namely: return, repeat, and overcome.

True enough, many would still not favor Žižek’s unorthodox reading of Hegel. Of course, as a pioneering work (when we say pioneering work, we have to take into account the uniqueness of Žižek’s work as compared to other projects of *Return to Hegel*), it rightfully receives both praise and criticism. Nevertheless, I still ought to leave an open thought to the interested reader. Disregarding Žižek’s reading of Hegel, let us consider the following relation: thesis-antithesis-synthesis; and Hegel, post-Hegelianism, contemporary philosophy (Žižek). Do we see a similar pattern? Whether it “conforms” to the pattern, the matter will be solved in the long run. From my own standpoint, what I find significant is that interpretation never stops. As Gadamer teaches us, we have to continuously reinterpret tradition for it to be alive in the present. What one hopes is that the project of the *Return to Hegel* may soon dispel the scarecrow image that lurks in the background of Western philosophy for the past two hundred years. Beyond all this, the dialectic continues (and this is from an orthodox reading of Hegel): something affirmed will soon prove itself to be unsatisfactory, and thus will be denied. However, and more importantly, this negation will also embrace the same fate.

¹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*,

1954-1955 (*Le Séminaire #2*), trans. Sylvana Tomaselli, ed. Jaques-Alain Miller (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 71.

² According to Gadamer, while the Enlightenment's thought claimed that they are free of prejudices, judgments, and presuppositions, it forgot that such a claim has been their unquestioned presupposition. Thus, Gadamer contends that Enlightenment's thought is guilty of a 'prejudice against prejudice.' See: Allyn Fives, *Political Reason: Morality and the Public Sphere* (Harmondsworth, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

³ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 235.

⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, Introduction to *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir)*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (United Kingdom: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiv.

⁵ Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Pocket Books, 2006), 379.

⁶ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea, Vol. II (Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung)*, trans. R.B Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Walter Kaufmann tells us that Schopenhauer's later thunderous verbal attacks on Hegel might as well be considered "sour grapes." He says, "Schopenhauer attempted to teach at the University of Berlin, Hegel's stronghold, and that he was a failure—largely because he deliberately chose to deliver his lectures at times when he knew that Hegel would be lecturing, too. In this self-chosen contest he lost out; and his later diatribe *Über die Universitätphilosophie* (in *Parerga und Paralipomena*) might be considered 'sour grapes.'" See: Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: New Jersey University Press, 1974), 105.

¹⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, Volume I, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 96.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 168.

¹² Howard P. Kainz, Preface to *G.W.F. Hegel: The Philosophical System* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1998), ix.

¹³ *Ibid.* x.

¹⁴ Slavoj Žižek, "Is it Still Possible to be a Hegelian Today?" In *Hegel Now?* (Lecture and workshop, Middlesex University, North London, England, 05 May 2011).

¹⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1998), 1.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, 235.

¹⁷ A *point of no return* is generally defined as a point wherein the action is necessarily irreversible. But given this case, the project of return becomes a point of no return because the action of going back to Hegel seems irreversible—whether we proceed forward as Deleuze would have wanted, or we go back to Hegel himself, the result still is thus *back to Hegel*. The point may be quite vague as of this state, however, what is being argued here is that we are led back to Hegel no matter how we try to escape from him (which is quite similar with Foucault's view regarding the matter).

¹⁸ Of course, it must be noted here that Hegel actually only used the terms thesis, antithesis, synthesis, once, and that is when he ascribed it to Kant. In various translations, one cannot really locate Hegel's usage of the three terms, however, most scholars would argue that it does not mean that the triadic formula is not used.

¹⁹ Christopher Kul-Want (Author) and Piero (Illustrator), *Introducing Slavoj Žižek: A Graphical Guide*, ed. Duncan Heath (London: Icon Books, Ltd., 2011), 5. The brief biographical note that follows is taken from Christopher Kul-Want's account, unless cited otherwise, and with some additional notations from the author's insights.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 10.

²¹ In a documentary, Žižek once told that while his peers and colleagues opted for French or German for the second language, Žižek opted for English. This is perhaps for the reason that he wanted to make his works and lectures more accessible to the rather large part of the population.

²² This became a dilemma in Žižek's writing career, when his publishers, *Verso*, started to doubt the success of his books because it was always filled with jokes. However, as soon as Žižek wrote a book without one, the publisher worried, saying, *who would by that book if it contains no jokes?*

²³ Ian Parker, Introduction to *Slavoj Žižek: A Critical Introduction* (Virginia, USA: Pluto Press, 2004), 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1979), 39.

²⁶ David J. Gunkel, "Žižek and the Real Hegel," in *International Journal of Žižek Studies (IJZS)* 2, no. 2 (2008): 1-2.

²⁷ Slavoj Žižek, “The Three Events of Philosophy,” in *International Journal of Žižek Studies (IJZS)*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (2013): 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2012), 193.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* 194.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.* 236-237.

³⁴ The aforementioned two terms are the two widely-accepted shortened titles of Hegel’s most famous works, *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic*, respectively.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 237.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.* 239.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Gabriel Tupinambá and Yuan Yao, *Hegel, Lacan, Žižek* (New York: Atropos Press, 2013), 153.

⁴⁰ Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, 258.

⁴¹ This is explicitly discussed in the section entitled, “The Limits of Hegel,” found in *Less than Nothing*.

⁴² *Ibid.* 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Domenico Losurdo, *Hegel and the Freedom of Moderns (Post-Contemporary Interventions)* (Durnham, North Carolina: Duke University Press Books, 2004), 26.

⁴⁵ Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, 239.

⁴⁶ Slavoj Žižek, Introduction to *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2009), xxxi.

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J.L. Austin's Speech Acts on the Notion of Intentionality

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Abstract: The aim of this discussion is to expose Austin's Speech Acts Theory, while revealing the Theory of Intentionality in order to supplement and moderate the insecurity in speech acts insofar as its inconsistencies or infelicities are concerned. It would highlight the engagement of a speaker to a performance of speech which involves saying and acting of words while intending himself to fulfil what he said. Such performance of speech acts is, for John Langshaw Austin, constitutive of the performance of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. This kind of conception that Austin had initiated elevates now a mere statement or constatives to higher class performatives. The latter is a conjunction of speech (to say) and action (to act). And so, such speech acts is not only limited to the speaker-utterance sphere, but is being directed and performed socially. Intentionality now supplements the directedness of a speech act which entails that prior to achieving satisfaction of the act is the consideration of the effectivity of purposive intentional thoughts of the speaker. In short, these thoughts are being put into words (speech), and relating such thoughts through speech into the world.

Keywords: Austin, Constatives, Illocutionary Acts, Infelicities, Intentionality, Locutionary Acts, Performatives, Perlocutionary Acts and Speech Acts.

We have been taught in the primary school basic grammar. Verb suggests action and performance; a noun, which could be substituted by a pronoun, represents the name of a person, place, and thing; adjective suits to describe something; subject and predicate compose a sentence, etc. These are what our grammar teachers basically fed us. Though basic, they are the essentials in learning how to communicate one's thoughts by means of a simple sentence - a sentence which is part and parcel of language and which carries complete thought.¹

We construct sentences by following certain conventions and patterns so as to use different punctuation marks like period, question mark,

and exclamation point. And so, we learned how to differentiate a query from an assertion, we understand instructions and express exclamations. Nonetheless, British philosopher John Langshaw Austin proposed the speech act theory in order to distinguish a mere statement from what he called a performative utterance. Henceforth, a sentence from a unit of language carrying thoughts has been simplified as a "tool" for making a statement.² Austin gave new life to a simple word and statement and was able to name a new term: performative. In this light, he conjoined speech (to say) and action (to act) into such performative sentence - an utterance which has certain directedness and is looking towards a goal, an achievement, and a successfulness of what one said. It seems that

he conjoined saying and acting in order to imply that for every deliberation of an utterance is a corresponding action which also entails responsibility. In this regard, this paper is dedicated to elucidate further J.L Austin's theory of performative utterance and locate his utilization of the theory of intentionality.

Austin's Speech Acts Theory

Before delving to the performatives proper, let us first consider Austin's notion of the constative or a mere statement. A term was born akin to the notion of a basic statement and somehow isolated from Austin's favorite, the performative. Constative only reports, or describes state of affairs and facts.³ And it is only susceptible to the truth-value it carries: so as to be either true or false. Whereas performative involves saying and doing, constative only implicates saying and stating. The latter is as if a lifeless utterance which does not entail a respond to neither the speaker nor the hearer. Moreover, it is stagnant and is valid only to when it was uttered. In short it is intermittent and not protracted.

Now, Austin gave life to an utterance through his notion of the performative. It is susceptible as to being felicitous (happy) or infelicitous (unhappy), or in simple terms, success or failure. It is purposively intended towards a successful utterance. This is likewise the starting point of speech acts proper wherein Austin has elevated the classification of a mere sentence to a higher class akin to the masqueraders. It does not simply carry information, but moreover, it includes action. Performative are also called performatory or performative sentence which still includes the imperative 'perform' which denotes action. And to make it shorter and sound nicer, he preferred to call it performative.

What are we to call a sentence or an utterance of this type? I propose to call it a performative sentence or a performative utterance, or, for short, 'a performative'...it indicates the issuing of the utterance is performing of an action- it is not normally thought of as just saying something.⁴

Nonetheless, in this paper, we would call it performative utterance (and constatives sentence) rather than performative sentence (and constatives utterance) to justify the demarcation between performatives and constatives. Besides, Austin likewise clarified that performative utterance is a 'non-constative' utterance.⁵

Performatives (a) do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true' or 'false'; (b) the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be describe as saying something.⁶

These two characteristics make a performative strongly different from that of the constative. However, inferior from performative, constative is qualified to become performative. A consideration could be, a simple statement or assertion still carries thoughts and intentions (belief for instance) of the speaker. Yet performative could not step down as to becoming a constative.

Furthermore, performative utterance is significantly applicable on ceremonies or ceremonial acts, baptism (naming a child) and marriage (uttering "I do") for that instance. With that the utterance is not merely limited during that particular instance, but is protracted and sustained onwards. Austin has limited the examples into four specific instances:

(e.a)" I do", as uttered in wedding or marriage ceremony;

(e.b) "I name the ship the Queen Elizabeth", as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem;

(e.c) "I give and bequeath my watch to my brother", in accordance and occurrence in will;

(e.d) "I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow", uttered in the act of betting.⁷

Nevertheless, such examples are characterized as explicit performatives thereby the "I" and the imperatives (bet, promise, bequeath) is obviously visible in the utterance, whereas, implicit or primary performatives are otherwise.⁸ For instance,

(1) I will go to your house tomorrow. (An implicit example)

(2) I promise, I will go to your house tomorrow. (An explicit example)

Moving on, to be definite, Austin had classified the performatives into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

Locutionary act is the traditional way of doing things with words. It is the expression of content, in the matter of meaning, cognitive and/or the expressive aspect of speech.⁹ Moreover, it comprises the phonetic act, the phatic act, and the rhetic act. Uttering a phone or certain noises is called the performance of a phonetic act. This is not a speech totally, it is just a sound. On the other hand, when the utterance does not merely involves phone, thereby a mere utterance noise becomes word or vocable, a phatic act was henceforth performed. A simple noise now creates intonation, thereby following certain conventions in grammar in order to conform to a certain vocabulary to where it specifically belongs. Now, this follows the performance of the rhetic acts, which entails that such sounds

and vocables are not simply limited to what kind of vocabulary it belongs to, but is being uttered communicably and socially. The utterance of the so called rheme constitutes a more or less definite 'sense' and a more or less definite 'reference'.¹⁰

Meanwhile, let us take the performance of an utterance into the next level by discussing illocutionary act. Illocutionary act is the very act performed in speaking.¹¹ The meaning of words are undoubtedly relevant. But in an illocution another relevant factor is being expressed, the force, this time, is the so called illocutionary force. It is suggested that while focusing on the force (which involves the context) rather than simply on the meaning (the content), eliminates language variations (regional, national, continental, etc), on the other hand, creates a sort of misunderstanding. A speech is not merely about what he means in saying", but more importantly "how he means in sayin." And so, illocutionary acts are likewise asserting, promising, ordering, requesting, etc.¹²

Nonetheless, the locutionary acts carry the explicit meaning of an utterance and the illocutionary bears the implied meaning. Consider the following examples:

I will go to your house tomorrow. (I might)

I will go to your house tomorrow. (I promise)

I will go to your house tomorrow. (Be ready)

I will go to your house tomorrow. (Please)

The first phrase portrays the locutionary force, while the second phrase is the implied or hidden meaning, henceforth, depicting the illocutionary force.

Furthermore, an utterance having a sense of deliberation and purpose¹³ leads to fulfilment. And so, the product or achievement by saying something refers to the perlocutionary act. While illocutionary acts is a relation between the speech and the speaking agent, perlocutionary act is an affair among the speech, the speaking agent, and the receiver of the speech or utterance. Perlocutions are all about the (purposive intentional) impact of an utterance not simply to the so called hearer but appropriately to the responder of the speech. The achievement of the perlocutionary acts is the verification of the affectivity of the speaker to the hearer and so he must attain a successful deliberation of utterance. He must not aggravate¹⁴ the hearer but rather he must motivate and affect the latter to respond on what he said. Thus, some instances of perlocutionary act are convincing, persuading, deterring, surprising, etc.¹⁵ In this light, the achievement of the utterance “I will go to your house tomorrow” is that the speaker having convinced the receiver will stay in the house for he is coming tomorrow.

(E) Perlocutionary	The (purposive intentional) impact of an utterance to the hearer as well as the speaker. ¹⁶ .
	The receiver of the utterance would not leave, as the speaker had convinced H that S would go to H’s house tomorrow
	convincing, persuading, deterring, surprising or misleading

(D) Illocutionary	The very act performed in speaking. ¹⁷
	“I promise, I will go to your house tomorrow.”
	Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Behabatives, Expositives
(C) Locutionary	Expression of content, in the matter of meaning, cognitive and/or the expressive aspect of speech. ¹⁸
	“I will go to your house tomorrow.”
	Phonetic Acts, Phatic Acts, Rhetic Acts
(B) Performatives	It indicates the issuing of the utterance is performing of an action- it is not normally thought of as just saying something. ¹⁹
	Explicit: “Can I please go to your house tomorrow?” Implicit: “Can I go to the house tomorrow?”(in the form of a request)
	Locutionary Acts,

	Illocutionary Acts, Perlocutionary Acts
(A) Constatives	Only reports, or describes state of affairs and facts. ²⁰
	Informing that, “I will go to your house tomorrow”. This has no assurance that the speaker would go to the hearer’s house tomorrow. It does not care any response coming from the hearer (to be convinced) or to the speaker (to perform the act).
	Stating, informing, describing, explaining

The above table is a summary of Austin’s Speech Acts. It portrays a continuous process or level of the Speech Acts, which starts on mere constatives. These are followed by the performatives classified into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The perlocutions are expectedly²¹ the peak of the speech acts, so as the speaker must achieve the successfulness of his saying and must create an impact (motivation or discourage) to the hearer. Nevertheless, there is line bordering between the performatives and constatives. Yet, constatives could reach as far as being performatives, but not vice-versa.

The Fulfilment: Happy or Unhappy

But how about in the case when a speaker did not succeed in his utterance? Does it mean that his utterance is false? Austin does not associate

performatives to truth and falsity but to happiness and unhappiness which refers to the so called felicity and infelicity of the utterance. Truth and falsity are traditionally applied to statements which states facts and reports.²² On the other hand, performatives do not absolutely mean to be true or false, but to be satisfactory or not (felicitous or infelicitous). And so, Austin presented such felicity conditions:

(A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in a certain circumstances, and further;

(A.2) The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked;

(B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and;

(B.2) completely;

(Γ.1) Where, as often the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further;

(Γ.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.²³

These felicity conditions describes that Austin also gave the guides in uttering sentences. One should not just utter a word only because he wants or intends to do so. An utterance must also be subjected to conformity, to conventions, and with certain appropriations. Those appropriations are in regards with certain words, certain persons, and in certain circumstances. As such, you would not ask “Will you marry me?” to someone who is already married in a non-conducive occasion. Otherwise, you would



commit bigamy or covetousness.²⁴ Moreover, such appropriations are executed procedurally, meaning in order and should be correctly and completely. And eventually, there must be congruity of the procedure (the act) and the speaker. The speaker carrying thoughts and feelings, who intend to express and execute it, must perform it and direct it to completion. Otherwise, the failure of such felicities would be referent to infelicity or the doctrine of the things that can be and go wrong on the occasion of such utterances.²⁵

Non-conformity to one or all of the guides leads to infelicitous performatives. A little less than parasite (parasitic speech acts), performatives could also be sick, and in this case infelicitous. But these infelicity conditions also show intentionality or directedness that has been curved wherein putting utterance into act has been compromise. When felicity A and B are achieved while Γ is disregarded, such infelicity is described to be professed or hollow. It is not void or without effect at all, simply, it is not implemented or consummated. Given the conditions A (A_1 & A_2) to B (B_1 & B_2), that is, there is an appropriation to certain words, persons, and circumstances, and is already applied into procedure or execution. However, conducting the intentions, thoughts and feelings are absent, is associated to an infelicity of Insincerity²⁶; an Abuse²⁷ of the procedure. The performative is acted yet there is a consequence. For instance, a promising without intending, “I have promised but...”²⁸

On the other hand, an offence against the felicities A to B is generally called Misfires wherein the purported procedure is disallowed or botched and so, the act is considered to be void or without effect. Misfires could furthermore be classified as to Misinvocation and Misexecutions. Misinvocation and

Misexecutions. These refer to not satisfying felicities A_1 & A_2 , and B_1 & B_2 respectively.

Misinvocation is subdivided into Misapplication (or infelicity A_2), wherein the act is disallowed because the procedure is contested and could not be applied; the other subdivision has not yet named by Austin yet we would call it ‘Misprocedure’ (or infelicity A_1) which an abbreviation for “missing procedure” since this category of Misinvocation is lacking or not purely having procedure at all. In the case of ‘Misprocedure’, there is no conventional procedure ever existed and accepted. It becomes infelicitous when the utterance is not accepted singly not of the speaker, but significantly of other persons.²⁹ For example, the utterance of “I love you” by a Chinese woman to a Filipino man. Although their relationship is not accepted by her Chinese family because of certain conventions, her love for him is not recognized by her family³⁰. Moreover, in the case of Misapplication, the utterance exists and is accepted, however, it becomes infelicitous when the circumstances in which it was invoked or the person who invoked it were inappropriate.³¹ And so, the procedure has been misapplied. This is evident in the deliverance of command or request of a person who is not in proper position. For instance, a secretary commanding her boss to answer the phone.

Meanwhile, in Misexecution, the purported act is vitiated because of a flaw (referring to felicity B.1) or hitch (referring to felicity B.2) in the conduct of ceremony.³² In order to destroy infelicities B_1 and B_2 , it requires the participation of all the participants, in that case the speaker and the audience. Utterance becomes infelicitous when a flaw in the ritual is (obviously) involved however the audience took it and the act is abortive.³³ This is normally visible in the instance of betting. For example,

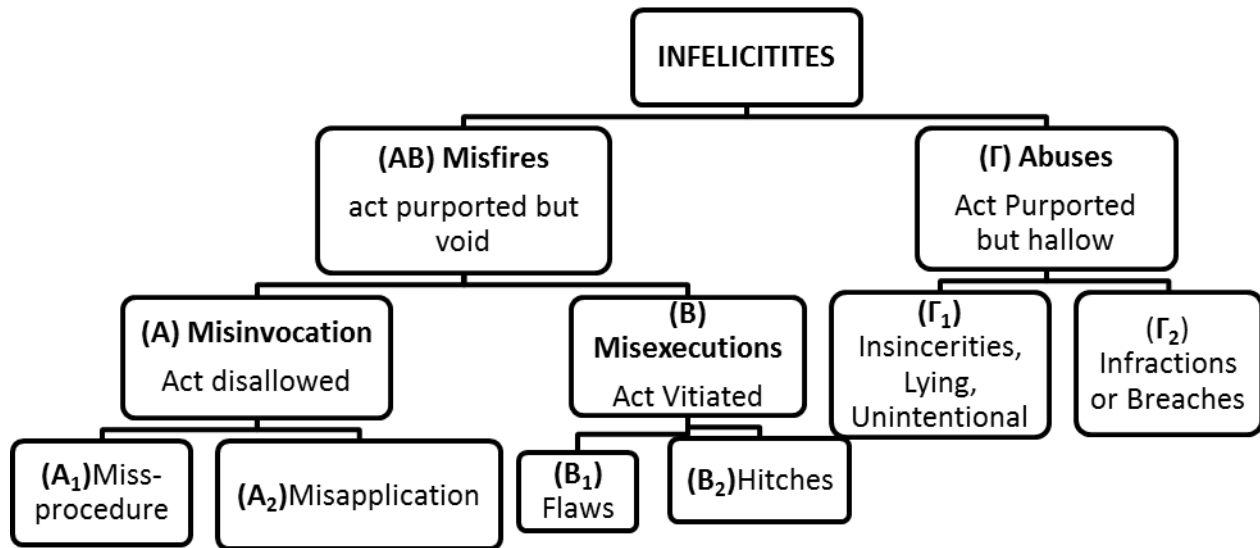
the utterance “I bet you sixpence” (as used by Austin) could be unhappy if it is taken by a hearer though he knew that the speaker does not have any penny. Acting upon such utterance could likewise be aborted. Moreover, as contrast to explicit performatives, there are also classes which are implicit or primitive wherein the procedure in question is not sufficiently explicitly invoked.³⁴ Implicit or primitive performatives could likewise be associated to infelicities B_1 & B_2 as being faulty or incomplete performatives respectively. Hence, I would consider infelicities B_1 & B_2 types to be raw performatives- a performative or utterance that has not fully implemented or acted.

Conditions $\Gamma.1$ & $\Gamma.2$ also have infelicity such that the utterance, according to Austin, becomes Insincere ($\Gamma.1$), and Infraction or Breach ($\Gamma.2$) when the performative is unhappy. In this light, fundamentals regarding procedures and appropriations are being set aside for a while to divert on a more ‘personal’ criterion considering the speaker’s feelings, thoughts, and intentions and also the necessarily subsequent actualization of the performative. Nevertheless, infelicity $\Gamma.1$ does not solely account on Insincerity (in regards to feelings), but in addition this also includes unhappy performative as Lying (in regards to thoughts) and Unintentional (in regards to intentions).³⁵ Utterances like “I

congratulate you”, “I advise you to”, and “I promise” are just some of the examples which includes the feelings, thoughts and intentions of the speaker. However, when these were uttered convincingly (that is ‘as if’ only) but not happily, such utterances report to infelicities. At this instance, the meaning of a given utterance is no longer in question. Rather, the force or the content which is incorporated in the utterance is now being considered. Therefore, infelicity $\Gamma.1$ suggests that the words in a given utterance are present, yet the thought of the agent is absent. On the other hand, $\Gamma.2$ forbids the ‘instalment basis’ of uttering the performatives, otherwise this may lead to Infraction or Breach infelicity. Consider the utterance of “I do” in a marriage ceremony. The commitment of a husband and wife is not to be taken fractionally or stagnantly. The utterance must also be in process and consistent throughout the couple’s family life.

The fulfilment of such utterance is synonymous also to the notion of “palabra de honor” or the standing and fulfilling one’s word. And so he would utter, “you have my word”. The same is true for Austin when he said that our word is our bond.³⁶ Thoughts in the mind would be excreted through speech, and his speech is equivalent to an act which would essentially be satisfying. “So you thought, so you speak, so you act”.

Summary illustration of Austin's infelicities:



Performatives on Special Cases

Nevertheless, there is such untouchable class in the speech acts, which was excluded by Austin from being felicitous and infelicitous. Such would be referent to the parasitic or using of language in special cases or occasion which could be associated to utterances heard in artistic allies (in theatrical and role plays as well as in dramas and poetries). Parasitic speech acts³⁷ are very much applicable (only) to the creative world of the arts. Here, the act of the artist in expressing feelings and emotions are being taken into account. Parasitic is a 'non-serious' or 'non-full normal use' of language³⁸ and is distinguished by Austin from the explicit performatives (promising, commanding, betting, naming, etc.).

Furthermore, "playing³⁹ things with words" goes on special occasion of utilizing language, much so in the case of parasitism (this is just a simple assertion). In process, parasitic could also be a speech act, however in an unusual

manner, to be exact, in a fictional manner⁴⁰. This would henceforth suggest the 'Ideal' and 'Real' use of performative. Ideal in the case of parasitic speech acts as operative in artistic and literary expressions. While Real or non-fiction in the sense of the authentic speech acts of Austin which is best applied on common social communication. In this manner, both of them becomes effective, although into two distinct scenarios. In parasitic speech act, imagination and sensation are being much utilized which is of a more passive aspect. But nonetheless, it should always be remembered that performatives denotes performance (in an utterance), a more active aspect. "Playing things with words" is thus a special, and moreover, a creative aspect of using the language of performative.

Speaking is diverse. Perhaps not necessarily would it entail to have the visibility⁴¹ (by that I mean the visible presence) of the speaker (for example, while having a conversation through phone) but significantly what it requires is the

“presence of the speaker” (not necessarily physically but at least thoughtfully) because speaking necessitates committing oneself (the speaker) to his utterance. Saying something is not simply an outward and visible sign of conveying a message of fact. It is an inward and spiritual act of including oneself as part of the utterance.⁴² Likewise,

For one who says ‘promising’ is not merely a matter of uttering words! It is an inward and spiritual act! is apt to appear as a solid moralist standing out against a generation of superficial theorists⁴³

Also, we cannot just categorize or even call the parasitic to be an utterance. It is just simply associated to the term text. The essential formula of Austin’s performatives is: I + Presence + Active⁴⁴. These three must essentially work in certain appropriations and with asymmetry.⁴⁵ The formula, henceforth, entails the active engagement of the speaker to his utterance. And so, uttering the performatives is an “event” and by that a “continuous event”. An utterance is not only confined into the present instance of uttering it but is carried out ‘futurally’ as depicted in the four explicit performatives, “I do”, “I bet”, “I name”, “I promise”. Performatives indulge the speaker to commit to his utterance. And eventually he ought to perform and achieve it, because his utterance does not only carry information, but it contains responsibility. While uttering marriage vows or betting for something, one is not merely reporting or stating rather one is deliberating an utterance and in that circumstance of marrying or betting. Hence, in performative utterances, the speaker is part of his utterance and the utterance has the assurance of the presence of the speaker. In short, it means that language is an engagement. The utterance has a sense of direction and deliberation. It is having a purposive intention

to lead his utterance to fulfilment, to success, and to satisfaction which could be received by both speaker and hearer or respondent. Performative is an event and its end is a satisfying ‘event’.

¹ Copi, I and Cohen, C. *Introduction to Logic 11th edition*. (2002: Pearson Education, Asia Pte Ltd.), 76.

² Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*. (1962: Oxford University Press). see footnotes, 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 6-7.

⁵ Ibid, 139. C.f. Garner, R. “Utterances and Acts in the Philosophy of J.L Austin”. *Noûs*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Aug., 1968) accessed: September 30, 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2214718>>, 210.

⁶ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 5.

⁷ Ibid.,

⁸ Ibid, 69.

⁹ Kemp, G. *What is this Thing Called Philosophy of Language?* (2011: Routledge), 90.

¹⁰ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 92-93.

¹¹ Kemp, *loc cit*.

¹² Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 108.

¹³ An action has some sort of *deliberating* and *purpose*. See Austin, J.L.’s “Three Ways of Spilling Ink” in *Philosophical Papers*, 273.

¹⁴ Austin, *Philosophical Papers. loc cit*.

¹⁵ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 108.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kemp, G. *loc cit*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*, 6-7.

²⁰ Ibid, 1.

²¹ I mean expectedly because along the way, an utterance could be bent or broken.

²² Ibid, 12.

²³ Ibid, 14-15.

²⁴ Ibid, 16-17.

²⁵ Ibid, 14.

²⁶ Could be equated as $(A_{1\&2}.B_{1\&2})\sim\Gamma_1$

²⁷ Could be equated as $(A_{1\&2}.B_{1\&2})\sim\Gamma_{1\&2}$

²⁸ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 15-19.

²⁹ Ibid, p.27.

³⁰ Her love to him neither exists nor accepted in so far as the conventions of her family are concerned.

³¹ Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*, p.28.

³²Ibid, 17-18.

³³ Ibid, 35-36.

³⁴ Ibid, 33.

³⁵ Ibid, 39.

³⁶ Ibid, 10.

³⁷ *Parasitic* are excluded by Austin. However, Kevin Halion in his paper entitled “Parasitic Speech Acts: Austin, Searle and Derrida” has considered it as speech acts. Hence, *parasitic speech acts*. Nonetheless, *parasitic speech acts* are still unique since it is a special use or case of not only language but specifically of *performatives*. Halion while investigating the *parasitic* has utilized the view of Derrida as an answer to the “fixed” or “contextualize” notion of language as proposed by Austin and eventually by Searle.

³⁸ Garcia, Leni dIR. ‘Speech Acts and Poetry’. (2008: *Philosophia vol 37, 2*), 193.

³⁹ “Playing” here has nothing to do with Wittgenstein’s Language game theory. I just used such word to depict the difference between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ speech acts, insofar as the parasitic speech acts is concerned. “Playing” is in association with creatively putting one’s thoughts into words.

⁴⁰ Searle, J. *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. (1979: Cambridge University Press), xi.

⁴¹ For there is such thing as the *absence of the speaker-writer* or “*sender*” from her “*text*” because of the such notion of iteration. This aspect is therefore associated to *detachability- a detachment or disengagement*. Refer to Halion, K. “Parasitic Speech Acts: Austin, Searle, Derrida”. *Philosophy Today, Summer 1992*, 163-166.

⁴² Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 9-10.

⁴³ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁴ Austin has used Present but I would rather preferred Presence to complement to the notion of the presence of the speaker. See Austin’s “Lecture VI” *How to Do Things with Word*, 67-68.

⁴⁵ Austin. *How to Do Things with Words*, 68.

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A Critical Exposition of Baruch Spinoza's Concept of a Miracle

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Abstract: What I intend to do in this article is to expound Baruch Spinoza's concept of a miracle as found in his primary works, namely, *Ethics* and *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. In this particular study, I have employed a variety of ways through which the reader of this article can understand Baruch Spinoza and his concept of a miracle. They are the following: 1) by providing a survey of how the concept of a miracle evolved in the history of mankind; 2) by laying down the background of Baruch Spinoza and how the rationalist thinking of his time had influenced Baruch Spinoza's frame of mind as he crafted his own definition of a miracle; 3) by describing Baruch Spinoza's notion of the Divine; 4) by incorporating the Old Testament in the understanding of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* alongside Spinoza's latent pantheism and his most famous dictum, "*Deus sive Natura*," and; 5) by providing arguments for or against the four theses in the philosophy of Spinoza. The encompassing aim of this article is to shed light into the hidden philosophy of Baruch Spinoza about the concept of miracles. Even if he devoted a chapter of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* for his exposition on the concept of a miracle, philosophers of today do not know well about this "latent" aspect of Spinozan philosophy. I have written this article with the hope of making it easy for students of philosophy to seep through the intricacies of Spinozan philosophy and to understand clearly what Spinoza's concept of a miracle is. This article will conclude that the treatment of the problem of miracles, whether it is existent or non-existent, lies upon what Spinoza calls as "intellectual love of God" or *amor Dei intellectualis*. After all, miracles being unusual works of Nature entail the capacity of a God to perform them.

Keywords: Baruch Spinoza, God, Latent Pantheism, Miracles and Nature

Rationalism in Europe (continental rationalism) had its beginnings through Rene Descartes' excavation of the fundamental truth by way of the methodic doubt. His pronouncement of himself as the "thinking being" or the *cogito* paved the way for budding rationalists to express their philosophy through their positions on certain philosophical branches, namely, on metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In metaphysics, the

rationalists have thought of the world as a rationally ordered whole. This entails that the world can easily be recognized by the mind because of its well-organized structure. Therefore, the rationalists never endorsed their predecessors' view of reality as disjointed and full of aggregates. Moreover, the rationalists, with the prevailing developments in the physical sciences, were motivated to synthesize their philosophy with those of the sciences. The likes

of Isaac Newton and Galileo Galilei, who profoundly revolutionized the science of the 16th century, became the epitome of the rationalists. At some point, they began to aspire being the Newton or the Galileo of philosophy. In short, the study of metaphysics holds its foundation from the paradigm provided by the physical or mechanical sciences prevalent at that time.

In epistemology, the rationalists have thought of knowledge as independent of the senses or of experience. This is in clear contrast with the empiricists who posited that sense perception and experience provide us the first truths or somehow ignite the latent truths in our minds. The rationalists saw it in a different perspective. They believed that foundational truths are already innate in our mind. Also, these foundational truths are universal and can be directly apprehended by the intellect. But the most important thing to highlight is that the rationalists claim that the most certain knowledge is one of *a priori* nature (no intervention of the physical sciences), necessary, and universal. In a whole, the epistemology of the rationalists entailed the innateness of knowledge which cannot be debunked by the knowledge given to us by sense perception and experience.

In ethics, the rationalists argued simply by saying that the norms of human acts come from reason. Feelings, emotions, and other sentiments are not to be credited at this stage. The norms of morality are provided by reason as the ultimate arbiter which is described by the rationalist epistemology as *a priori*, necessary, and universal.

Who were the continental rationalists? Of course, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the father of modern philosophy, is one of them. He was

inseparable to the concept “cogito.” He was famous for his maxim, “I think, therefore I am.” Also, there was the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) who became famous for his works on the problem of evil which is enshrined in his *Theodicy* and his metaphysical assertion of the existence of the monads found in his opus *Monadology*. Another important rationalist is Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) who became famous for his coined concept of “occasionalism” found in his many works such as *The Search after Truth* and *Dialogues on Metaphysics*. And most importantly is Baruch [or Benedict] Spinoza (1632-1677) who is the subject of this paper. His most famous works were the *Ethics* and the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Theologico-Political Treatise). We will know more about Spinoza in the succeeding discourse. These continental rationalists contained similar takes on metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics in their philosophies.

Baruch Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in the year 1632. A son of Jewish-Portuguese parents, he went on to be trained as a *rabbi* or a teacher in the synagogue. At a ripe age of twenty, he studied the newly founded philosophy of Descartes and scholastic philosophy which was prevalent during that period. Unfortunately, due to his doubts on the immortality of the soul and the existence of angels, Spinoza was excommunicated in 1656 and received the official sentence of eternal damnation for his false beliefs. This ignited the philosophy latent in him. He later on left his homeland and his religion in order to venture out into the philosophical realm of thinking. For twenty years, he wrote opuses which clearly left a mark in the study of philosophy. Two of his best works were the *Ethics*, his philosophical magnum opus, and the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Theologico-Political Treatise) which

was published anonymously in 1670 due to fear of authorities. He died in The Hague, Netherlands in 1677.

The chapter on miracles is found on the *Theologico-Political Treatise* [TTP] of Spinoza. Theo Verbeek describes the book as “difficult to read but... its difficulties are not like those of the *Critique of Pure Reason* [of Kant] or the *Phenomenology of the Mind* [of Hegel].”¹ The hardships to be encountered in the reading of this book is profound yet its product is fulfilment that one has understood Spinoza’s work. Verbeek adds that the treatise “is not clear most of the time what it is all about even if every now and then one stumbles across something familiar and recognizable.”² I humbly accept the challenge of bringing into light Spinoza’s philosophy on miracles found in the TTP. This will be done through the re-reading of the sixth chapter of the TTP and by referencing to Baruch Spinoza’s *magnum opus*, *Ethics*, because in there lies a careful exposition of his metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical biases which are very helpful in understanding the TTP.

I will now proceed to the matter in question. The concept of a miracle will be critically delved upon and exposed in this paper. Philosophers of religion will say that there are two questions to which the traditional approach on the problem of the miraculous is deeply concerned. First, we start by asking “What is a miracle?” and second, “What justification can we have for believing that such things occur or have occurred?”³ It is supposed to be made clear that this problem concerning the miraculous is a problem in the realm of Christian religion. Hence, before I present Spinoza’s notion of miracles, I would like to present first what the Christian notion of a miracle is through the teachings of the Angelic Doctor, Saint Thomas

Aquinas, as written in his *De Potentia Dei* or *On the Power of God*. He writes in his *De Potentia Dei* his own definition of a miracle.

That which is arduous is called a miracle not because of the greatness of a thing produces, but in comparison with the faculty of nature. Consequently, every effect is reckoned to be difficult—and therefore miraculous—no matter how insignificant the effect, if the latter surpasses the powers of nature.⁴

Aquinas said that a miracle entails a laborious task for the spectator to comprehend its greatness. However, this greatness must not be attributed to the effect. Instead, a miracle must be understood in the light of nature. Its contrariness to the laws of nature gives it its wonders. And God, the creator of these laws of nature can also work wonders against it. Thus, there is this divinity in the occurrence of miracles to which Saint Thomas Aquinas rightfully calls a miracle as an event of wonder.

Another influential doctrine on miracles was offered by a former pope and is still followed by the Catholic Church whenever examining the causes for beatification and canonization of holy people and the miracles attributed to them. This former pope was known in history as Pope Benedict XV. Prospero Lambertini (his former name) was a former devil’s advocate.⁵ His dogma on miracles was enshrined in his treatise, *De Miraculis*. He proclaimed in this treatise that not only God can work these wonders which we call miracles. Instead, even angels and very pious men and women can work these marvelous acts.⁶ Another significant qualification modified by Pope Benedict XIV in the definition of a miracle is not that it is contrary to nature but it is something beyond nature.⁷ This new Catholic doctrine on miracle will stay as is from the 1700s up until today.

The contrariness of a miracle to the universal laws of nature may somewhat authenticate its existence. Yet, Baruch Spinoza offers a different take on the issue concerning the existence of the miraculous. We go back to his metaphysical account of God as substance and as nature because this will be prevalent in the whole of Spinoza's line of thinking concerning miracles. He writes in Proposition 17, Part I of the *Ethics* that "God acts from the laws of the divine nature alone, and is not compelled by anything."⁸ However, the concept of *natura naturans* as the active aspect of nature is, for Spinoza, God Himself. Therefore, if God acts from the laws of divine nature alone, then He is compelled to act and is necessarily acting through His own nature. This will prove influential to the study of miracles as I proceed in this discourse. It is because if miracles are events which are contrary to the laws of nature, then how will they be existent if miracles are contrary to God, being the active aspect of nature and being Nature itself according to Spinoza? It does stir up a controversy among scholars studying Spinozan philosophy.

Spinoza starts the sixth chapter of his *Theologico-Political Treatise* by describing the notion of the divine. He states that the divine is defined by many people of his time as "any work whose cause is unknown."⁹ It is also worth noting in the observations of the Dutch Jewish philosopher that people of his time consider God as someone who is latent, somewhat passive, and somewhat inactive. However, Nature seems to be the active thing of this world. Thereby, Spinoza tells of the clearest possible evidence of God's existence as the deviation of Nature from her laws, from her *logos*.¹⁰ It is obvious that Spinoza hated the line of reasoning of his contemporaries especially in the field of religion. His metaphysics, as stated in the previous discourse, establishes the notion of God as the same with Nature. Spinoza tells

his contemporaries that "they have no idea"¹¹ because they just imagine God with "the rule of some royal potentate and Nature... a kind of force and energy."¹²

He then defines miracles as "unusual works of Nature."¹³ This is not Spinoza's definition. This is still his contemporaries' notion of a miracle. Yet, why was such a phenomenon existent? According to Spinoza, attributing miracles to God is a result of the people's imagination of supernatural events. Because they imagine supernatural events, they consider their passive and latent God as something which is now active and unconcealed.¹⁴ It seems, therefore, that only miracles can make the Christian God alive. Spinoza breaks this paradigm in the subsequent parts of the article. He condemns the early Jews (circumcised) for envying the presence of visible gods in the culture of the Gentiles (uncircumcised).¹⁵ He said that the early Jews only had the proof of miracles in order to prove that their invisible God is present in the world. It "unconceals" their concealed God. Thus, this culture suggests that up to this day, Judaism and other monotheistic religions continue to "invent miracles"¹⁶ as Spinoza would say in order to prove that their God exists.

He then proceeds to lay down his philosophy, thesis by thesis. The same method will be employed in the critical exposition of Spinoza's take on the existence of miracles. Alongside the exposition of each thesis will be my acceptance or criticism of Spinoza's take per thesis. The four theses, according to Spinoza, are as follows:

- 1) That no event can occur to contravene Nature, which preserves an eternal, fixed, and immutable order. At the same time, I shall explain what is to be understood by a miracle.
- 2) That neither God's essence nor God's existence—nor, consequently, God's providence—can be known from

miracles. All these can be far better apprehended from Nature's fixed and immutable order.

- 3) I shall cite a number of passages in Scripture to prove that, by God's decrees and volitions, and consequently God's providence, Scripture itself means nothing other than Nature's order, which necessarily follows from her eternal laws.
- 4) Finally I shall discuss the method of interpreting Scriptural miracles, and the chief points to be noted regarding the narratives of miracles.¹⁷

In the first thesis, Spinoza contests the thoughts of the people of olden times who considered miracles as products of the "understanding of the common people who were quite ignorant of the principles of science."¹⁸ In Part 2 of the *Ethics*, Spinoza despised ignorance because ignorance brings about falsity and falsity is evil because it entails inadequate knowledge of the nature of the Divine.¹⁹ Evil is not a privation of good, for Spinoza, but it is a privation of knowledge. Henceforth, he gives a proposition regarding the non-existence of a miracle being defined as an unusual work of Nature in order to shed light to what he calls his ignorant readers. Spinoza writes:

So if anything were to happen in Nature contrary to her universal laws, it would also be necessarily contrary to the decree, intellect, and nature of God. Or if anyone were to maintain that God performs some act contrary to the laws of Nature, he would at the same time have to maintain that God acts contrary to his own nature—of which nothing could be more absurd.²⁰

In this discourse, Spinoza gave his readers a glimpse of his pantheistic tendency. In this regard, he believed that "God is intimately connected with all things,"²¹ his modes. Also, it seems that all exist in God. This pantheistic tendency of Spinoza of attributing all things as existing from God and in God leads us to the fact that miracles are non-existent in the mind of Baruch Spinoza. He affirms it by saying that, "Nothing, then, can happen in Nature"²² to

contravene her own universal laws, nor yet anything that is not in agreement with these laws or that does not follow from them."²³ I think that, at this stage, Spinoza has not yet firmly rejected the existence of a miracle or a miraculous event. He had a very light reason for denying such an existence and that is through his pantheistic tendency. Contradicting the existence of a miracle because it is contrary to the Divine is not a good claim. Also, in this sense, Spinoza narrowed down the miracle into a work of ignorant people trying to get famous in the Judaeo-Christian sense. It seems to be blasphemous on the part of Spinoza. How about the beatified and the canonized who worked wonders in the name of God and of Christ during and after their lifetime? Are they worthy of such appellation from Baruch Spinoza? I think not.

Let me proceed to the exposition of the second thesis, i.e., that God's essence and existence cannot be known through miracles [and miraculous events]. Spinoza declares:

Since God's existence is not self-evident, it must necessarily be inferred from axiomatic truths which are so firm and incontrovertible that there can neither be, nor be conceived, any power that could call them into question.²⁴

In this passage, Spinoza affirms his metaphysical notion of God as the only substance in the world which cannot be easily known by man. He even said in his *Ethics* that man must reach the level of intuitive knowledge²⁵ in order to have a good grasp of what God really is and what His essences or attributes are (thought and extension). After all, the three levels of knowledge mentioned in the *Ethics* entails that only one and the same truth are known in three different ways.²⁶ In the succeeding sentences, Spinoza relates this knowledge of the Divine to how Nature acts. He states:

We know that something agrees with or contravenes Nature only when we can prove that it agrees or contravenes those basic truths. Therefore, if we could conceive that in Nature something could be produced by some power, of whatever kind it be, to contravene Nature, it would contravene those primary axioms.²⁷

Contravention of the natural or regular pattern of Nature, for Spinoza, is breaking the fixed and immutable order provided by God in the course of nature. Therefore, it is imperative that the basic or fundamental truths about God and Nature need not be broken because it would entail a laborious task of deviation from the established axioms of Nature. Henceforth, Spinoza declares that since miracles are described as unusual works of Nature and are said to be ways to prove the presence of the Divine, he concludes that miracles are non-existent and are not ways to prove God's essence and existence.²⁸ By virtue of being a violation of the course of nature, it breaks the pattern of Nature and also the firm and incontrovertible truths coming with it. Also, Spinoza tells of miracles as "events of a limited nature."²⁹ Due to its limitation, a miracle can never describe or tell the essence or existence of something infinite like God, to whom the existence of a miracle is attributed by the contemporaries of Spinoza.

In the second thesis, Spinoza still brought with him his latent pantheistic tendency. Imagine if God and Nature were not the same for Spinoza, miracles, as violation of the laws of Nature, may be a product of the Divine because Nature in this sense is not within the Divine. This 17th century philosophy of Spinoza is indeed a breakthrough in the history of philosophy. Never in various writings of philosophers about miracles will this philosophy be found. It is absurd yet phenomenal because Spinoza offered a new meaning on miracles. Nevertheless, this is only the second thesis. There are still two theses

to go that needs to be exposed. Maybe, Spinoza will forego of his latent pantheism in the next theses.

A verse in Deuteronomy 13 serves as an interlude towards Spinoza's explanation of his third thesis, namely, that the Scripture provides a firm proof of Nature's immutable order. A summary of the said Bible verse will tell that false prophets must be punished even if they should perform miracles. Thereby, miracles can also be done or attested by false prophets. Moses warned of his people against this kind of people that attempt to explain the Divine through miracles. Spinoza follows this line of thought. If false prophets can perform miracles, then the credibility of a miracle is diminished because there may be a tendency that people who believe in such false prophets may entertain the thought of believing in a false god.³⁰ Moreover, Spinoza tells his readers that all the while when the Israelites entertained the thought of miracles, their wisdom seem to be put into shambles. He writes that the prophets of old "found considerable difficulty in reconciling the order of Nature"³¹ with the study of God's providence and the existence of miracles. This will later lead to Spinoza's conclusion of miracles with regard to the Scriptures. He said, "Therefore even Scripture itself makes it evident that miracles do not afford true knowledge of God, nor do they clearly teach God's providence."³²

In the third thesis, Spinoza demonstrated the fixed and immutable order of Nature through certain chapters and verses in the Bible. He mentioned of the first book of Samuel, Psalms, and Genesis. One of the verses, which may also be the most famous for several Judaeo-Christian believers, tells of the denouement of the story of Noah's ark. Genesis 9:13 states that God told Noah that He will set forth a rainbow in the cloud. Whereas, there is no written explanation

in the Bible of how a rainbow is formed, we all know that a rainbow is formed when the rays of the sun are refracted in the water droplets. Prior lectures in theology told me that there are three kinds of truth which can be extracted from the Holy Scriptures. They are: 1) literary truths; 2) historical truths, and; 3) theological truths. Given that there are diverse truths obtained from the Scripture, these must not sway us from believing that God is the ultimate substance of the world and Nature's ways are fixed and immutable. Also, Spinoza adds that anything contrary to Nature which happened in the narratives of the Bible must not dissuade us in order to believe in miracles. He declares:

Therefore there can be no doubt that all the events narrated in Scripture occurred naturally; yet they are referred to God because, as we have already shown, it is not part of Scripture to explain events through their natural causes; it only relates to those events that strike the imagination... So if we find in Scripture some things for which we can assign no cause and which seems to have happened beyond Nature's order, this should not perplex us.³³

Thus, it is clear for Spinoza that the Scriptures can narrate stories regarding supposed miracles but they must not be judged as events really contrary to the laws of Nature. Stories like Moses hitting a rock after which water flowed and the prophet Elisha raising a dead person back to life are circumstances wherein there are alleged miracles. However, Spinoza tells that these incidents are grounded on real events. For instance, water flowing from a rock is a reference to Moses and the Israelites journeying in the desert where they are led by God to springs and oases.³⁴ Elisha's raising of a dead child is a way of saying that the prophet first lied with the child several times in order for the child to receive warmth and in turn that the child may open his eyes.³⁵ The creative way of narrating stories in the Bible makes the devotees

believe. This is in contrast with a factual and historical retelling of events. Spinoza argues that people are not persuaded when they are only confronted with facts. However, when people are told of creative stories and stories which stir up the imagination, then people will easily be persuaded to believe the Christian faith. Spinoza writes:

Indeed, when they see or hear something strange, they will generally be so much influenced by their own pre-conceived beliefs—unless they are strictly on guard against them—that what they perceive is something quite different from what they really see or hear to have happened.³⁶

The downside of literary stories in the Bible is that it entails sentiments or emotions which seeps through the soul of the believer, making him/her passionately believe in the alleged miracles of the Bible.

The last thesis that Spinoza exposes in the sixth chapter of the TTP is that he discusses how Scriptural miracles should be interpreted. He previously defined miracles as unusual works of Nature; yet, Spinoza uses the word miracles alongside the scriptures. For Spinoza, he suggests that miracles only happened inside the chronology of the Holy Scriptures. The same line of thinking is found in the Saint Augustine, Doctor of the Church. He even exclaimed in his *De Vera Religione* (On True Religion) that the time of miracles halted in the Apostolic era.

These miracles were not permitted to last till our times, lest the soul should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which stirred it when they were novel. That is true. When hands are laid on in Baptism people do not receive the Holy Spirit in such a way that they speak with the tongues of all the nations. Nor are the sick now healed by the shadow of Christ's preachers as they pass by. Clearly such things which happened then have later ceased. But I should

not be understood to mean that to-day no miracles are to be believed to happen in the name of Christ. For when I wrote that book I myself had just heard that a blind man in Milan had received his sight beside the bodies of the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius. And many others happen even in these times, so that it is impossible to know them all or to enumerate those we do know.³⁷

We have to understand, according to Spinoza, that the Scriptural miracles are indeed part of the fixed and immutable order of Nature in the world. He cited the heart of the Pharaoh hardened by God.³⁸ It is not to be interpreted literally that the Pharaoh had a hard heart after he was punished by God. Instead, the Pharaoh was just obstinate to follow the will of God. In the end, Spinoza would just like to tell his readers that the law of Nature is fixed and immutable and the notion of miracles are no more than strange because of the ignorance of man.³⁹

There are a number of criticisms which can be held against Spinoza's notion of miracles and I highlighted them at the end of every thesis. But there are also a number of good points which can be obtained from Spinoza's exposition of the concept of a miracle. I would like to emphasize three important points. First, on devotion of Judaeo-Christian believers of a miracle. Second, on a different kind of scepticism employed by Spinoza. And third, on the Scriptures being a source of truth and fiction.

Let me proceed with the first point. Verbeek, a foremost scholar of Spinozan philosophy, obtained the meaning of devotion from the *Ethics* as love of one whom we admire.⁴⁰ How will devotion be powerful over what seems to be a superstitious account of miracles according to Spinoza? If devotion is love for who we admire, then to devote oneself to God is to love

Him. And I posit that loving God would entail this certain drive in us in order to fully achieve intuitive knowledge which we need to grasp his essence and existence. Therefore, for Spinoza, it is better that we just devote ourselves to God rather than looking for proofs of God's existence through miracles which he proved to be false in the TTP.

Second, there seems to be a different kind of scepticism which governed the whole philosophy of Spinoza on miracles. Yes, he lived before the time of David Hume, the father of scepticism. However, I would like to emphasize that Spinoza became a sceptic as concerned with the issue on miracles. Obviously, this is because of his latent pantheistic tendency which I highlighted at the beginning of my exposition of Spinozan philosophy. He observed Nature as one with God. Therefore, any concept related to God must not be separated from God. This was the fate of the concept of a miracle. For many years, the treatment of a miracle's existence is that which is something outside God, outside Nature. However, with Spinoza's scepticism, the treatment of a miracle as outside God was revolutionized. But this scepticism, I posit, became easy to understand because of the organization of Spinoza's philosophy. The *logos* in the philosophy of the rationalists made it easy for their philosophies to be understood.

Third, the Scriptures may be a source of truth and fiction. The examples of Scriptural passages stated in the previous discourses always carried with itself a grain of truth. It became fiction when the element of myth or literature was inserted in those verses. Therefore, I conclude that the miraculous is associated with fiction. Just as Spinoza highlighted the non-existence of miracles in the Holy Scriptures, so he did highlight that the fictional and literary verses in the Bible are just portrayed as the miraculous in

order to engage people into the devotion of the Judaeo-Christian faith.

In a nutshell, the problem of miracles has undergone a series of debates which can be traced back during the time of Saint Augustine up until now. Yet, the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza on miracles, which was exposed in the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, became a revolution in the history of rationalism, of philosophy of religion, and of the whole realm of philosophy as a whole. Scholars who debate upon Spinoza's latent pantheism may carefully examine the 17th century philosopher's take on miracles because it well speaks of a possible problem of pantheism in his whole philosophy. Nevertheless, the problem will not lie on Spinoza's philosophy. He may be influenced by his excommunication from the Jewish religion and wrote this as part of his rebellion. However, the problem will lie upon us, his readers, who will interpret his philosophy rightly or wrongly. But nonetheless, it is Spinoza who will give us the answer on how we will treat the problem of miracles. That is through devotion, the love of what we admire. If we love God and we admire Him, then we devote ourselves to Him even if miracles are really existent or non-existent.

¹ Theo Verbeek, *Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise: Exploring the Will of God* (London: Ashgate, 2003), 1.

² Ibid.

³ Beverley Clack & Brian Clack, *The Philosophy of Religion: A Critical Introduction* (Great Britain: Polity Press, 2008), 142.

⁴ English Dominican Fathers, "Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia Dei," in *dhspriority.org* <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/QDdePotentia.htm#6:1>, 30 July 2013.

⁵ Carol Neiman, *Miracles: The Extraordinary, the Impossible, and the Divine* (London: Boxtree Publishing, 1995), 12.

⁶ Carol Neiman, *Miracles: The Extraordinary, the Impossible, and the Divine*, 12.

⁷ Ibid, 13

⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* [1676] (2010), Prop. 17, Part I, 10.

⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* [1677] found in *Spinoza: Complete Works* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 444.

¹⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 444.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 445

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 445.

¹⁸ Ibid, 446

¹⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Prop. 35, Part II, 38.

²⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* [1670], 445-446

²¹ Maria Imelda Nabor-Nery, *Philosophy of Man* (Mandaluyong City: National Book Store, 2007), 71

²² Author's note: Here, by Nature, I do not mean simply matter and its modifications, but infinite other things besides matter.

²³ Baruch Spinoza, Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 445-446.

²⁴ Ibid, 447

²⁵ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Prop. 42, Part II, 41.

²⁶ Theo Verbeek, 24

²⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 447.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 449.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 451.

³⁴ Ibid, 454.

³⁵ Ibid, 451.

³⁶ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 452.

³⁷ John Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 220.

³⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 454.

³⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 455.

⁴⁰ Theo Verbeek, 28.

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***The Confessions* – The Journey to the Intellectual and Spiritual Maturity of St. Augustine**

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Abstract: *The Confessions* is one of the books that have been used by philosophers and theologians for over a millennium as a source for intellectual, moral, and spiritual guidance. It contains the accounts on the life of one of the greatest ecclesiastical figures and well-known Doctors of the Roman Church—St. Augustine. The entire work is written in such a meditative way that has influenced many intellectuals as a source for the intimate relationship of man with the Divine. It also gives the reader a view on the philosophy and theology of St. Augustine that has been one of the reasons for the development and acted as one of the pillars for Christian philosophy and theology. Further, the life of St. Augustine exposes the reader to the examination of oneself as one can see in the intellectual and spiritual conversion and ascent of the saint. The thought of St. Augustine can be summarized into this treatise and one will see the union of the two dimensions in his mind: the intellectual, and the spiritual realm that has been the topic for most of his discourses. He used the dominating philosophy of his time in order to present a systematized body of thought and bound the realms of reason and faith together and made it to complement and harmonize each other. Due to that effort done by him, it contributed to his later title: “Doctor of Grace.” Bearing that in mind, the paper contains a critical analysis on *The Confessions* (how crucial the said text is for the study) as it aims to give an exposition on the importance and relevance of the philosophical and theological theories of St. Augustine especially during this time of the modern era.

Keywords: St. Augustine, *The Confession and Theology*

The philosophy of St. Augustine, it should be noted, does not only have a pure philosophical content but it has, at the same time, theological elements on it. It is the mixture of both fields that was made by him to complement each other. Through that combination, he has made it possible to produce a system of thought that became one of the main pillars of Christian belief and teachings. If one may notice, most of his works

contain topics that are highly religious in nature and can be classified as theological. Further, it might be questioned whether he is ever conscious and intends to write his works in the manner that they were written and composed. In other words, does St. Augustine know what genre his works will fall under? This question does not only apply in *The Confessions* but to all of his works. The answer that the researcher can give is that yes, he is conscious of addressing it

in a philosophical and at the same time, theological manner. The reason is that, for St. Augustine, there is no boundary between philosophy and theology because for him according to one of his works entitled *Of True Religion*, he stresses that “So it is thought and believed as a chief point in man’s salvation that philosophy, i.e., the pursuit of wisdom, cannot be divorced from religion...”¹ In there he has proven that the object of philosophy (pursuit of wisdom) is also the object of religion. In a book by Eugene Portalie entitled, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, he stated there in support:

Clearly, then, there is a philosophy of St. Augustine, but so intimately is it linked with his theology that the two cannot be separated. Therefore no separate study will be made of Augustine the theologian and Augustine the philosopher. Augustine is not the kind of man you can cut in two.²

Further, in support to that claim, it was said in an article by Joseph Rivera entitled, *Figuring the Porous Self: St. Augustine and the Phenomenology of Temporality*, he stated there that “Augustine’s work is therefore both philosophically suggestive and theologically fertile without insisting on a conceptual rift between philosophy and theology.”³ One of the most notable of his works is his work entitled, *The Confessions*. What the most catching feature of *The Confessions* is that, it holds the position of touching different topics and discussions. *The Confessions* also appeals to the reader as one can read the history of the life of the saint: from his childhood to his adult life. What makes it distinct is that *The Confessions* is made in such a way that it is seen as a person in communication of the Divine. Religious Language holds the position as that the use of words which pertain to God. *The Confessions* on that part is written in that constant manner. The said work also appeals to the intellect, the emotions, and the

spiritual life of the reader on ground of being an inspiration that has been evident on those other notable figures in Church history as well as the history of the development of philosophy. Those are the elements to be seen in the main source of the entire study that in general terms, *The Confessions’* contents and areas is diverse that it can be a source of study in other related fields. Through *The Confessions*, the researcher aims to show the reader the essentials of Religious Language found from the conclusions and generalizations from the preceding discussions in each chapter.

In an article by Andrew Ryder entitled, *Led by the Spirit: St. Augustine*, he states there that the “work records his long drawn-out struggle to find God.”⁴ As one will read thoroughly in this masterpiece, it can be analysed that the work contains most of his philosophy and theology. One might be asking what those confessions are all about. To give an answer to that it is very obligatory to give a brief overview of the book. The said book contains three kinds of confessions namely: “the confession of sins, confession of faith, and a confession of praise.”⁵ It also holds the three positions that embody what religious language is and those that are mostly questioned by the critics of religious language. Further, as it also explores the ascetical life, it also gives man a view of union with God through “by God’s grace he finds God, and by God’s grace he is united to God.”⁶ Being a confession in manner, it pushes its reader into threefold conversion as well: “philosophical, moral, and religious.”⁷ As in St. Augustine’s journey in life, he corrects all his errors and deficiencies that can be attributed as a helpful source to the study of Ethics and as well as on Existentialism. Further, it includes St. Augustine’s hermeneutic of the exegesis on the *Book of Genesis* namely, the story of creation. In the same article by Andrew Ryder, he says that: “this combination of speculation and experience

gives his writings a unique on-going relevance.”⁸ Not all writers in history possess such magnitude for it requires a lot of experience and knowledge for a person in order for him to write a book that can be said as a summary of all his teachings and philosophy. At the same time, *The Confessions*, due to it having an autobiographical nature, can be said that it allows its readers to look directly to what the Bishop of Hippo has in his mind and all along his journey in life. That is why it can also be classified as a psychological examination of one’s consciousness. It can be noted also that the book is written on a meditative manner for “the book is an extended prayer.”⁹ It is further argued that “his book is not only a most penetrating psychological study and a unique document for understanding the spiritual and ascetical life, but it is also a storehouse of thought for the philosopher and the theologian, and for others as well.”¹⁰

From there, the objective of this article is to show what the nature and characteristic of *The Confessions* is that makes it unique and to show its usefulness as a source for different related fields of study. Also, its on-going relevance that makes it as a classic will be explored. This will be shown as the researcher critically excavates *The Confessions*, revealing its basic features and characteristics together with the exposition of manuscript’s author particularly the language of his writing style. This study will pave way to the basic understanding of *The Confessions* and the philosophy and theology of St. Augustine.

St. Augustine: His Philosophy and Works

In reading St. Augustine, one must always put into his mind the basic features of his philosophical theology:

- (1.) “His agonizing effort leading to his conversion,

- (2.) His need as a pastor to explain the Church’s doctrines,

- (3.) His awareness that the action of grace is the love of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts.”¹¹

Those are the basic elements that must be understood by his reader first and foremost because those reasons provide an overview of his writing style and influences.

Bearing that in mind and before the discussion will proceed; the researcher finds it very necessary to include a brief account of the life and contributions of St. Augustine. Who is this person? St. Augustine (Aurelius Agustinus) was born on November 12, 354 A.D. in Thagaste, Numidia Proconsularis (now in the modern day Algeria). He was the son of Patricius, a pagan, and Monica, a devout Catholic who herself later became a saint. The early years of his life is noted by having a life of pleasure seeker, continually satisfying his earthly desires until one day, he came upon the teaching of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and having read the *Hortensius* (now a lost work) of Cicero and being exposed to the philosophy and theology of his time that eventually led to his conversion.¹² The reigning philosophical inclination of the time is Neo-Platonic philosophy which holds the philosophical belief adapted from Platonism that can be summed up as:

the visible world is but a manifestation or reflection of the “spiritual world,” and the world of Ideas (spirit), which, in turn, is the creation of the Absolute (*Unum*), through the instrumentality of the Word (*Logos*).¹³

This philosophical belief will be the foundation of his writing of his treatises and will soon be developed in his formulation of the “Theory of Divine Illumination” that was fully exposed in his work entitled, *The Teacher*. He also served as

an instructor of rhetoric and because of this; he was able to exercise that skill in writing his works and manuscripts, particularly *The Confessions*. Because of that characteristic, it can be said that it also paved way for making it as an enduring source for literary studies that focuses on Classical Literature as it was said in a book by Bernard Knox entitled, *The Norton Book of Classical Literature*: "... he is one of the masters of Latin prose."¹⁴ And also, of course, as a representative of early Catholic writing as it was further said in the same book by Bernard Knox: "He was a prolific writer, an ecclesiastical controversialist on the grand scale (with ninety-three titles to his credit), and an eloquent upholder and mainstay of the authority of the hierarchy of the Church."¹⁵ His later life was allotted to the service of the Church as he has served as the Bishop of Hippo until his death on August 28, 430 A.D.¹⁶

Throughout his life, he has written many works on both philosophy (inspired by Neo-Platonism) and theology (on doctrines and apologetics in defence to the teachings of the Catholic Church) that has been used by many philosophers and theologians in later years as a foundation of their teachings. In a book by Eugene Portalie entitled, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, he stated the way into which one must read St. Augustine as he said: "To study his teaching is at the same time to study his influence on the world."¹⁷ It is because his teachings have contributed greatly in the development of human civilization that was exemplified in his teachings preserved in his writings. His contemporaries, influenced by him, have carried on the tradition of his thought that was incorporated in the respective philosopher or theologian's own works and mindset. Further, in the same book by Eugene Portalie, he stresses the characteristic of the saint that he was able to make it possible to make his works still sound new even though it

was written for almost two thousand years ago. He said: "Augustine collects and condenses in his writings the intellectual treasures of the old world and transmits them to new."¹⁸ He has shown his influence in totality as it was evident in history, particularly speaking of the development of philosophy and theology.

Due to his teaching regarding the need of grace coming from God for the conversion of man, he later obtained the honorary title of "Doctor of Grace." This teaching of his was fully exposed in *The Confessions* as he said: "So totally is it a matter of grace that the searcher is not only invited to see you, who are ever the same, but healed as well, so that he can possess you."¹⁹ Stressing his title as Doctor of Grace, St. Augustine believed "that to overcome temptation we are in absolute need of the grace of God."²⁰ It can be noted and can be vividly seen that most of the philosophies of St. Augustine mentions the vital role of God in the life of man and argues that the said guiding grace did not just come out of man's own efforts but it is first and foremost from the generosity of God and has given it as a blessing and gift in order for his creations to know Him and adore Him.²¹ From there, it can be concluded that the aim of the philosophy of St. Augustine is to establish the fact that God is the sole source of all goodness, beauty, and perfection and that man should understand that God must be the one to search for in order to attain the fulfilment of contentment. On an article by Macario Mina entitled *St. Augustine: Philosophy, Religion, and Mysticism*, he states that "God is the stimulus for the search of truth, for the philosophical search"²² and as St. Augustine himself said it on one of his works entitled *Soliloquies*: "God to whom we have committed ourselves will doubtless lend his aid and deliver us from these difficulties. Only let us believe and ask him with the greatest devotion... now our plan was, I believe, to proceed peaceably

and agreeably in our search for truth, with God's help."²³ St. Augustine fully believes on the idea of God's light shining deep within man and illuminating him in order to attain knowledge of certain truths that again was fully addressed in his *The Teacher*. The late Pope Paul VI on one of his letters addresses St. Augustine in this manner:

For us, St. Augustine is an always productive mind, or better yet, an ever flowing fountain. One never finishes admiring or drawing from his words, his insights, and the richness of his spirit, treasures which can be of great importance, not only for scholarship and for the religious life..., but also for that of the modern world. Really he is the one who has spoken for the interior Master better than anyone else.²⁴

Pope Paul VI has set the standards on which St. Augustine, particularly his magnificent contributions in the philosophical, theological, and literary world has never faded and remains to be interesting and delightful to read and investigate even by the people of the modern era despite of the many transitions and development of man to cope up with the trend in the society.

With that in mind, it is further stressed and argued by thinkers of St. Augustine of today that among the many contributions in philosophy and theology, what needs more attention is:

His subtle accounts of belief and authority, his account of knowledge and illumination, his emphasis upon the importance and centrality of the will, and his focus upon a new way of conceptualizing the phenomena of human history.²⁵

On an article entitled *St. Augustine: Philosophy, Religion, and Mysticism* by Macario Ofilada Mina, he cites Agostino Trape on his book entitled,

Saint Augustine: Man, Pastor, Mystic, as he said that:

Augustine was ... philosopher, theologian, mystic, and poet in one, and this is an eminent degree. His lofty powers complemented each other and made the man fascinating in a way difficult to resist. He is philosopher, but not a cold thinker; he is theologian, but also a master of the spiritual life; he is a mystic, but also a pastor; he is poet, but also a controversialist. Every reader thus finds something attractive and even overwhelming depth of metaphysical intuition, rich abundance of theological proofs, synthetic power and energy, psychological depth shown in spiritual ascents, and a wealth of imagination, sensibility, and mystical fervour.²⁶

From there, Saint Augustine was described as having all those characteristics making him one of the people in history to have possessed all those qualities and have exercised it properly into almost perfection. Most of his works has inspired different thinkers in history and has adapted the kind of his philosophy like St. Anselm of Canterbury, Rene' Descartes, G.W. Leibniz, Nicolas Malebranche, to name a few.

The Confessions: The General Features

The combination of many experiences and a mind that has pondered upon many questions in the life of man, it made it possible for the Doctor of Grace to compose *The Confessions*. He wrote the said work when he was already consecrated and serving as the Bishop of Hippo at around the year 397 until year 400.²⁷ It is a work that is acclaimed over the ages by philosophers, theologians, litterateurs, and historians as the only source in which one can have a view on the life of the saint and at the same time to have a look on the birth and the development of Christian philosophy and theology during the late ancient period. In the modern age, it has still maintained its prominence for its content holds the

characteristics of being captivating, inspiring, and spellbinding.²⁸ It is written in thirteen books ranging from the author's childhood down to his hermeneutic and meditation of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. It can be noted by the reader that *The Confessions*, based on how it was written, was a product of a man who has a very strong sense of memory having remembering the accounts of his life. St. Augustine does not only possess that kind of ability of having a good memory but more important is the fact that he has showed what the ability to "reflect" is all about. To reflect on one's own mind and life is the sign of intellectual maturity. From the exegesis from the Holy Scriptures, St. Augustine used his understanding of it as a way in his analysis of his own life and evaluating it. What makes the work so superb is the fact that he has connected all the chapters properly and he never swayed from his style of writing. The book started on a meditative manner and it ended on it as well. His outstanding rhetorical abilities made the work more attractable for the reader. In order to link the books into one another, he used the philosophy of age—Neo-Platonism; as it was said in a related article: "what unifies these books is the extensive use of Neo-Platonic philosophy as a means of coming to some understanding of the Christian faith, specifically an understanding of the origin, present state, and destiny of human beings."²⁹ As a product of more than a millennium of study, it later led to the translation of the work together with his other works into different languages in the modern age for the people to have an access to the life and mind of the Doctor of Grace.

***The Confessions* as a mirror of human condition**

The Confessions, as already said, is the autobiography of the life of Saint Augustine and at the same time a masterpiece of meditative

literature for having it written in a prayerful manner. Further, if one may look deeper into its contents; surveying his life, it can be said that the "the story of Augustine's conversion exemplifies the human condition. Only by turning back to the Creator can the creature find happiness and fulfilment."³⁰ It is one of the very rare books that can serve as a mirror for the reader to see and evaluate his life as a rational and moral human being. By that, it means that the life journey of St. Augustine can be seen as that of a life of an individual who is in search for meaning and purpose in his life and the aim of the Bishop of Hippo in writing *The Confessions* is such because he is in search for what is the ultimate answer to all the questions that bothers him, what will ultimately satisfy his thirst for wisdom and certitude. One can see the transition and the maturity of the mind of the young Augustine as he ages and became a Christian and later an ecclesiastic. He describes this transition in *The Confessions* as he says: "...into that error too I had formerly blundered, but your right hand grasped me, they plucked me out of it and put me in a place where I could be healed."³¹ Here, he stresses his signature doctrine of Divine grace as a way in remodelling the life of man into a truly moral and spiritual being.

Having borrowed the dominant ideas during his time, Saint Augustine has also made it possible that his classical masterpiece will serve as a source not only for philosophical and theological issues but for psychological investigations as well for in *The Confessions*, St. Augustine also offered ways in which one can manage his life properly through the exploration of one's self and consciousness in a way that can be called as a "spiritual exercise"³² that Andres Niño argues in his article entitled *Spiritual Exercises in Augustine's Confessions*. *The Confessions*, in this sense, is not just an abstract philosophical, theological, and literary work but

can be used as a guide and inspiration for the intellectual, spiritual, and physical development and maturity of an individual. *The Confessions* can be classified as a way of life—a way that a person can get some hints on how he should live his life accordingly. The said work can be considered as an authority on this sense because it is the experience of the author whom has evaluated life in his struggles for conversion from his attachment for the mundane out of his desire for something good that is far greater than man can ever have and that is no other than God.

The basic philosophical content of *The Confessions*

It is analysed that the aim of *The Confessions* lies on how one can achieve the greatest good in life, and that is, God. It is the product of his earlier writings that are heavily influenced by the early Christian thinking. He said in the introductory part of *The Confessions*: “Let me seek you, then Lord, even while I am calling upon you, and call upon you even as I believe in you; for to us you have indeed been preached.”³³ Further, on an article by Carol Harrison entitled *Augustine and Religious Experience* it is said there that:

In order to exist, to literally stand out from nothingness, his life must be a continual turning towards the source of his existence, an endless willing of God, in other words, an unceasing search for the truth, obedience of the good and delight in the beautiful.³⁴

For St. Augustine, God is the ultimate source of all goodness as was shown in *The Confessions* and in his other works. The only goal that man should follow is the path toward God for if this path is not chosen by an individual, he will be led to moral and intellectual disintegration. In a deeper sense, there is something in the work that does not just end with the reading of the

accounts in the life of St. Augustine; of knowing his person through his established work, by learning the essentials of the products of his brilliant mind, and by learning the historical background of his time but moreover, the fact that a person can have the idea of putting himself into the shoes of St. Augustine. In other words, one will be able to see himself and have an inspiration from the hurdles that St. Augustine needed to overcome in his life toward his intellectual (due to the many heresies that are dominant during his time) and spiritual life (his conversion to Christianity and fulfilling its demands).

For the life of an individual who has read *The Confessions*, it does not literally mean that there is a complete sameness with one's life with St. Augustine's but it only serves as a medium in which man will be able to evaluate himself whether he, over the years in his life have really been on the right path or was often swayed by other things irrelevant and violating in the true nature of man. What a person will be able to see here is the fact that the path toward the conversion of the mind and spirit at the same time is not a very easy but a daunting task to do. It would require a lot of effort and total submission from a person who intends to change for the better. That is why, the saddening part, there are many people that are still on the path of intellectual and spiritual degradation in the society due to the lack of moral and religious guidance and supervision especially from the people who are supposed to sustain those needs. St. Augustine is fully aware of that fact when he says: “And so the two wills fought it out—the old and the new, the one carnal, the other spiritual—and in their struggle tore my soul apart.”³⁵ He does not evade saying that there will always be a challenge for a person that he needs to pass in order to attain what he wills for.

The Confessions also feature the longing for God. It can be said that among many works, it embodies this kind of thinking and experience for it possess such a mystical approach that makes the reader think about on how can be it possible to do attain such but the author himself have attained it and have shared his accounts on his said masterpiece. St. Augustine establishes his theory that the entire happiness that man wants rests in God as he says in the introductory part of *The Confessions*; "... and our heart is restless until it rests in you."³⁶ St. Augustine, holding the belief that God is the ultimate end of man, shows that man's goal is to return home from its origin. It can also be linked to that of what is said in the *Book of Genesis* of the Holy Bible: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."³⁷ It is God who created man and therefore man should return to whom he came from. But the way to that is not easy for, as mentioned earlier, there are many hurdles that need to be crossed and passed in order to return to that original state.

Since the true home of the spirit or soul is the realm of the spiritual, it is but natural that creatures should yearn and search for their origin. Man, particularly, a rational creation, enjoys privilege, though interior illumination, of having power to communicate with or contemplate this *Unum* (God) in this life.³⁸

In his work *Of True Religion*, St. Augustine reiterates as a support for the belief that man's nature is positioned toward his inclination on his origin; his creator—God, and that everything came from the efforts of God and it is essential for man to have knowledge of this when he said: "All that exists receives existence from God, and that which does not as yet exists but may do so, receives its potential existence from God."³⁹ Such extracts from his earlier works will usher his creation of *The Confessions* and his later works like *The City of God* and *Retractions*. The earlier philosophies will greatly

help the Doctor of Grace himself for him to be able to construct his classical epitome work and at the same time guide his readers that will serve as a supporting pre-requisite not only for the study of the philosophy of St. Augustine alone but for the whole of the history of philosophy as a ground for the development of Scholastic philosophy and Mystical theology as it was said in classification in the book of Eugene Portalie: "... Augustine was the inspiration of two seemingly antagonistic currents of thought in the bosom of the Church, Scholasticism and Mysticism."⁴⁰

Conclusion

The works prior to *The Confessions* can be viewed as it was all summarized into one volume as exhibited in the said work. The intellectual and spiritual struggle of St. Augustine has been the highlight of *The Confessions* that has remained to be unequalled because there is no other person in history that has written in the manner that *The Confessions* was written by its author. To let another person know one's private life is a very serious matter for it can be the cause of the destruction of a person's image and position on the society but despite of those possibilities, St. Augustine have not fallen into that pit but instead, he became the victor in his struggle for conversion. His inner desire to put an end to his hedonistic self and his decision to put on the "armour of light" that eventually led to the maturity of his past feeble mind and spirituality. For the modern people, this is a timeless experience for the life of St. Augustine also mirrors the life of a typical common person whose true goal in life is both the development of the rational capacity in order to fulfil one's life to the fullest and the battle for the entry through the "narrow gate" that needs complete submission of faith, mind, and body that will lead to the ultimate end of man; his true home

and origin and that is no other than God Himself.

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- ⁵ Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. by John K. Ryan. (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 29.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ryder, *Led by the Spirit: St. Augustine*, 410.
- ⁹ Ibid. 411.
- ¹⁰ Saint Augustine, *Op. Cit.*, 17.
- ¹¹ Ryder, *Led by the Spirit: St. Augustine*, 410.
- ¹² Saint Augustine, *The Confessions* (trans. by John K. Ryan), 18-27.
- ¹³ Eusebio B. Berdon. "Augustine's Conversion: A Key to Understanding His Spirituality" in *A Tribute to St. Augustine*, compiled by Felicisima Torres-Campos. (Iloilo City: University of San Agustin, 1999), 5-6.
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- ¹⁵ Ibid.
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- ¹⁷ Portalic, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, 81.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 84.
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- ²⁰ Ryder, *Led by the Spirit: St. Augustine*, 417.
- ²¹ Ryder, *Led by the Spirit: St. Augustine*, 416.
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- ²³ Saint Augustine, "Soliloquies" in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. by J.H.S. Burleigh. (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953), 46, 48-49.
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- ²⁵(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/#ReaCon>) accessed last December 2, 2013.

²⁶ Mina, *St. Augustine: Philosophy, Religion, and Mysticism*, 496; Agostino Trape. *Saint Augustine: Man, Pastor, Mystic*, trans. by M. J. O'Connell. (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1986), 335.

²⁷ Saint Augustine, *The Confessions* (trans. by John K. Ryan), 40.

²⁸ Andres G. Niño. "Spiritual Exercises in Augustine's Confessions" in *Journal of Religion and Health Vol. 47 Issue 1*. (New York: Blanton-Peale Institute, 2007), 88.

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³¹ Saint Augustine, *The Confessions* (trans. by Maria Boulding, OSB), 185-186.

³² Niño, *Spiritual Exercises in Augustine's Confessions*, 89.

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³⁵ Saint Augustine, *The Confessions* (trans. by Maria Boulding, OSB), 193.

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³⁷ Gn. 3:19.

³⁸ Berdon, *Augustine's Conversion: A Key to Understanding His Spirituality*, 6.

³⁹ Saint Augustine, *Of True Religion* (ed. by J.H.S. Burleigh), 242.

⁴⁰ Portalic, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, 88

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The Emergence of *Taglish* as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon in the light of Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge

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Abstract: Taglish or simply a creative way of blending together Tagalog and English languages is not just a trend. It is becoming so ordinary. And what makes it even more inviting for a point of reflection is the collective tolerance in assimilating these changes into our daily interactions. If Hegel is correct that language is the soul of the people, then are we comfortable in accepting that Taglish is the contemporary Filipino's "soul"? Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge could offer a more substantive analysis of Taglish as a social phenomenon. Society is tangled by ideologies, mind sets, interests, habitus, narratives that crisscross along a wide spectrum of social interaction. It is like a battle of discourses so that the one that emerges predominant becomes a system of control over the others. Such control results into the emergence of norms institutionalized as bodies of knowledge... that knowledge legitimized by unreflective majority becomes a power of control. As time passes by, it becomes a tradition that is so difficult to challenge. Taglish may carry within an ideology of superiority so that to get the power is to speak the language. It may even serve as a requirement for social acceptance, and once within, it shapes a new trend, a new value, a new way of looking at reality.

Keywords: Discourse, Genealogy, Panopticonism, Power-relations, Taglish

I. Preliminary Remarks

"Bro, sa'n ka mag-*dinner after class*?"

"Di ko alam bro, *what if sa MOA na lang*?"

"Sa MOA pa. Anlayo naman. Sa'n tayo sasakay?"

"Mag-*cab na lang tayo*. Di ko kase dala yung *car ko e*."

In the contemporary Filipino setting, Taglish is naturally common as a form of casual communication. By creatively playing with English and Tagalog words, the Filipino is able to make complete sentences that are understandable in its own right. In almost all cases, English words are mixed up with Tagalog words in a sentence. It is a colloquial means of communication that has grown to be a normal phenomenon in everyday life. The growth of Taglish or perhaps Vislish's/Ceblish's, Iloclish's, or any other vernacular language, for that matter, mixed with English, is not surprising since our country is using four major languages:

Filipino, Cebuano, Ilocano and English. If Taglish is common among the Tagalog speaking regions, it is also equally the same with Ilocano or Cebuano.

Filipino is our mother tongue, while English is the language we have acquired from American colonization and have embraced as our own. And so, *Taglish* has developed into a standard means of discourse here in the Philippines. The average Filipino, for instance, would normally use the English words *T.V.*, *refrigerator*, *aircon*, *notebook*, *blackboard*, *computer*, etc. In the Filipino setting, it becomes “normal” to use English words or phrases with Tagalog to complete a sentence. This usually happens whenever a particular Filipino finds it difficult to think of the proper Tagalog word that matches what he wishes to express. This is true for example when expressing academic jargons that have always been taught in English. A student cannot, in his power, express in pure Tagalog many scientific jargons such as *photosynthesis*, *predation*, *red-blood cells*, *genus*, *species* etc. Neither can he express mathematical equations using pure Tagalog. The terms *pagdadagdag* and *pagbabawas* in place of *addition* and *subtraction* admittedly sound very unnatural even to Filipino ears. This is not necessarily always the case since there are many other English words that have taken the place of proper Tagalog words out of popular usage. Taglish has emerged not only as a popular means of communication but as a normal colloquial discourse when talking with friends and family outside school or working hours.

On the other hand, Taglish’s popularity carries within it some elements of elitism, high-culture, and prestige. Such is the case it likewise becomes the arbiter for distinguishing the educated from the unlearned. What is fascinating is the fact that even among the educated (academicians), Taglish, as a social

phenomenon, fails to captivate their interest. Taglish ceases to fascinate them so that an in-depth treatment of this phenomenon is nowhere to be found. As a matter of fact, very little literature is available taking this theme as a kind of intellectual exploration. Taglish simply blends perfectly with Tagalog and that linguistic turn does not invite a more intensive philosophical reflection.

If, according to Hegel, language is the soul of the people, then has Taglish become the soul of our nation? If each language uses particular symbolisms that unfold a web of culturally differentiated character, does it follow that systematic incursion of Taglish in our ordinary discourses is a distortion of meaning, and consequently, contributes further to a heightened social identity crisis? Gadamer has a profound description of the German word *verstehen*, roughly translated as ‘understanding’. It addresses a specific cultural affinity among speakers so that each one understands because of their given-ness to history (*Wirkungsgeschichte Bewusstsein*). A deep-seated common experience that is brewed through many years of rituals, symbols, traditions and norms make their notion of a life-world.

Furthermore, is it not illogical to postulate that Taglish is not merely a distortion of meaning but also an *engendering* of a cultural divide among us? On one side, we see the Taglish-speaking community who are hailed and respected. Taglish becomes a symbol of breeding, a language of the rich and famous. On the other side, a group of Filipinos speaking the language with a natural crunch is differentiated from the Taglish speakers. Tagalog is the language of the *masa*, of the ordinary man, and of the uneducated. Hence, it is reasonable to construe that Taglish culture, and for whatever mindset it brings along, shapes the culture of the common *tao*. The common people look at the Taglish

speaking as if idols worthy of emulation. If any, language is a kind of cultural forgery, where a way of life is nurtured and protected, then our language lies at the mercy of a language (Taglish) and the culture that it promotes. This continues and persistent “attack” would drive away a typical Filipino way of knowing to the sidelines.

Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* could offer a more substantive analysis of Taglish as a social-phenomenon. Philippine society is tangled by ideologies, mind sets, interests and narratives that crisscross along a wide spectrum of social interaction. What we have is a battle of discourses in which the victor of the battle emerges as the predominant system of control. Such a control results to the emergence of norms and standards that are institutionalized as governing bodies of knowledge. Such bodies of knowledge are legitimized by the unreflective majority and become a power of control. As time passes by, it becomes a tradition that is so difficult to challenge.

Hence, for all intent and purposes, this paper argues:

1. Taglish may carry within it an ideology of superiority so that to attain power is to speak the language. It may even serve as a requirement for social acceptance, and once within, it shapes a new trend, a new value, a new way of looking at reality gradually pushing the other to the margins. Even further,
2. This paper speculates that with the predominance of Taglish, a vast collection of Tagalog words whose meanings nurture a Filipino culture would die for the life of a language depends on its usage. Taglish would gradually unleash a culture that discards the old ways leading to a distorted social consciousness and identity as Filipinos.

3. Taglish is a clear manifestation of a colonial mentality brewed in a hundred of years under the control of superior nations and “superior cultures” that the indigenous culture is viewed as inferior or even abhorrent.

II. Beyond Taglish as a Social Phenomenon

A. Taglish as the Language of the Learned

English words are sometimes even used in exchange of an already existing Tagalog word that may seem alien because some Filipinos seldom use it anymore. For example, many of my friends would rather express the sentence “*Mag-ready ka na*” when in truth, the more Tagalog way of expressing it is “*Gumayak ka na.*” Sadly, expressing the sentence through the latter merely makes you sound as if you grew up in the province. One particular response you’d hear is “*Gayak! Wow. Lalim! Nosebleed*” in which the term *malalim* denotes one who has lived in the past, and has grown in wisdom; a euphemism for OLD. Such a term connotes a negative tone as if one’s very own language has already become alien to his own land. Such remark peculiarly makes you seemingly inferior to the “sophisticated” Taglish-speakers. We have grown up preferring using the words *notebook* over *kwaderno*, *board* over *pisara*, *book* over *aklat*, *room* over *silid*. In addition, we would rather be saying the phrases “*Relax ka lang*” instead of “*Huminabon ka*”, “*Nag-lunch ka na ba*” over “*Nagtanghalian ka na*”.

Such linguistic modifications would sound perfectly normal to the average Filipino. Yet, a tinge of elitism in Taglish is apparent. This elitism can be traced from its two languages of origin: Tagalog/Filipino and English. Having Filipino as our mother tongue, we are addressed in the Filipino from the moment we are born. Filipino is the language we grew up with; it is the language we speak when talking to our

neighbors; it is the language we speak at home with our family or out with friends; it is the language we speak on normal occasions. On the other hand, we have English. Given our educational system, in which every lesson (except Filipino of course) was taught primarily in English, we are then exposed to English as our second language. More importantly, English is the language we are *required* to speak at school. It is the language professors use to educate their students; it is the language used by doctors to explain their medical jargon; it is the language businessmen use in addressing other businessmen, their CEOs and their managers; it is the language used in senatorial debates and court hearings. Hence, English is the language of professionals and the elite. This intense exposure to two major languages gives us the means to articulate in both languages and in merging those two: English being more acquainted with the academic and professional life, whereas Tagalog being more acquainted with life outside of it.

This sense of elitism in Taglish then is undeniable. After all, in order to speak it, one must be exposed to speaking in English which is the language taught in academic institutions. Needless to say, English is the language of the learned. Many medical, political, and technical jargons are expressed in English as well. Hence, to be learned in many various professional fields would mean being able to articulate them in English.

Filipino is the language you learn at home, neighborhood—in everyday life. This implies a notion that you do not have to be educated in order to learn Filipino. Consequently, this entails a certain sense of inferiority for our own mother tongue. And so, by integrating English words into Tagalog sentences, one elevates himself from the other who speaks in pure Tagalog sentences. As normal as Taglish is

today to most Filipinos, there is always an underlying sense of superiority that separates the Taglish-speaking community from the Tagalog-speaking majority.

Along with it, Taglish as mentioned earlier becomes an arbiter for distinguishing the learned from the ignorant. You could tell by the words a person speaks whether he is educated or not; when he uses English jargons applicable to his profession or when he uses English words in day to day conversations, he is educated. The ability to wield English words using them in sentences whether Taglish or pure English reveals that person's educational attainment. Failure to wield English words with the same mastery shows otherwise.. Henceforth, Taglish tends to widen the gap between the Taglish-speaking, privileged community and the non-Taglish speaking people.

This can be problematic since Taglish as a language must be bridging that gap instead of widening it. Therefore, although Taglish has become a normal means of discourse, it fails to unify the Filipino nation the same way Tagalog does. Taglish may create bridges among Taglish speakers but it does not serve the same purpose between them and non-Taglish speakers. Instead, it creates disunity between the two factions in which the one tends to distance itself from the other group creating a feeling of hostility between two classes. Taglish characterizes the upper educated classes whereas the failure to engage in it characterizes the lower uneducated masses.

B. Taglish and the Question of Meaning

Given its everyday use, is Taglish able to capture the same meaning and essence that its Tagalog equivalent expresses? Let us explore the following Tagalog phrases and their Taglish modifications:

Common Language	
Filipino/ Tagalog	Taglish
Opo, Ma.	<i>Yes, Ma.</i>
Huminahon ka.	<i>Relax ka lang.</i>

It is fascinating to note how in our common language, despite Taglish being as commonly used as Filipino/Tagalog, cannot entirely grasp the full essence of its Tagalog equivalent. For instance, the words *po* and *opo* are used to denote respect for the elder, a higher ranking official, or a mere stranger. Using *yes* in place of *opo* does indeed show its affirmative answer but without the same respectfulness and amiable tone that *opo* has. Even the word *po* cannot be translated literally to English and is an entirely unique word endemic in Tagalog. The use of *po* and *opo* reflects a culture which values the elder community and addresses them with reverence and respect. Meanwhile, although both the phrases “*Huminahon ka*” and “*Relax ka lang*” both express an imperative tone to address somebody to calm down, the former phrase is usually expressed with more conviction and has a more imperative effect on the Filipino. Its Taglish equivalent on the other hand is mainly used to address a *kabarkada* to calm down with its tone being less serious and less domineering than its Tagalog equivalent. It is easily discernible that despite having equal frequency in usage, the Tagalog equivalent of our phrases indeed has more impact to the Filipino than its lighter and more casual Taglish version. This is apparent also in metaphors and street slang.

Symbolic-Metaphoric Language	
Filipino/ Tagalog	Taglish
Ang pagpakumbaba ay sinasalamain ng kawayan. Habang ito’y, tumatanda, ito’y yuyuko	<i>Ang pagkumbaba ay nag-mimirror ng bamboo. Kung tumanda na nag ba bow-down ito</i>
Kung ano ang itinanim ay syang aanihin	<i>Kung ano ang pinaplant ay siyang hina-harvest</i>

Shown above are two well known Tagalog proverbs and their Taglish equivalents. It is apparent how the Tagalog versions of these proverbs have a more significant impact on the Filipino who has known them by heart. Tagalog proverbs have been an integral part of Filipino culture even during contemporary times. Consequently, Tagalog metaphors are treasured in the hearts of Filipinos that any certain modification is seemingly a form of sacrilege. That is why, any Taglish version of such Tagalog proverbs would sound peculiar despite the frequent use of Taglish.

Aside from this, reading both versions, one can objectively observe that these symbolic and metaphorical phrases have a more lasting impact, or as we would call it, *dating* on the listener when they are expressed in their pure form. Both the Taglish versions of these sayings have a minor and less serious impact on the Filipino as compared to their original Tagalog versions.

Mga Salitang Kanto	
Filipino/ Tagalog¹	Taglish
P***** ina mo!	<i>Pakyyu (F*** you) ka!</i>
Tinira ang bola. Butata!	<i>Shinoot ang bola. Na-block!</i>

I would finally compare the impact of Filipino street-language or *salitang balbal* with their Taglish counterparts. It is true that both versions are both frequently used in everyday communication most especially among friends. It is typical of many close friends, for instance, to curse at each other. However, there is a certain level of intensity in Tagalog curses that Taglish curses cannot express. Notice the Taglish curse “P**** ka!”, for instance, which is a derivation of the English “F*** you!” with the Tagalog *ka* in order to address somebody. This curse is usually expressed in a joking manner among friends. It sounds very mild as compared to the intense impact of the Tagalog curse “P***** ina mo”, which when expressed with much conviction would have a grave effect on the person hearing it. *Kung baga pag mangyari sa mga matatanda: MAGHAHALO ANG BALAT SA TINALUPAN!* Curses have been an integral part of our culture. Thus, in a Filipino culture where mothers are respected and revered, for one’s mother to be called a *p**** (prostitute) is beyond insulting and painful to the Filipino. The Tagalog curses, as a matter of fact, have already been embedded in our identity that they definitely have a more violent impact to Filipinos than the milder Taglish curses *p**** ka*, *s*** naman*, etc. Meanwhile,

street slang does not necessarily include only curses. In the basketball court, for instance, the Tagalog street word *butata* is expressed whenever someone’s shot gets swatted away. It is popular even among commentators in the PBA (Philippine Basketball Association) and is usually said with much force and power. To say *na-block ang* shot, on the other hand, does not have that same powerful effect to Filipinos as saying “swatted away” which has a powerful effect on Americans.

From the above three categories of Tagalog-Taglish translations, it is quite noticeable how the Tagalog versions have more significant effects on Filipinos than their Taglish counterparts. As much as Taglish has become a popular means of communication among Filipinos, it does not have that same impact or *dating* to the Filipino as Tagalog. The Filipino language is after all the soul of the Filipino nation and its words are closer to our hearts than Taglish. When it comes to usage, Taglish may be as frequently used as Filipino but when it comes to verbal and cultural impact to the Filipino listener, Tagalog has the better edge.

So, why is it that despite the greater power Tagalog holds, it has become reduced to merely a language of the street? Why do we, as a nation, elevate English over Tagalog when the former is alien to our hearts and the latter is in the very blood that flows in our veins? Even if Filipino is the heart and soul of our country, we, as a people have come to embrace Taglish as one with our language. Taglish has seeped into our system as the emergent popular language alternative to Filipino. The ideology it upholds is that the speaker is more empowered by Taglish than by Filipino. In order to substantially explain this, we now turn to Michel Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge*.

III. An Overview of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*

Foucault's perspective of history is beyond the conventional view of history where events are viewed as following a logical sequence which is given further explanations. For Foucault, the succession of such historical events must not be seen merely as a series of unrelated events but as a series of events reflecting certain sets of ideas, logic and standards of knowledge which reflect each historical epoch. His point of interest is how these certain sets of knowledge become the ruling body in a certain epoch only to be changed by another set of knowledge. Thus, in Foucault's philosophy, bodies of knowledge play an important, perhaps a *powerful* role in history. His study of the history of such knowledge is what he calls *archaeology*.

A. The *Archive*

Foucault makes use of archaeology so that in his analysis of history, he is unearthing layer by layer of what he calls as *archives*, which are characteristic of every historical epoch consists. Foucault describes the archive as:

...the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events... it is that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration... it is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements.²

An archive is a system or set of *discourses* in which each discourse counts as a legitimate body of knowledge during that historical period. Foucault simply puts it as "a set of discourses actually pronounced."³ The very object of archaeology is the discourse itself:

Archaeology tries to define not the thoughts, representations, images, themes, preoccupations that are concealed or revealed in discourses; but

those discourses themselves, those discourses as practices obeying certain rules.⁴

B. The *Episteme*

For Foucault, every historical epoch is constituted of various numbers of discourses. But, with these various discourses, there must be a set of conditions, or in other words, a system of control which governs in the establishment of knowledge. This system of control is called an *episteme*. Paul Oliver would describe this as "the sum total of intellectual rules which controlled the process of establishing valid knowledge."⁵ In other words, they are the governing conditions which influenced how the people sorted out what are valid and what are not in a particular epoch. Foucault describes how epistemes changed during the classical period, Renaissance, and the modern period. These epistemes influenced the way people thought during each of these historical epochs.

These epistemes are likewise characteristic of a certain system of thought or *archive* that has been established in time. These systems of thought were not created deliberately. In other words, there was no event wherein groups of people gathered to establish what is valid and what is not. Systems of thought are rather established gradually and unintentionally through different human activities. In time these ways of acting, working and thinking became acceptable for the majority and in time, served to be the very system which characterizes their historical period. In other words, these systems of thought were practices done successively until such a time that it became a normal practice. When it is established as a norm, it becomes the governing rule which dictates what must be acceptable and what is not.

In time, the present epistemes may gradually or abruptly change and be replaced by new epistemes which influence the mode of thought of the new historical epoch. Such change may be a result of an individual or a group of people who challenge the existing episteme. In time, their influence grows great until such a time that the episteme they have challenged during their lifetime gets replaced by a new episteme

C. The concept of *Discourse*

Each historical period has its own archive of discourses. Foucault defines discourses as “verbal signs”⁶. These verbal signs or statements are unique for any system of science. In professional medicine for example, doctors have their own medical jargon in which only those who are knowledgeable in medicine can understand. In other words, only those who are knowledgeable of such a system of knowledge can engage in such a discourse. Discourses likewise change depending on the person one is engaging with in the discourse. Verbal signs and symbols used vary whether you are talking with a colleague or a friend or an expert in a certain field. Discourse is not strictly limited to highfaluting jargon. Casual conversations with friends and family for example, are considered as discourses. Such discourses reflect the individual’s culture, and system of understanding. Thus, discourse reflects a system of knowledge and ideas found in the person engaging in it.

Discourse can likewise be put to *discursive practice*. Thomas Flynn describes *practice* as “a pre-conceptual anonymous, socially sanctioned body of rules that govern ones manner of perceiving, judging, imagining and acting.”⁷ Simply put, practice is the governing body which governs our manner of judging and acting, depending on the discourse we are engaging. Practice has two natures: the first is its

judicative nature in which a certain practice establishes norms and becomes the judge which applies such norms. Through this nature, it is able to set its own set of rules that need to be abided. Its *veridicative nature* on the other hand dictates whether a discourse is true, legitimate and valid, or plainly false, unacceptable and invalid. It is the *epistemes* of each historical epoch which establish the rules for the practice’s veridicative function. Thus in a given historical epoch, knowledge’s legitimacy is judged according to the rules established by the epistemes.

A discourse has within it its own system of ideas and knowledge. It has its own system of logic and its own system of judging and reflecting what is valid and what is not. It is within this discourse that the body of language is expressed, and so consequently, the discourse one is engaging in reflects a certain mutual ideology found among individuals engaging in it. The mode of discourse is closely associated then with what the type of knowledge that is considered valid and the possibility of generating new knowledge within the parameters of such discourse.

“Disciplines constitute a system of control in the production of discourse, fixing its limits through action of an identity taking the form of permanent reactivation of the rules.”⁸

Thus, within a discourse is not only a system of bodies of legitimized knowledge (such that have been accepted by the majority engaging in that discourse) but also an underlying ideology rooted in the cultural identity of the individual engaging in it. The discourse reflects the culture, the norms and ideas of the individual engaging in it. As Paul Oliver puts it:

In the sense that discourse is a reflection of the different forms of culture, customs and, indeed, knowledge, then discourse is typical of a

particular historical period... Discourse also helps create history... History will thus evolve in parallel with the predominant discourse⁹

Different modes of discourses reflect the historical period of the time. Foucault tackles such relationships of discourses with the historical epochs in his study of *genealogy*. Since a historical epoch consists of an archive with its own set of discourses, it follows that such sets of discourses are legitimized during a specific period of time. The existing epistemes of the epoch play an important role in the legitimization of such discourses so that some discourses (carrying with them certain elements and ideas) are accepted by many, whereas others are not. Whether a system is accepted as valid and legitimate or otherwise all depends on whether certain conditions (the epistemes) established by the existing archive, permit it.

D. Power within the Discourse

Not everyone can engage in one particular discourse however. The common man cannot engage in a philosophical discourse if he himself is uneducated in the field. A layperson cannot easily understand a doctor's medical jargon since he is not adept to such a course. This element of exclusivity within certain discourses allows for the person engaging in that discourse to exert his power over those unable to engage in it.

In turn, the ability to engage in such a discourse allows one to judge what is valid and invalid pertaining to the discourse he is engaging in. This is very much like the governing archive in every historical epoch which sets the conditions for what is logically sound during an epoch and what is downright unacceptable. To have the knowledge needed to engage in certain discourses allows one to legitimize certain knowledge or even generate new knowledge

which shall be legitimized by others. Thus, discourse gives one the power to sway ideologies, to challenge epistemes, and to influence the majority (whether those in the majority are capable of engaging in that discourse or not).

To be able to engage in certain discourses then implies that one person must learn the knowledge and the ideologies behind the discourse. A person must, for example, be educated in various fields if he wishes to engage in a discourse with someone who is educated. The very saying "knowledge is power" comes to life in the concept of discourse. In a way, along with this exclusive element in the discourse is inevitably an alienating element in which the uneducated are removed from the picture for being able to engage in such discourse. The uneducated would have less power and are at the mercy of the educated because they are unable to engage in the same discourse as the educated. Their lack of education prevents them from elevating the level of their discourse to match those of the educated.

IV. Power/Knowledge

A. The Dynamics of Power

Foucault's concept of power can be broken to its most basic element, which is influence. "He saw power as an aspect of an inter-relationship or interaction between human beings".¹⁰ In this case, one person can exercise his influence over another person, whether it is a friend, family member, co-worker, etc. However, any exercise of influence cannot always be accepted. It is characteristic of humans after all to want to exercise their own independence, and so the exercise of power over another can be tricky. In this way, a sovereign will "try to develop an intellectual justification for the exercise of that power"¹¹. As Joseph Rouse elaborates, Foucault

indicates aspects in the conception of sovereignty two points:

First, sovereignty is a standpoint above or outside particular conflicts that resolves their competing claims into a unified and coherent system. Second, the dividing question in terms of which these claims are resolved is that of legitimacy (often framed in terms of law or rights): Which powers can be rightfully exercised, which actions are lawful, which regimes are legitimate? Together, these two points present the sovereign as the protector of peace in the war of all against all and the embodiment of justice in the settling of competing claims.¹²

In the process, it is observable that power is everywhere. It is located in complex social networks, in which there is a constant battle of influences. Likewise, there is always this constant resistance of power that those in power must then develop and legitimate laws that would justify their rule over the majority. Sovereignty becomes the embodiment of what is legitimate and what must be followed. Similar to this monarchial sovereignty is what Rouse calls “Epistemic sovereignty” which “constitutes knowledge as the unified (or consistently unifiable) network of truths that can be extracted from the circulation of conflicting statements. They are legitimated as truths by the precepts of rational method, the epistemic surrogate for law.”¹³

In this way, the emergent network of truths becomes legitimized by the majority and is regarded as the governing truths. This network becomes the body which controls and exerts power. Such is the case that it has the capability of dictating what must be followed and what is set aside.

Power, for Foucault, is not as simple as having a sovereign rule over a people. He insists that “power is not something that is acquired,

seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away”.¹⁴ “Power is not possessed by a dominant agent, nor located in that agent’s relations to those dominated, but is instead distributed throughout complex social networks.”¹⁵ He further explains that Power is exerted through *power relations*, which emerge from “the support which force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunction and contradictions which isolate them from one another”.¹⁶ In this case, *power relations* are formed by alliances in which power finds support and acceptance, and thus influence is exerted from one person to another. On the other hand, those who refuse to succumb to such influence are removed from such relation. Power, in addition, presupposes knowledge. Knowledge needs power in order to have a significant impact on the individual. Just as power is in conflict with other power, so is knowledge through *epistemic practices* in conflict with other *epistemic practices*. In the same manner, epistemic practices rise because of these relations of power.

“Knowledge is established not only in relation to a field of statements, but also to objects, instruments, practices, research programs, skills, social networks, and institutions. Some elements of such an epistemic field reinforce and strengthen one another and are taken up, extended, and reproduced in other contexts.”¹⁷

In summary, power is dispersed across complicated social networks marked by an on-going struggle. From this struggle, power comes to rise through power relations which in time form a single coherent body of knowledge. In the process, those who wield such power are able to legitimize facts and generate laws in justification of their authority.

“Foucault suggests a different image in which conflict and struggle are always present and

inescapable. To make truth-claims is to try to strengthen some epistemic alignments and to challenge, undermine, or evade others.”¹⁸

This constant conflict of epistemic practices in time creates an epistemic growth. For instance, what may be abided and dignified before may be considered trivial nowadays. Power works wonders behind knowledge for knowledge exert its legitimate authority. In order for knowledge to be abided, the power working behind it goes through a series of power relations in which it grows until such a time that it is powerful enough to dictate what must be legitimate and what must be set aside. In retrospect, these dynamics of power are behind the shifts of *epistemes* with every historical epoch.

V. Synthesis: Reflections on Foucault as applied to the Taglish as a cultural phenomenon in the Philippines

As observed previously, that when it comes to impact on the Filipino listener, Tagalog undeniably has a greater force exerted as compared to Taglish. The impact of our very own language to us can be rooted in our culture. As Filipinos we have grown accepting values, norms, saying and even superstitions that are genuinely Filipino. This Filipino mode of thinking reflects an *episteme* anchored on the Filipino identity, so that the typical Filipino would grow to discern what is genuinely Filipino based on his cultural up-bringing. Such a system of knowledge and belief is expressed in our very own Filipino language. This explains why when it comes to impact; phrases uttered in Tagalog have a greater effect on the Filipino as compared to Taglish. For instance, as mentioned previously, the terms *po* and *opo*, reflect a system of thought that is undeniably Filipino. And since such words are expressions of an endemic Filipino mindset, other languages, in an attempt to translate, cannot fully grasp the essence of these words. Other

languages are discourses that have a system of knowledge of their own and hence cannot grasp the Filipino mindset. So that replacing *opo* with yes cannot fully grasp the essence that *opo* has. Our language reflects the episteme that is genuinely Filipino so that translations or modifications of Tagalog saying cannot fully express them with the same impact that Tagalog has on the Filipino listener. This is observable not only in day-to-day language but also in Filipino sayings and even street language which are integral aspects of our culture. Within that culture is a governing system of thought, logic, and understanding that is uniquely our own.

On the other hand, the emergence of English and the modification of Tagalog phrases with English words uphold an entirely different episteme. Naturally, they are expressed in a different form of discourse. English as mentioned earlier is the language spoken by professionals and prestigious people, whether they be businessmen or government officials. In addition, English is the medium of communication used in academic institutions. This renders that in order to be able to speak English, you must be educated. English becomes the determining factor of who is educated or not. Likewise, a proficiency in the use of the language (the range of one's vocabulary, the skill in playing with words, etc.) reflects the level of educational attainment. For instance, a college graduate has a greater expertise in the English language than the grade school drop-out. When one is proficient in English, then he has no trouble engaging in Taglish as well. Because of colonial-mentality, Taglish and English are elevated and empowered at the expense of Tagalog. In the process, Taglish as a discourse becomes a norm which everyone else has to abide. Being a language of an educated, this implies that Taglish becomes a more superior discourse as compared to Tagalog, having the power to

establish itself as a normative discourse which exercises control over other discourses. Taglish is esteemed while Tagalog is taken for granted.

1. Taglish Becoming a Normative Discourse

As mentioned earlier, to be able to engage in certain discourses is to be able to exercise power. Francis Bacon's historic statement that "Knowledge is power" comes to life in the concept of discourse as mentioned. Having knowledge in a given field allows the person to dictate what is valid and what is not in a given field and so he is able to practice such power over those who are not knowledgeable.

Given our educational system wherein English is a policy, it is no doubt that English, and Taglish, for that matter, becomes the language of the learned. And so those capable of engaging in Taglish conversations are esteemed to be more learned than those who cannot. This notion is anchored on the system of thought that English and Taglish as the language of the learned is superior to Tagalog. Taglish creates an ideology that those engaging in it are more superior to those who do not. Taglish becomes an alienating discourse, very much like medical, mathematical, or political jargons (which by the way are expressed in English as well) are alienating discourses. Such an alienating element empowers the person engaging in that discourse so that he is able to exert that power over those who don't. Vis-a-vis the Taglish speaking community is esteemed more superior compared to non-Taglish speakers.

There is no denying that Taglish is on its way to becoming a norm which distinguishes the educated from the uneducated. Taglish becomes the standard of the educated, of the elite and the powerful so that it becomes normative. Consequently, in order to elevate oneself, one must then engage in Taglish as well. Those who

are in power, whether it be the state, professionals or mere celebrities, involuntarily impose upon others the ideology that English and Taglish is superior as compared to Tagalog. Such ideology has been legitimized so that it cannot be questioned by that majority, particularly the masses, so that they associate Taglish with education, higher social status, and class. Such mindset only serves to make them view themselves as lesser compared to the Taglish speaking community. This can be observable in interviews and even in the classroom situation in particular, wherein those engaging in English and Taglish are esteemed for their proficiency, at the expense of Tagalog. Institutions with an "English campaign" for example deliberately set English as a standard for learning at the expense of Tagalog.

It becomes a normative discourse, a standard which draws everyone helplessly to follow so that it has the ability to exercise its control over those who do not speak the language. In other words, its subjugating power ends in complete domination and sets itself as the ultimate arbiter on who is "in" and who is "out". Further, since the standards of superiority is so legitimated by speakers of Taglish who come from the elite members of society, the natural pull, that is drawing the greater majority into it is more of an unconscious reaction that ultimately ends in the triumph of Taglish over Tagalog as the language of the Filipino. In its downfall, so does the intricacies of a Filipino culture that makes us what we are goes down the drain.

2. Taglish as a *Panopticon*

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault talks about the *Panopticon* in the prison setup. It is a form of surveillance system in which the prisoner has the impression that he is being watched all the time and is forced to comply with normative

behavior. Thus, it is an effective way to exercise power and control over those prisoners.

“Hierarchized, continuous and functional surveillance . . . was organized as a multiple, automatic, and anonymous power. . . . This enables the disciplinary power to be both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert, since by its very principle it leaves no zone of shade and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising; and absolutely “discreet,” for it functions permanently and largely in silence.”¹⁹

This *Panopticon* can be likened to the *Eye of Sauron* in *Lord of the Rings*²⁰, where the eye has a view of everything. In a similar way, such a form of control occurs in the daily setup. In a community where Taglish has become the normative discourse, non-speakers feel a sense of discomfort for not being able to abide to such norm. The *Panopticon* becomes the arbiter which distinguishes the Taglish speaker from the non-Taglish speaker. Because of this distinguishing element, there is a significant gap created between the Taglish-speaker and the non-Taglish speaker. The Taglish speakers have the tendency to be esteemed as superior whereas non-Taglish speakers are given less notice. As mentioned, when Taglish becomes the normative discourse, the ideology of superiority it upholds is legitimized. Thus those who engage in such discourse are able to exert their power over those who don't. This creates a subtle sense of inferiority in the non-Taglish speaker. This truth claim comes to play so that it undermines the person who does not engage in Taglish.

Consequently, the non-Taglish speaker is then pressured to comply with these norms in order to feel a sense of belongingness. When Taglish becomes the norm, non-speakers are marginalized and undermined. Such marginalization is a subtle way of exercising

control. This fear of social marginalization serves as the *Panopticon* which constantly supervises the majority with great subtlety. An individual does not even realize that he is already abiding to it for social acceptance. In order to cope up with such a norm, he involuntarily feels the need to engage in the normative discourse (Taglish) and complies. In this sense, the *Panopticon* succeeds in *normalizing* the non-conformist.

3. Discourse is Power

All social relations are constituted by a web of knowledge claims that clash against each other. Each claim for truth is entangled with the demands of legitimacy. This legitimacy is absolutely dependent on the eternal dictum *A lie multiplied a thousand times is better than a truth that has never been heard before*. This means that all knowledge reigns superior against the other if and only if it lives constantly in discourse that affirms and confirms it. In other words, the politics of knowledge simply means that a knowledge that has not been heard dies naturally, devoured by a discourse that dominates the others.

Taglish is a discourse. Taglish is not just the use of an English word blended ingeniously with Tagalog. It has a mindset, a value system, a way of looking at reality, a system of symbols that mesmerize speakers and, like a virus, it sweeps through every social vein that sustain the Filipino life-world.

As mentioned earlier, when one is able to engage in a certain discourse, he has the ability to judge for himself what is valid or invalid pertaining to the discourse he is engaging in. To have the knowledge needed to engage in a discourse renders him powerful. The community engaging in such discourse has the power to dictate what the norm is, what is valid,

and what must be discriminated or set aside. Thus, discourse empowers those who engage in it, to sway the majority, even if that majority does not engage in the same discourse. This discourse upon being legitimized as a norm then becomes the standard which has the ability to exercise power and control over others.

When Taglish becomes the normative discourse, it becomes a discourse of power. Taglish and the ideas it upholds are elevated in the pedestal, wherein it exercises its power over the majority, so that those who fail to abide to it, those who do not speak it feel marginalized from the Taglish speaking community. The primacy of Taglish as a discourse means that the narratives beyond Taglish are excluded and considered substandard. That means to say that in order to keep up, one is to engage and communicate in Taglish. As a legitimized norm, it advocates uniformity. This means that everybody has to speak it lest he be discriminated.

4. Reality is constituted by relations of Power.

In the discussion of power aforementioned, we can liken the rise of Taglish as constituted by power relations. The rise of power is involved in the legitimization of certain ideals. Those in Taglish rise to power through relations. Such include our educational system, our colonial mentality, and the medium of communication in white-collared jobs (which are esteemed superior to blue-collared jobs). This makes it easier for the Taglish speaking community to rise. Our educational system which endorses English gives the impression that those who speak English or, in any way able to use it, are the learned. Such is the case that Filipinos have then embraced the authority of English as the language of education, a superior language. Embracing English with open arms easily allows

the Taglish speaking community to rise to power. In their growth, they are able to set the standards for what has *class*, what must be esteemed. People of high-class become trend setters in their own way so that deliberately or not, they legitimize Taglish as a socio-cultural norm. The predominance of the discourse of Taglish results in the predominance of that certain knowledge it upholds: that those who speak it are superior to those who do not.

An additional insight is that there is a relation of power between Taglish and Tagalog as discourses, along with English. Firstly, when power is at constant war, it seeks alliances and relations to grow and become the *Panopticon*, the “coherent and unified system” which everyone will accept. English is a foreign language that was incorporated in our educational system from the time the Americans came. Throughout time, it has been embraced as the language of higher learning. However, its authority cannot be easily accepted since it is after all a *foreign* language. Tagalog remains the very acceptable discourse everyone has access to. Hence, a power relation must be forged in order to aid its rise. By the very act of mixing English and Tagalog, a relation of power is formed. Taglish becomes socially acceptable even to the lower class as well as the higher class. Thus the ideology it upholds seeps into the psyche of those who esteem it. This ideology has spread into the psyche so that every Filipino associates Taglish with the higher social class which they esteem. Taglish becomes the weapon of control and subjugation.

VI. Conclusion

In the beginning of this paper, three arguments were presented that needed to be answered. We go back to these three arguments summarize in brief the findings of this paper in the light of Foucault:

1. Taglish does indeed uphold an ideology of superiority. Filipinos have associated Taglish with education and class throughout time. Those who engage in Taglish have risen so that they became the authoritative body which dictates Taglish as the normative discourse. Being a normative discourse, it excludes and undermines those who are unable to engage in such discourse, further deepening the mindset of superiority by exclusion. In a way, this pressures the individual to engage in such a discourse if he wishes to be socially accepted. This can be observable in interviews and even in the classroom situation in particular wherein those engaging in English and Taglish are esteemed for their proficiency, at the expense of Tagalog. In such a way, Tagalog is pushed to the sideline as an undermined language.

2. In the rise of Taglish, some Tagalog words have been forgotten. People esteeming Taglish at the expense of Tagalog generate a truth that the language handed down by our elders was set aside. The Filipino culture, whose soul is in the Filipino language, was left for granted. This phenomenon unleashes a culture that discards the old ways, and forgets tradition. In the process, our cultural heritage and identity is distorted by the ideology that Taglish as a socio-cultural phenomenon upholds.

3. The esteem and social acceptance of Taglish is rooted in our colonial mentality. This ideology further roots to the mindset that the language of our colonizers is more superior as compared to our own language. That is no wonder considering our educational system's medium of communication is predominantly English. By incorporating English in our language, we became empowered and esteemed as well. In the process, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, and other native languages were underestimated and viewed as inferior since the ideology we have now esteems English as the

language of the learned. Sadly, vernacular is being set aside.

¹ In this paper, Tagalog and Filipino are used interchangeably though Filipino is sometimes used to refer to the person

² Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 129

³ Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live*, as cited by Thomas Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History", *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 30

⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 138

⁵ Paul Oliver, *Foucault: The Key Ideas*, (London, Hodder Education, 2010), 21

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, as cited by Paul Oliver, *Foucault: The Key Ideas*. London: Hodder Education, 2010, 27

⁷ Thomas Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History", *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 46

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 224

⁹ Paul Oliver, *Foucault: The Key Ideas*, 30

¹⁰ Paul, Oliver, 44

¹¹ Ibid, 45

¹² Joseph Rouse, "Power/ Knowledge", *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 103

¹³ Ibid, 106

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, as cited by Joseph Rouse, "Power Knowledge", *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*

¹⁵ Joseph Rouse, 109

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 92

¹⁷ Joseph Rouse, 113

¹⁸ Ibid, 115

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, as cited by Joseph Rouse, "Power/Knowledge", *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 98

²⁰ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings series*. (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991)

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A Synthesis of the Goodness of God and the Existence of Evil through G.W. Leibniz's *Theodicy*

Lyka Marie B. Gumanay

Abstract: Throughout history, the question about the existence of God has branched out to form numerous questions under it. One of these questions is known as the problem of evil. This study will try to prove that the goodness of God can be reconciled with the existence of evil using the works of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Leibniz is said to be one of the top pioneers that tackled the problem of evil along with Epicurus and St. Augustine and he even coined the term “theodicy” to describe the defence of God’s omnipotence with regards to the threat of evil. The study would focus primarily on Leibniz’ *Theodicy* and how he used his doctrine of pre-established harmony and the best of all possible worlds to prove that evil is something necessary in order to live our life to the fullest. This study also aims to erase the idea of evil as something concrete and synonymous to someone’s personality. Evil is something that needs to be discussed instead of feared and if we only see it without prejudice, we could see the real reason for its creation. This study, however, is to be treated differently from the classical argument from evil for this serves only to show that there is a reason for all the evil that is happening in our lives and that reason will serve the greater good in the totality of the universe.

Keywords: Evil, God and Theodicy

The greatest questions in philosophy come from philosophy of religion. This is a quotation that I have believed since the start of my journey in philosophy. Big questions like the existence of God to lengthy debates like faith versus reason are all covered under the umbrella known as philosophical theology. Why, exactly, are the questions about the Supreme Being famous for philosophical debates? I believe that this is because—the mere fact that there are a lot of unexplained phenomenon in the world. The ancient thinkers didn’t have the technology to explain some of nature’s magic, and thus, they attributed those to the One or God. God, for them, became an

immutable force; an all-good, all powerful and infinite Being. But, of course, there were some thinkers who rejected the idea of God or any powerful being. Their main argument to counter the idea of God is the existence of an inconsistency with God’s power, wisdom and virtue. They named this inconsistency, evil.

The first philosopher who talked about evil would be the Greek philosopher, Epicurus. He formulated a question that became the foundation for all arguments regarding its existence and God’s goodness. He said:

“If God is perfectly good, He must want to abolish all evil; if He is unlimitedly powerful, He

must be able to abolish all evil: but evil exists; therefore, either God is not perfectly good or He is not unlimitedly powerful.”¹

Throughout the years, philosophers have formulated their own questions based on Epicurus'. Some of these famous thinkers are St. Augustine, St. Thomas, David Hume and Charles Hartshorn. Evil was originally a subject for discussion exclusive to theology but as time went by and different schools of thought for philosophy emerged, it has been incorporated into their studies. A few examples of these would be Ethics wherein they try to reconcile evil present in man's actions; Epistemology where they study man's knowledge about evil and Rationalism in which God plays a very crucial role in the origin of evil. But even though the problem of evil has been endlessly talked about throughout time, there is still no unified solution to it. Philosophers can only discuss what their proposed solutions but there would still be no universal answer and thus, still remains problematic and even worse than before.

In the ancient times, evil was an abstract thing that almost everyone incorporated to Satan or Lucifer. This was when religion was more powerful than the State. Nowadays, however, evil has become a more concrete term. We often see movies about superheroes who are trying to save the world from the clutches of their enemies generically called, "villains". These villains perform acts of cruelty to other people with different modes like murder, torture, or even human annihilation. These people are what the term evil refers to in today's time. Although it is agreeable that these "villains" or acts of cruelty are within the domain of evil, they are hardly all there is to it. There is no more awareness in the multitude that evil threatens the whole existence of God, but instead, they

only think about how these concrete beings of evil can threaten the existence of mankind.

But is evil really a threat to mankind? When talking about evil in its more concrete sense like murder and serial killers, no one would hesitate to say yes. But what about the abstract notion of evil? Is evil bad when it comes to the development of one's life? The answer could be otherwise. There is a famous saying, "Everything happens for a reason," that almost summarizes the position of this paper on the matter. Evil is necessary in man's life and without it; man cannot live the best course set for him. Along with this, the origin of evil and how we can reconcile it with an all-powerful and good God would also be explained. I believe that evil is only misunderstood by man. When we are face to face with something that we cannot understand, the natural tendency would be for us to reject it and keep away from it but in the end, it might be the one that gives meaning to our life.

Theodicy

A theodicy is something used by philosophers to reconcile the existence of evil in the world with an all-good and all-powerful God. It has been thus named for the main reason that evil has baffled philosophers since the ancient times. One philosopher who tried to solve the problem of evil was German philosopher, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz. He is one of the top pioneers in the field of philosophy who discussed the reconciliation of God and evil.

In his *Theodicy*, Leibniz formulates his own question regarding the problem of evil, "Si Deus est, unde malum? Si non est, unde bonum?"² [If God exists, why is there evil? If God does not exist, why is there goodness?] Leibniz, inspired by St. Augustine, uses the Scholastic definition of God—that of a

Supreme Being all-good and all-powerful. His challenge now is to reconcile that same God to the existence of things like pain, suffering and even death.

Evil, for Leibniz, is a kind of privation. Again, just like St. Augustine. He says, "...therefore like darkness, and not only ignorance but also error and malice consist formally in a certain kind of privation."³ Evil is a privation of, more specifically, goodness. This stems from the fact that men were made imperfect, therefore, it is impossible for us to possess everything. If ever God gave us everything, we would be just like Him, but there must only be one God. We cannot have many gods for it would mean that they all lack something that the other has and vice versa. This might be applicable to other religions but for a monotheistic religion like Christianity, having numerous gods is unthinkable. British philosopher and theologian, John Hick, expounds this on his book, *Evil and the God of Love*, by saying, "For the problem of evil... arises only for a religion which insists that the object of its worship is at once perfectly good and unlimitedly powerful."⁴

Leibniz does not only define evil but he also divides it into different types. He says, "Metaphysical evil consists in mere imperfection, physical evil in suffering, and moral evil in sin."⁵ By dividing it, he shows us that evil still has something more underneath its exterior unlike what most people think. Out of these three types, this study is more concerned with metaphysical evil because it is the only one that pertains to an external force outside man's power. Since it is impossible for a creature to limit himself, it must mean that imperfection is innate from the beginning and therefore, not exactly is man the cause.

In summary, Leibniz uses his theory of the best of all possible worlds to try and defend the

essence of evil. He says, "...if there were not the best among all possible worlds, God would not have produced any."⁶ In this theory, Leibniz says that this world where we live right now—this reality—is the best out of all possible worlds. For example, going from point A to point B, there exists a straight path to reach your destination and no one would disagree that that is the best way because it is short and straightforward. But even though that path exists, there are still other numerous paths that you can take to get there. But there is only one best path among them. This falls under the goodness of God which will be discussed more in the next part of the paper.

The Goodness of God

Who exactly is God? In a nutshell, Christian doctrine tells us that he is the all-good and all-powerful Supreme Being that created man and the whole world. He displayed his power by creating man in his image and likeness but also showed his justice when man sinned against him. However, why did God need to allow the evil present in our lives to take control over us? Surely, an all-powerful God could create a world wherein evil would be eradicated, thus, being a better world for man to live in. Some philosophers defended not only the goodness of God when it came to evil but also the perfection of the world—and Leibniz was no exception.

Much like Nicholas Malebranche's notion that God is the first cause, Leibniz starts his defense by saying, "God is the first reason of things."⁷ Being the Creator, we cannot but attribute to God the beginning of things. This is something that Leibniz readily admits. He also says that the first cause must be intelligent for he could not have created a better world than what we live in right now. Leibniz further states, "...all that God does... is harmonious to perfection."⁸ This

is because God's goodness constrains him to always create the best. That is why, for Leibniz, everything we see around us, as it is, is perfect and the best.

In the following paragraphs, the most important arguments posited against Leibniz' theory of the goodness of God would be answered and expounded upon. These arguments range from the question about God's omnipotence to the "best of all possible worlds".

The first argument is, if God were to always create the best, then wouldn't it be better if God created other gods and not something imperfect and prone to sinning like man? One thing we have to remember here is that God can create other Gods but he would not because it is not what is best. In Leibniz's words, "...therefore there must needs be different degrees in the perfection of things, and limitations also of every kind."⁹ This statement of Leibniz is closely related to his theory of the mind as a mirror. According to him, our minds perceive the city of God in one way or another. But that image is confused because we only see one side of it. Much like a pencil halfway submerged in a cup of water, we see it bent even though we know it is perfectly straight. If we look at it from the front, it would appear bent but if we look at it from above, we see that it is straight. In order to successfully perceive the city of God, all minds must come together and mirror it with their own perspectives. Another argument Leibniz uses is that, creating a multitude of unique individuals that are so similar yet so different from one another would most fittingly project the power and wisdom of God than creating one perfect man.

The second argument is if God can only create what is best, then it would question his omnipotence because he is constrained towards what He should do. For the answer to this

second argument, we have to go back to the theory of the best of all possible worlds. What exactly is this theory? For Leibniz, the world we live in is the best of all possible worlds. He says that God has an infinite number of possibles to choose from. He chose from innumerable plots and scripts to create the best world. This is because the goodness of God cannot but create the best. So everything present in the world has a purpose in the grand scheme of things. Let us now correlate this with Leibniz' defence of God's freedom. He says, "God fails not to choose the best, but he is not constrained so to do... there is no necessity in the object of God's choice, for another sequence of things is equally possible."¹⁰ In the realm of the possibles, we can find numerous possibilities of combinations that God can deem to exist. For example, you are here now, reading this paper but in the realm of the possibles, there exists a combination wherein you are drinking coffee or watching television instead of reading this. But God chose this combination for this point in time therefore, this is the best. God could've just as easily deemed to existence the reality of you drinking coffee, meaning, God was not constrained to do what He did for there were innumerable other combinations He could've created instead. What drives God into choosing the best is his goodness.

The third argument is, if the reality we live in now was the best, then that must mean God cannot change anything more in the world, but that would question his omnipotence again for he cannot have limitations. This is the main problem that faces the existence of miracles because if everything was already the best from the start, there would be no more for God to do. If we look deeply into the theory of the best of all possible worlds, we would find out that everything is already determined. God determined everything from the start when he thought of the best combinations of all

possibilities because in order to create the best path, one must foresee the indefinite future and keep going at it—which is exactly what God does. What then if everything is already determined? Leibniz writes, “...the miracles which happen in the world were also enfolded and represented as possible in this same world considered in the state of mere possibility...”¹¹ Here we see him solving the problem, once again, with the “best” theory. God included it in the best combination that he performs miracles at a specific time, at a specific place and, to specific people. He already foresaw that it was the best course to take on a certain combination. But it doesn’t mean God would constantly perform miracles—for he can’t—because the order of the natural world is already perfect and therefore, to interfere with it constantly would render the best to be lessened.

Another related question that would arise from this is the use of prayers and vows. If everything is already determined, there would be no more use for praying or giving yourself up to God. But Leibniz answers this by saying, “These prayers, these vows... were already before God when he formed the resolution to order things.”¹² God knew that one would pray before Him and even the content of the prayer is before man ever knew about it therefore, prayers are still needed because God, technically, can and do hear them out.

The last and probably the most controversial argument that serves to tie the goodness of God and the existence of evil (which will be discussed in the next part) in relation to Him is, if everything is determined, it must mean that God also determined that the serpent would tempt Eve and she would share the forbidden fruit with Adam which resulted to the fall of man. If this was true, wouldn’t it question the goodness of God?

I believe that this is the most difficult argument to defend because it cannot be explained thoroughly and enough for people to believe. Leibniz answers:

God having resolved to permit the sin of Adam and the corruption of the human race, for reasons just but hidden, his mercy made him choose some of the corrupt mass to be freely saved by the merit of Jesus Christ, and his justice made him resolve to punish the others by the damnation that they deserve.¹³

Basically, what Leibniz says is that the fall of man was seen by God as a part of the best possible world. The reason I said earlier that I cannot explain it thoroughly is that we can never know the reason why God allowed the fall of man or why it was considered as part of the best. Because of the limitations of human knowledge, we can never perceive the divine reason for God’s actions. But we can be sure that whatever He does is for the best of mankind. One more important thing we have to see here is that for Leibniz, God did not want man to fall but He could not fail in creating the best. But his goodness is then redeemed because God still wants man to be saved. That is why He sent His Son down to the earth. God wanted people to follow Jesus back to Him. Those that followed Jesus were saved while those who did not repent were punished into damnation. We have to remember though that condemning people to damnation is not a defect of goodness but, rather, an exercise of justice, specifically, divine justice.

It is quite obvious that when it comes to God, difficult questions are sure to arise. One reason is because our limited intellect can never understand the reasons for God’s choices. The only thing we could do is trust His judgement because we know that what He does only serves to benefit mankind. Leibniz expresses this simply by saying, “...*there is nothing so exalted as*

the wisdom of God, nothing so just as his judgement, nothing so pure as his holiness and nothing more vast than his goodness."⁴

The Existence of Evil

For years, the theological and the philosophical communities have communicated their differences and arguments in different aspects of man's life and his spirituality. But one of the most interesting and engaging topics that has ever faced the theological and philosophical world is the problem of evil.

Evil are, basically, bad things.¹⁵ What the world experiences are only the shallow effects of evil however, they do not really understand the true meaning of evil or even the purpose of evil. Because of this, people have always blamed God whenever something bad happened in their lives. Evil is truly a mystery for human beings but we must also understand that it is needed in the world. Evil creates a sense of balance that the world needs.

Evil has been present in every aspect of man's life. In its many forms (disease, death, etc.) evil has plagued human beings and made them doubt the goodness of their Creator. In contemporary times, the forms of evil have taken on a whole new standard from petty thieves to calculating serial killers and with this, our fear has taken on a whole new level. But what most people do not realize is that sometimes, we are scared for nothing. People doubt God's intentions because of the presence of evil which shakes their faith. Death is inevitable. From the day we were born, we knew that there was a day when we would cease to live yet why do some still take out their anger on God when their loved ones die? Not everything that causes pain is evil. All of us do evil in our own way and yet why isn't the world in total chaos? Almost like Pandora's Box

wherein out of all the evil that came out, there was something good in it, and that is hope.

As said before, Leibniz considers evil as a privation of goodness, but never the goodness of God. So in order to find the true origin of evil, he goes back on history and to the basic essence of man and his freedom. First, he examines the source of evil in man and why he does these bad things in the first place. To start off, he says, "...it appears that man is compelled to do the good and evil that he does..."¹⁶ This is closely connected to his concept of determinism. For if everything is determined, it must mean that we are committing sin in a specific point of time was "permitted" by God. Therefore, we had no choice but to do that sin. Again, this closely relates to the problem of the freedom of man which will be discussed further on the paper.

Why is man compelled to sin? Surely if God wants to save all men, He would prevent man from sinning in order to gain a place in heaven. Leibniz expresses his sentiments by saying, "Man is exposed to a temptation to which it is known that he will succumb, thereby causing an infinitude of frightful evils..."¹⁷ This statement describes the fall of man which some call the greatest sin ever committed. God told Adam and Eve that they can eat any fruit in the paradise except from the forbidden tree. With this act, they were exposed to the temptation. But at the time, they did not care much for it because they were perfectly happy. When the serpent tempted them, however, they yielded and ate the fruit. God knew they would be tempted before He even created them, but he didn't stop them in any way. And for Leibniz, this placed the whole human world into a "necessity of sinning" wherein everyone is bound to sin, even the newly born babies. With this account, it may seem that God is the sole cause for the presence of evil.

At the core of Leibniz's defense, he reiterates that God's choices are always for the betterment of the world. No matter how painful or how many people suffer in order to achieve this, there would always be a reason for it. Often too, the evil we experience can be attributed to something that would produce goodness in the long run. This view of Leibniz is similar to the utilitarian point of view. When Leibniz says, "We know, moreover, that often an evil brings forth a good whereto one would not have attained without that evil. Often indeed two evils have made one great good,"¹⁸ his view coincides with the utilitarian point of view. Utilitarianism is a school of thought that judges by the happiness of the multitude. If an action serves to bring maximum happiness to the maximum number of people, then it is deemed good. Leibniz says that God permits evil because it becomes the cause for bigger goodness to manifest.

How exactly can something negative give rise to something positive? There are actually a lot of examples for this kind of combination. But Leibniz best expresses this in the following statement:

A little acid, sharpness or bitterness is often more pleasing than sugar; shadows enhance colours; and even a dissonance in the right place gives relief to harmony. We wish to be terrified by rope-dancers on the point of falling and we wish that tragedies shall weigh-nigh cause us to weep. Do men relish health enough, or thank God enough for it, without having ever been sick?¹⁹

Most people do allow evil in their lives. Why do we watch tragic movies wherein people die? Because we appreciate the feelings and sentiments that the characters feel and we relate to them. Why do we like bungee jumping or rock climbing wherein our lives are put on the line? Because we want to feel that thrill or that

adrenaline rush that comes with it. Why do we put salt on something that is too sweet for us? Because we do not want to taste something sweet but instead, something that pleases our taste buds. What's more important however is learning through our mistakes. For example, if a lazy student failed an important test, this would cause him to change and start studying in fear of failing the subject. If he passed instead, his attitude would not change and he'll be the same lazy student throughout his school life. One example that Leibniz reiterates is the state of sickness. When we are healthy, we become carefree with our lives but once we feel pain or fall ill, we start to miss that healthy state we had immediately. We start to appreciate our health once we feel pain and we cannot do anything we could normally do before. The pain we feel, that most people deem evil, is actually the one that keeps us alive. For upon touching a frying pan on the stove, we immediately feel the pain of heat but if we didn't feel it, we could never know that our hand is in danger of getting burned. The same goes for the body—if you do not feel the pain of a stomach ache, you may never know that your appendix is about to burst or that you had food poisoning. For Leibniz, it is quite obvious that all these evils that people abhor are actually the ones that preserve our lives.

The world would not be better had there been no evil in it. The fact that evil is existent must mean that evil is the best purpose for us and that there is a reason for its existence. Benedict Spinoza, a Jewish-Dutch philosopher, said that evil is just an illusion. This is because we humans are ignorant of what's going on in the world. He said that if we looked at the world without prejudice, we would see that there is no evil because everything happens for a reason. Although Leibniz and Spinoza may disagree most of the time, they are still both rationalists and, therefore, have the same thinking. Leibniz

says, “God being inclined to produce as much good as possible, and having all the knowledge and all the power necessary for that, it is impossible that in him there be fault or guilt or sin; and when he permits evil, it is wisdom, and it is virtue.”²⁰

Conclusion

The goodness of God does not diminish in any way because of the existence of evil. This is because of the mere fact that He is all-good means that there must be a reason why He would allow evil in the world. There is no doubt that those reasons are for the sake of the whole human world. Though He might have permitted the fall of the first parents, He still wants all men to be saved—clearly shown by Him sending His only son, Jesus Christ. Of course, it was possible that there be a world without evil but then again, it wouldn’t be perfect for us. We might never know the reasons of God for allowing evil but it doesn’t matter because we just need to trust in Him. Even Leibniz says, “...that we may not have cause to vaunt ourselves, it is necessary that we be ignorant of the reasons for God’s choice.”²¹ A limited mind can never achieve the intellect of something as infinitely intelligent as God. The only thing we can do is to live our lives as before and be enlightened by the fact that there is nothing bad that happens without a reason. Because in the end, our lives are only so long and is only borrowed, that is why we have to live as we are and not worry about the future because God has already determined it into the best way he can.

⁵ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 136.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁷ Leibniz. *Theodicy* 128.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 142.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹¹ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 152.

¹² Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 152.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁴ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 181.

¹⁵ Peter van Inwagen. *The Problem of Evil*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 12.

¹⁶ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 124.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁸ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 129.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

²⁰ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 138.

²¹ Leibniz. *Theodicy*, 180.

¹ John Hick. *Evil and the God of Love* (Great Britain: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1996), 5.

² Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy* (United States: New Haven Yale University Press, 1952), 135.

³ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴ Hick. *Evil and the God of Love*, 4.

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The Reified Filipino Mode of Thinking (Fragments of Filipino Social Reality)

Jessie Joshua Z. Lino

Abstract: The overarching aim of the paper revolves around two questions: (1) Is it possible to extract a "Filipino" mode of thinking through a critical theory of the Philippine social reality? (2) Is the "Filipino" mode of thinking "rational" in itself to justify the present situation of the Philippine social reality? The methodic approach to be used in this paper would be Critical Theory as presented in the works of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Horkheimer's criticisms against instrumental rationality and Adorno's insights on the culture industry give a depiction of society which, ironically, seeks to destroy itself for its own progress. In their works, we find a society which makes dehumanization of its people a precondition for social mobility; the societal progress through capitalism being the end and its people being the means. The method of criticism of the critical theory is not exclusively limited to certain societies of the world. On the contrary, all social reality may be subjected into a critical explanation of each of their current situation. In the case of the Philippines, the collective "Filipino identity" may be said to be losing its original conceptual content as the society progresses; yet this said "progress" of the Philippines could not even eliminate poverty and social suffering of the country. It should be noted here that a particular aspect of our identity is how we think - our mode of thinking. And so, this paper seeks a sufficient rational explanation on why such social phenomenon is necessitated in our country, starting from our [contemporary] "Filipino" mode of thought to certain fragments of the Philippine social reality. The first part of the paper would critically examine two aspects of our social reality in order to extract "Filipino" mode of thinking or Filipino thought: 1) the social history of our civil society and 2) our culture. The second part would focus on discussing Filipino thought being actualized or reified into our present social reality. The paper would not dwell on Filipino social reality in its totality, only a fragment of it, which is found in our socio-historical and contemporary culture and which may already be sufficient in explaining the present "awful" situation of contemporary Philippines.

Keywords: Critical Theory, Filipino Social Reality and Mode of Thinking

Introduction - Two Disasters: An awful situation

October 15, 2013 – A 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the island of Bohol at around 8:12 a.m., the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology and the United States Geological Service reported. The epicenter was detected in Carmen, Bohol; the tremor lasted a minute. Blackouts and other damages were expected from the quake including the devastation of some of the oldest churches in the Philippines. Power was down and so as water supply. Aftershocks were experienced in Bohol and in other places in Visayas. Some of our fellow *pinoy*s in Bohol were injured, others even died; all of them needed the help they could get. Of course, the whole nation aided them because even Bohol's provincial disaster management team could not handle all the problems.¹ It is a good thing that Filipinos are there for each other in times of devastation. Luckily, no notable tarsier was harmed during the tremor.

November 7, 2013 – Supertyphoon 'Yolanda' (international name: Haiyan) entered the Philippine area of responsibility. Yolanda "packed maximum sustained winds of 195 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of up to 230 kph."² Damages were expected, specifically on the Visayas region. Tacloban City, Samar, Leyte, Capiz and other provinces were nearly wiped out by the storm surge. By the time Yolanda left the Philippines, people who were heavily affected had nowhere to go and seek for help. Almost all of the resources in their location were destroyed. Death toll reached 4,000 and still counting, injured Filipinos were about 18,000, and there are still others missing.³ The nation took immediate action in aiding affected places the day after the incident happened.

We can at somehow give a picture of the Philippines' current situation in dealing with disasters brought by nature. However, these are not the disasters I am about to discuss here. The stories continue:

Two days after the earthquake incidents in Bohol, President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III went to South Korea for a business trip. The business trip to Korea would assure benefits for the country in terms of tourism and economy. Of course, it is inevitable for Filipinos to be enraged with such action of the President. Filipinos would think that Pres. Aquino left for the business trip instead of being focused in helping our fellow Filipinos in Bohol. Pres. Aquino defended his decision to push through with his trip to South Korea, despite the devastation wrought by a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that hit Bohol and other provinces. "While we are working on the present, we should perhaps also not abandon the future," he said as he defends himself during a televised press conference at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Aquino assured the public that members of his Cabinet were in Bohol and Cebu to address the needs of those affected by the quake. "In the mean time, I am going to South Korea to address the future [of the country]...", he said.⁴ Nonetheless, it is obvious that the motive of President Aquino is primarily caused by opportunities – a simple example of an instrumental rationality. Nothing is wrong when a person is profit-driven; it only becomes wrong when profit-driven actions are done at the same time neglecting situations that affects other people.

In Tacloban City, people had no idea on how to survive with the scarcity of each resource they own after 'Yolanda' visited the Philippines. That is until several residents began looting grocery stores and breaking into shops for food and other basic items they needed to survive. Due to

low police power and military force in the area after the typhoon, no one was put to jail. Jiggy Manicad, a reporter, even saw policemen looting for their own survival.⁵ Anarchy was present in this event. No one could blame those looters; they needed the resources for them to survive. It merely alludes to Darwin's phrase of "survival of the fittest". Sadly, a part of popular culture in contemporary Philippines would still emphasize that looting is evil in itself – a much distorted one-sided kind of thinking.

And now people blame God for "forsaking" them during these two disasters. It is not God who is to be blamed, neither the government nor ourselves. After all, we are powerless before the two disasters happened. Man cannot control the forces of nature in toto; man is even possibly powerless in his social sphere. Randolph David, a notable sociologist in our country, in his editorial essay "The Powerless Public" gives a finest depiction of Filipino social reality in Metro Manila, to be specific:

"Massive shopping centers are out up on vital arteries of the city, without any provision for the traffic that is bound to be created by the concentration of so many people and activities in one place. High-rise offices and condominium complexes are built without adequate provisions for parking, drainage, garbage disposal; and totally without regard for the pressure that high-density buildings exert upon existing water, power, and other utilities. Huge construction projects, sometimes employing as many as a thousand workers, are started without providing proper temporary housing for the workers. As a result, squatter colonies often sprout beside large construction sites, remaining there after the building is finished to await demand for maids, drivers, and security guards. Streets are taken over and used as dumps for gravel and sand, steel bars and lumbers. And while the construction is going on, the entire neighbourhood must put up with all the hellish noise and dust created on the project site. The developers don't care, of course, for they don't live there."⁶

We Filipinos cannot even speak against the powerful [ones] in the social aspect, what more to the natural. Another depiction of powerlessness is found in Agustin Martin Rodriguez's narrative of the "Drama of the Sidewalks" in his book *Governing the Other: Exploring the Discourse of Democracy in a Multiverse of Reason*. In 2002, Bayani Fernando, a Filipino politician (notable as one of the most effective and active), successfully removed all business affairs of illegal vendors in the sidewalks of Manila. Those vendors' wares were confiscated and doused with gasoline in order to prevent the illegal vendors to resume their sidewalk vending. The dousing of gasoline in the wares signifies negation of the poor's livelihood.⁷ Nothing is crueller than the phenomenon of the powerless being negated of their social existence.

The consequential events happened after Bohol and Yolanda are good examples of how Filipinos deal with social reality of everyday life. Though we might say that those events occur rarely, the ways which Filipinos normally react upon such situations differ not at the most fundamental level of social reality. In other words, disasters always happen; may it be natural or social and the solutions are always made by "the social" - the society. And believe it or not, it is empirically obvious that the current situation of our country is awful. It is always good news when survey results inform progress in our country, but these results are mere conceptual information formalized by those great positivists. It cannot feed, clothe, or give us shelter. Try living in the slums and "squatter's house" in Metro Manila, and ask yourself where that progress is. There is progress, as evidences show, but how visible can it be in the midst of the poverty that was present since the very beginning of our social history? While inquiring into the solutions on how to eliminate the "inevitable poverty" of the

Philippines, a critical theory of our society should be useful. By critically examining our social reality, including history, culture, and the factors of its stabilization, one could determine where society have failed to realize, which lead to this awful situation of today. A possibility arises here: all these awful situations that the country experiences resulted from the Filipino mindset. Giving insights from the perspective of the Frankfurt School (or the New Left), it is possible that a social reality is simply the reified form of thought of the people. And so the Filipino mode of thought could have resulted into the current situation of our country. This view on our social reality requires thorough explanation. The overarching aim of these fragmented works revolve around two questions that give the explanation it seeks: (1) Is it possible to extract a Filipino mode of thinking through a critical theory of the Philippine social reality? (2) Is the Filipino mode of thinking "rational" in itself to justify the present situation of the Philippine social reality? The flow of the discussion might be unsystematic; it is to give justice for the fact that these are fragmented writings on Filipino social reality in the philosophical lenses of critical theory. First, we must inquire into the Filipino mindset, and then justify its reification to our social reality.

The Filipino Mode of Thinking: Debunking Traditions

“Who is the Filipino?” This is a question that fundamentally constitutes all inquiries on our social existence. Perhaps it is time to look once more in a certain new way of looking at the Filipino mindset. We have had enough relying so much to methods on looking on Filipinos with parameters given by traditional Filipino anthropology, psychology, and values education. Take account of this example: *Filipinos are known to be hospitable* – traditionally, we would interpret this phrase by examining our behaviour in

matters of tourism and international relations; critically, we would try to inquire whether our colonial history has something to do with us being hospitable (whether there were *datus* or chieftains happily being conquered and executed by colonizers some time in our history). By deducing our mode of thinking according to the traditional method, we are limiting our mindset into its traditional aspects in living the everyday life. Nothing new is seen here, nothing new would be seen at all. The danger is that when the traditional view of the Filipino mode of thinking does not recognize the diverse changes in the concept of Filipino mindset they have been teaching. As history progresses, man also changes. What tradition has seen in Filipinos might be different from the sight of the Filipinos of today. We have now our contemporary Filipino identity, the *Pinoy* – which I doubt to be the same as what tradition has seen through time. What we should do is inductively examine the mindset of the *Pinoy*s disregarding traditional mode of categorization and viewing them according to their social relations. From what I have gathered, at least, is that our social reality revolves around two concepts that were once been already studied by those critical theorists in the Frankfurt School: the first one is that the [Filipino] individual is highly motivated with instrumental reason, and the other is that our [Filipino] social reality, with the aid of “culture industry”, provides a mode of thinking wherein an illusory hope for a better world keeps us stable in poverty. We take advantage here the studies of those critical theorists from the Frankfurt School in explaining such concepts-in-themselves, but how these concepts also becomes visible in our social reality is another matter I am about to tackle.

Horkheimer, Instrumental Reason and the Philippine Civil Society⁸

There is no doubt about this statement: as history progresses, the Filipino identity changes from time to time. In order to understand the contemporary *Pinoy* mindset, one should not rely so much on popular Filipino anthropologies and psychologies. Here, it is necessary to trace back from [civil] history to derive the influences we gained from our folks and how far our mindset has changed from them. So far as history of civil society is assessed in a critical manner, we find that the Filipino mode of thought is highly controlled by instrumental reason. Instrumental rationality of the Filipinos is evident in daily life. We give an example of a jeepney driver, on his habit of defying traffic rules in order to benefit himself the time and resources he needed in order to progress in life. Not only does the driver disobey traffic rules due to benefiting consequences, but it would also make his job a little easier and comfortable. However, often does he realize that what he is doing would make more complications in the traffic flow: other drivers would be in disadvantage, accidents may occur, or if the jeepney driver gets caught for disobeying traffic rules, it will bring more misery to his life [either in jail or not]. This “parable” of the jeepney driver would best depict contemporary Philippine society as governed by instrumental reason.

When a typical Filipino citizen is asked of the question “What is civil society?” they do not give the most generic or universal conception of what civil society is. Rather, they conceive civil society in the context of the testimonies and also of the situation of our country. Two of the answers are most striking and, in some way, alarming. One of them is “Non-Government Organizations and market system” to which they perceive civil society as it benefits them;

the other is “radical/aggressive social activism through the form of rallies, rebellion, etc.” Indeed, such answers are, in one way or another, exaggeratedly biased. But we are not to blame our fellow Filipinos for conceiving our civil society in such ways. For our way of conceiving it, as already mentioned earlier, lies in the context of Philippines - which includes our history, anthropology and psychology, culture, politics and economics, and even Filipino philosophies. On the contrary, the universal concept of *Civil Society* really has no permanent definition. Its use and definition has always changed in every moment of world history. During the nineteenth century, Hegel conceptualized civil society as “the sphere of ethical life interposed between the family and the state”. The concept fell into disuse until Antonio Gramsci revised it. For Gramsci, it is “the sphere of cultural politics” – encompassing the church, schools, trade unions, mass media, and other organizations – in which the state constitutes itself through the manufacture of consent rather than coercion or formal rule.⁹

In the Philippine contemporary setting, civil society has a very significant part when it comes to politics. It refers essentially to the so-called “intermediary institutions” between the people and the government¹⁰. Social movements all throughout the Philippine history are the civil society in the Philippines, clearly defined as: “A sustained and purposeful collective mobilized by an identifiable, self-organized group in confrontation with specific power structures and in the pursuit of socioeconomic and political change”¹¹. Obviously, the mere fact that Filipino civil society is socially active (and sometimes even to the point of being aggressive) makes it reasonable to think that it has not yet fulfilled its objectives. It is to eliminate poverty - the suffering of society in the practical viewpoint - which is their fundamental objective. Meanwhile in Germany,

Max Horkheimer, one outstanding leader of the Institute of Social Research which became the home of Critical Theory (Western Marxism, or well-known as "The Frankfurt School"), made some of the greatest contributions to the reaction against Enlightenment thought: The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (alongside with Theodor Adorno), the essay "The End of Reason", and the *Eclipse of Reason*. One of the fundamental presuppositions of his social philosophy is his idea of social emancipation from the suffering of the society. The possible convergence of reason and freedom was said to be immanent to man and human labor; with this, the goal of a community of free human beings is the idea of a rational society according to Horkheimer¹². In the *Eclipse of Reason*, he discusses "reason" in an interdisciplinary approach. The task of reason is to direct social reality, regulating our preferences with other human beings and with nature¹³. However, reason could either be objective or subjective; the former indicates a principle inherent in reality; the latter on the other hand implies a subjective faculty of the mind - "the ability to calculate probabilities, coordinating the right means with a given end"¹⁴. It is normal for any typical person to pursue his own self-interests, but if it is by means of subjective reason, reality (of the society) loses its essential content. In other words, subjective reason values an idea for another's sake. The worst is when subjective reason is formalized and develops its own objectivity; every meaning becomes the function or effect of things and reason becomes a mere tool, an instrument of attaining objects of our interests¹⁵. This is what Horkheimer calls "Instrumental Reason", which seems to be evident in the Filipino society. A society dominated by instrumental reason dehumanizes its people and uses them in order for the state to progress.

Proceeding to an analysis of the Filipino civil society, it may be possible that "Filipino" instrumental reason is rooted in and, at the same time, also determines our identity. Our cultural values such as *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), *hiya* (shame, innocent humility) and *pakikisama* (getting along with each other in harmony) do not only serve as norms governing interactions with others leading to relationships of obligations and responsibilities¹⁶ but also increments an individual's practicality. By far most observations, no responsibility to others is done without any ulterior interests. Assessing all social movements in the Philippine history, most of their methods in mobilizing their agendas include a pursuit for one's own self-interest. Revolts, in our history, were organized out of the outburst of repressed resentment of a group. Socioeconomic inequalities began during the era of the *datus*, whereas the *datus* "gave tremendous lands to the Spanish nobles and friars" during their colonization¹⁷. Many *datus* established "peace" with the Spaniards for an ulterior motive: to gain allies in fighting other clans ruled by their enemy *datus*. Since then, the problem of land ownership paved way to the great divide between the landed and the landless. The existence of alienation between them is when the landless were forced to serve in the lands of friars and nobles in order to avail the resources they need to sustain their family. Peasant agitation later began in order to gain social recognition from the powerful. This gave rise to the *principalia* class, the very first middle class in the Philippines. For the *principalia* class, social recognition would also mean for political power¹⁸. When bourgeois ideals have been introduced by Spaniards, not only the *principalia* class market systems were heavily influenced but also the *ilustrados'* concept of education. If the *indios* would not be educated, it would mean great danger to them for the rest of Philippine history. But what do they mean of the concept

of education? Theoretically, education for them is a kind of enlightenment, liberation of oneself from ignorance through the use of human reason; practically, it is to dignify oneself in order not to be treated by the Spaniards as inferior. But as time passes, the practical concept of education later became a weapon of the bourgeoisie as they maintained its subjective reason to dignify oneself. These words of Horkheimer in "The End of Reason" depict how reason becomes subjective and affects the society:

"The name of such reason is held to be a meaningless symbol, an allegorical figure without a function, and all ideas that transcend the given reality are forced to share its disgrace. [...] Reason has...only been reduced to its pragmatic significance much more radically than ever before.[...] Reason in this sense is as indispensable in the modern technique of war as it has always been in the conduct of business. Its features can be summarized as the optimum adaption of means to ends, thinking as an energy-conserving operation. It is a pragmatic instrument oriented to expediency, cold and sober."¹⁹

Our ideas of freedom, nation, and power are affected and distorted by this subjective reason. What polarized the "great division" between the land owners and the landless was education which aggravated further the socioeconomic inequality of the country. Education became an instrument in order to maintain resilience of elite class in the Philippines. *Ilustrados* focused their concern to establishing national territory but in terms of recognition of the Philippines as a Spanish province. Liberal-democratic ideas provided by the propagandists would influence Filipinos resulting to the creation of the *Kataastaasan, Kagalanggalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (KKK). But acquiescence of such ideas came from the *ilustrados* which are influenced with bourgeois ideals. Acquiring sufficient education, the KKK fought in the

name of "reason". Even after the Philippine Revolution of 1896, civil society's main concern territory, particularly setting our idea of a nation.

Because of the emergence of the elite class, many of those "less powerful", particularly coming from the working class, thought that liberal democracy cannot be attained in a country where the majority are poor and elites gain authority due to colonial power²⁰. Thus the rise of early socialist/communist movements took part in the civil society. After the war against the Japanese, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP), *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP), HUKBALAHAP remnants, and other socialist movements were still active especially through their participation to the electoral politics in the Philippines during those times²¹. But a great change to the mobilization of their agenda began when Marcos declared martial law, limiting the freedom of the people and democratic principles. The very main focus of the civil society during this time became the disposition of Marcos's authoritarianism leading to destruction of crony capitalism. This time, majority of the social activism came from labour sector and the working class. The failure of Marcos' agrarian reform (particularly Masagana '99) and the struggle of the New People's Army (NPA) to bring back democracy of the country resulted to social radicalism during the Martial Law era.²² Therefore, all was left as a solution for all anti-Marcos movements was electoral politics for it is a political opportunity to change the ruling system of the government. The aftermaths of civil disobedience by the people would later epitomize the civil society of the Philippines with the event that changed the country to its current situation – the People Power Revolution I²³ - a mass deception for maintaining bourgeoisie in the Philippines. Why is it a mass deception? Let us remember that Marcos' "bourgeois" authoritarianism which led

into dictatorship caused the "repressive suffering" of many Filipinos; on the other hand, it also caused the economic boom for our society before he used it as a means for corruption. Social upheavals would react against this corruption. But in a viewpoint which applies instrumental reason, those elites and elite families who led in the EDSA revolution knew that such actions they are doing because they knew it was the right thing to do. Horkheimer's words apply to this Revolution as becoming a mass deception of the people:

"The human being can fulfill his natural wants only through social channels. Use is a social category, and reason follows it up in all phases of competitive society; through reason the individual asserts or adapts himself and gets along in society. It induces the individual to subordinate himself to society whenever he is not powerful enough to pattern society upon his own interest... In modern society, it is supposed to be determined by reason, that is to say, by the individual's consciousness of where his advantage lies."²⁴

Here, the concept of what is right is distorted: the elites knew that the economy of the Philippines, no matter how it progresses, would not benefit them unless Marcos would resign in his position. The concept of what is right is reduced only to the term "benefit"- a pursuit for one's self-interest. During the first EDSA revolution, the Filipino mass was used as an instrument not only to remove Marcos' regime, but also it is used for the elite to mobilize their own progress. This thought, in a way, expresses Horkheimer's idea when he states that:

"Cognition thus becomes that which registers the object and proceeds to interpret the quantified expressions of them. The less human beings think of reality in quantitative terms, the more susceptible reality becomes manipulation... It is regarded as a matter of subjective preferences whether one decides for liberty or obedience, democracy or fascism, enlightenment

or authority, mass culture or truth. Freedom of choice, however, has always been the privilege of the small groups which enjoyed a life of abundance. For them it was possible to select among the so-called cultural goods, always provided that these goods were in harmony with their interests of dominion."²⁵

Furthermore:

"...self-preservation may even call for the death of the individual which is to be preserved. Sacrifice can be rational when it becomes necessary to defend the state's power which is alone capable of guaranteeing the existence of those whose sacrifice it demands. [...] The rationality of sacrifice and self-renunciation, however, was differentiated according to social status: it decreased with decreasing wealth and opportunity, and eventually became compulsory."²⁶

The mass deception to which any typical Filipino citizen is ignorant of remains unknown to them. For culture and ideas such as nation, freedom, democracy has clouded their minds and influences them to think that the Marcos regime was corrupted; on the contrary, it is them who are being corrupted by such ideas and those elites who provided the ideas for them have become their corruptors. This explains why our society is still in poverty. Progress is present, but its presence could justify its consequences of sacrificing the many toward their own poverty. In an article by Temario Rivera²⁷, capitalism in the Philippines shows resilience through dominating the manufacturing nurtured by the import-substitution industrialization (ISI) period. On the other hand, the elite, oligarchic capitalists remain through its continuing capture of political power and diversification of wealth in the financial and manufacturing sectors of the economy. The advance of technology and with this ISI bourgeoisie existing in the industrial development, the Philippine economy develops in such a way that domination by the elite

among subjects and process of dehumanization becomes a necessity. Our society justifies inequality as rational:

"In reality, a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need is unifying the system ever more tightly. What is not mentioned is that the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest. Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself."²⁸

Now any typical Filipino citizen would realize one thing: that the system of our society is distorted by instrumental reason. Although it might be impossible to change the system so long as there is no end to inequality among the powerful and the powerless, many of us would still insist: the methods of our society are wrong! I do not say that moral progress is against social progress. But a society must not make moral regress a means for attaining social progress. For it is society which builds up a nation, but the idea of a nation requires its people's concept of their identity. As an example, the Philippine Nation is determined by the Filipino identity. But if our society dehumanizes our people and removes our Filipino identity, we remain nothing but an irrational society devoid of a nation but fully controlled by instrumental reason. By far most observations, the Filipino progress of civil society could be seen as a growing domination of the subjective concept of reason at the expense of an irrevocably obsolete objective conception²⁹. Filipino instrumental reason distorts our way of thinking; citing Horkheimer in his words, even reason itself is distorted whenever it becomes instrumental to dominate a society:

"Mind becomes in reality the instrument of power and self-mastery for which bourgeois philosophy has always mistaken it. [...] The

powerlessness of the workers is not merely a ruse of the rulers but the logical consequence of industrial society, into which the efforts to escape it have finally transformed the ancient concept of fate. [...] Domination, in becoming reified as law and organization... has had to limit itself."³⁰

So much for instrumental reason, we now turn our interests in what makes our instrumental rationality stable even after we realize its aspects of irrationality. We now find that what the critical theorist thought of the notion of "culture industry" also took place in our social reality.

Adorno, Culture Industry and the Contemporary *Pinoy* Culture

Long ago, early indigenous Filipinos lived their lives in a manner where religion is the center of their social existence. Myths identify their existence through traditions, rituals, creed, and norms of the indigenous community. Our folk culture is primarily embodied in the religious behaviour before it was "compromised", meaning that the culture from other countries were shared, or rather imprinted, upon our way of living. According to ethnohistory scholar Florentino Hornedo, the religious way of living by the indigenous people can be classified into two categories: re-enactment of myth and enactment of ethical duty. By the term 'enactment', it refers to the mimetic repetition whose purpose is to make present the original reality and the condition of things.³¹ No wonder that culture may be as powerful enough to imprint upon us the rational structure of the order of things it carries – in the case for today, we call this order the status quo. In the case of indigenous people, the strong folk culture made them remain as they are up until now as there evidently exists ethnic groups in some parts of the country and also pure Filipino values we inherited from our ancestral family.

And then colonizers came to the Philippines. They did not only conquer us politically but also introduced to us the foreign culture they carried. But because during those times, we have less consciousness for a national identity, we welcomed the culture they brought to us and some of them were whole-heartedly accepted by the early Filipinos. They have conquered us culturally: Christian evangelization started, clothing changed, education is institutionalized, U.S. democracy was introduced, capitalism became stable, fiestas and other celebrations were established, etc. Our culture was enlightened. Furthermore, our culture has become hegemonic. It is not only because we have three colonizers who introduced their culture and traditions, but also because the folk culture we inherited hardly vanished from us as we try to embody the culture of other countries. The hegemony in our enlightened culture “damaged” our identity; consequently allowing Filipinos to lack total consciousness of social memory or a sense of pure national identity. We hardly could not even identify ourselves as “pure” Filipino people, what more to identifying ourselves as “pure” Filipino nation. What is left to us is the collective behaviour as a whole which we may use to keep order to the country and to survive the conditions of global recognition. In other words, we form ourselves a government in order for us to represent the country to the world as a nation potential for progress. Also, because our enlightened culture is hegemonic, it easily welcomes ideas that seemed to benefit status quo; all these phenomenon are graciously due to instrumental reason. From here comes a great threat to our contemporary mindset.

Culture is said to carry the spirit of a society from one generation to next, from one place to another. Even philosophers such as Montesquieu, Vico, and Hegel would agree that culture is primarily the repository of identity of

a nation. However, this notion of culture is negatively subsumed in the contemporary setting of the Philippines. Popular (mass) culture in the contemporary Philippines presents a banality of providing sense in things in the most unreasonable aspect. Our enlightened culture welcomes ideas that give us pleasure, easily imprinting us the new ways of living in the [capital] world. The danger of globalization is that it fails to limit the embodiment cultural influences from one country and of another. It was Benedict Anderson, a scholar of the history of ideas, who explained thoroughly how Philippines were affected with the capitalism of Europe which led in the birth of national consciousness in our country. By the time education’s resources were starting to be manufactured (i.e. books were mechanically reproduced and disseminated), capitalism was still in restless search for markets. Printing was then commodified, and soon education would to. It was the best way to educate people in the simplest and effective way. The capitalism of that age, according to Anderson, was given further impetus by three factors, two of which are the cause of the origins of national consciousness: (1) Latin, as the “language of the elite”, became the medium of instruction, (2) The impact of the Reformation, portraying Martin Luther as the first mass leader of popular literature, (3) and the spread of particular vernaculars as instruments of administrative centralization. System of production and productive relations (capitalism) and the technology of communication (printing) dominated man’s life during those days. The particular elements became universal to the masses of those days.³² And not only that the Philippines was a victim of this, but we once craved for this when we send our people to be educated in Europe (the *illustrados*) not being critical about the fact that we wanted to join status quo. All we wanted

was equal treatment of us *indios* with the Spaniards, but, fundamentally, “being equal with them” is a paraphrase for “belonging to the status quo.” Today, this sickness of us became worse. Culture here became commodity reification. The popular culture irrationally embodies almost everything that is appreciative, benefiting and maintaining their position to an illusory status quo. Popular culture distorts the minds of *Pinoy*s by dictating things as universal although such dictation is full of prejudices. *Tupperware* was once a brand of plastic containers; that is until *Pinoy*s nowadays commonly used such term as a generic (universal) name for plastic containers. And the worst has been finally achieved: popular culture dictates itself to embody appreciative ideas as part of our identity to the point that it tends to eliminate our original Filipino identity. So much is predicated for irrational hegemony. Our cultural roots, having evolved into today’s time, shared the same fate with our physical roots – the Malay race slowly becoming extinct in contemporary popular culture, so as the identity of “pure” Filipinos. And what we replace into us are ideas for identity which we do not even fully understand, we just appreciate them so much even to the point of not giving ourselves the moment for self-reflection. Take account of the Korean Pop Music as an analogical example. *Pinoy*s love them even if they do not fully understand the language of Koreans; the songs just merely fit into the ears of these *Pinoy*s. Appreciation would then lure them into learning the language itself. Once we get to translate the lyrics into our language, we seemed to realize that one could have just sing the song into English or Filipino because the lyrics can be as simple as those. We just love them because we have become curious of them. But the greatest mistake is when some of us do not even care to translating the song, but merely sing them because these songs, which they do not even

understand, can fit to the ears with its rhythm, tempo and melody. In the case of contemporary Filipino popular culture – we embody culture of other countries we do not fully understand but because they are easy to be appreciated, we tend to treat them as universal-single identity in our status quo. Psychoanalysis would tell us that our habit of embodying the culture of other countries is a result of our desire for equality. One could see that our social reality has the same qualities of an irrational society which is distorted by culture industry as theorized by Theodor Adorno, the great critic of mass culture. Adorno disenchanted his readers in “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*) and his essay “The Schema of Mass Culture” by proclaiming of the oppressive power of popular (mass) culture and its tendencies to disorient the people:

“The commercial character of culture causes the difference between culture and practical life to disappear. Aesthetic semblance (Schein) turns into the sheen which commercial advertising lends to the commodities which absorb it in turn... Imagination is replaced by a mechanically relentless control mechanism which determines whether the latest imago to be distributed really represents an exact, accurate and reliable reflection of the relevant item of reality.”³³

To understand how culture industry appears in our social reality, one should start on our cultural roots. We once have our folk culture, and then it evolved into an [hegemonic] enlightened culture. As we were affected by the capitalism of Europe, we embodied the technology and system of production because of our need to be educated. What we do not know is that we just got ourselves trapped in the status quo that was engulfing the world. Tendencies would be the negation of the last remaining spirit of our folk culture with the “new identity” imprinted upon us (which we do

not even fully understand) as our contemporary *Pinoy* culture. Our folk culture is negated for the progress of our country. More specifically, our Filipino identity is “given up” in our contemporary *Pinoy* culture, relying on the wish for social progress. There is no escape from this kind of objectification. If we try to change oppose the status quo, society would negate us. If we try to avoid status quo, society would leave us behind. If soon, religious behaviour would be diminished in our daily life, it is culture which we would be grasping from now on if we are to acquire roots for our identity.

In J.M. Bernstein’s analysis of Adorno’s notion of culture industry, it is said that its effectiveness depends not on its parading an ideology, “on disguising the true nature of things, but in removing the thought that there is any alternative to the status quo: ‘pleasure always means not to think about anything, to forget suffering even where it is shown.’ – a liberation promised by amusement ‘is freedom from thought and negation.’”³⁴ Bernstein would refer to it as the “social realization of the defeat of reflection”³⁵ – the reflection for some determinate negation; in our case, the negation of our Filipino identity. Such analysis is an allusion to the Arthur Schopenhauer’s dictum – “prolonging the suffering of the world”. Even Adorno’s depiction of the television³⁶ alludes to as a weapon of culture industry to maintain us as its prisoners enchanted of its offerings.

Take account on television shows or *teleseryes*. Did it not occur to any typical *Pinoy* that almost all of the stories and plots of *teleseryes* present awful class-structure, poverty of the tragic hero/heroine, cruel governance by the elite, the notion of “fun” being commodities? Never. Because those typical *Pinoy*s are enjoying themselves with the illusion that fate will provide them a happy ending as they portray the hero they watch from *teleseryes* as themselves;

all that is needed is some *deus ex machina* in order to actualize their enchantment. However, not all the time there would be a *deus ex machina* in [social] reality. Nonetheless, it is obvious that our contemporary culture is facing a tragic mission today: to give us salvation from cruel social reality. What we lack for our nation, we portray them in our culture and identity. And so when happy endings happen a lot in *teleseryes*, it is because we lack it in [social] reality.

When did milk teas become so mainstream that in the mindset of *pinoy*s, it is demanded very much to the point where its drinkers also become “high-class” for today? When did riding jeepneys reek the poverty of our country? When did Facebook become the unofficial universal medium of relating with others? How do the educated people of the working class become the “jejemons” according to the elites? Where can you find *bayanihan* today? The answers may not be found easily, but one thing is for sure: *Pinoy* popular culture gives its object the aesthetic semblance enough for us to be lost in pleasure and forget the way things should be – rational and needing changes. From here, our mindset has been compromised to have an inescapable fate of remaining to be in its current state – stable in poverty and forever “developing”.

It is not being said here that Adorno’s notion of the “culture industry” is found in our Filipino social reality. That statement was obvious from the beginning, given that we are still a developing country having a capitalist market system. What I am merely arguing here is that if Adorno’s “culture industry” is visible in our social reality, it would take form into our “cultural damage” – our distorted national identity due to its irrational hegemony, specifically the discrete embodiment of capitalism’s oppressions.

Social Reification, Rationalization and the Need for reflection and discourse

Now that we have another view of how typical Filipino citizens normally think, we should turn our attention to how it manifests into our social reality. It is most obvious to think that if one empirically inquires the cognitive behaviour of the mind from the social [awful, in the case of the Philippines] environment, then it is not very far for any typical thinker to somehow see the possibility of the mindset resulting into its reification to one's social reality. In Filipino social reality, we have found fragmented aspects of the contemporary Filipino (*Pinoy*) mode of thought which is highly tainted with instrumental rationality and the distorted cultural production or industry. Now, we inquire on how such mode of thought is translated in everyday experience in order for it to constitute the social reality we have in our country.

It is general knowledge to speak of reification as “to turn into things” from abstract to concrete. Traditional Marxism would emphasize more on the objectification of social relations by treating them as relations between things. There is no general definition of reification, but the fundamental constituents for a theory of reification is found in Marx's discussion of Commodity Fetishism in his work *Capital* as found by Gajo Petrović:

“The commodity form, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connexion with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. It is simply a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things ... This I call the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities ... To the

producers the social relations connecting the labours of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, thinglike relations between persons and social relations between things.... To them their own social action takes the form of the action of things, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them.”³⁷

Human subjects are reduced into objects, into things. They function in society to the point of being dehumanized. The mentality of man can only be translated into social reality through human work. It is most obvious that all human work is directed towards certain motives. The distorted mentality caused by instrumental reason would make man pursue distort selfish objectives towards fulfilment of social existence, even to the point of neglecting the social existence of other people. No one can escape such phenomenon because everything (every aspect of social reality) is sugar-coated by mass culture. We think of these selfish pursuits as the correct things to do only because one sees it from society's ruling criterion – popular culture itself. In the case of the contemporary Philippine social reality, such phenomena visibly appear in the objectification of “goals in life.” Take account of this example: Students, though still not working, aimed their goal to pursue another of those inventions of popular culture – Apple Inc.'s iPhone (invented and reified for the easier method of communication and other applications for entertaining oneself.) In the Philippines, the iPhone became a symbol of success. Once you own one, you're social existence would be acknowledged. To own an iPhone requires labor in the free market. From here, the student (having so much dreams in his youth) objectifies his dream by participating in the economic realm. However, instead of pursuing for a better future, what is merely wanted is to own just one iPhone and life is already fulfilled. What great idea for fulfilment

of oneself! Cognitive behaviour is distorted by such selfish subjective reason. But where is the “treatment of/as relation between things” in this example? There is no specific detail; because anything, and anyone, can be a means or an instrument for the attainment of such end. Another more banal example is, as already given insight earlier, is the destruction of “pure” Filipino identity, through the embodiment of hegemonic tendencies, in order for its social existence as a whole nation to be acknowledged by the world; the outcome of which is the contemporary identity of *Pinoy*s, damaged and trying its best to recover. Ideas and technological inventions produced by cosmopolitan popular culture are pursued by our fellow *Pinoy*s, believing that such things are signs of progress for our country. Wrong motives are actualized in “good” work. The labor of *Pinoy*s is directed towards each and every different instrumental reason and entertainment provided by these inventions is what makes us blind enough to not notice that we are forgetting our cultural values inherited from our ancestors – the sense of nationalism, our intense religious behaviour, high respect for family and familial principles, etc. Even our very own justification for our social reality also becomes mere rationalization – “that is just how we are and how we live”. This phrase becomes a valid excuse for such awful situation of contemporary Philippines. Although one could point out that such justification is hard for us to accept, such rationalization is valid because it is, obviously, how *Pinoy*s think today. The reification of our mode of thinking result not only to the “dehumanization” of our people for the progress of the Philippines, but also to our conception of a common good.

*Pinoy*s, because of instrumental rationality, ideological enchantment, “cultural damage”, and oppressive tendencies of its hegemony and capitalism, have various conceptions of what is

the common good. One *Pinoy* would think that “ x is good” while others would think that “ y is good”. But x is not y and both are different in all aspects. Most conception of common good may vary and be contradictory to each other. No wonder that there is hardly a sense of nationalism in our country due to the fact that each and every single Filipino has different notion of what is good. Citing again Agustin Martin Rodriguez, “the problem with governance in this country revolves around the lack of solidarity amongst its people. Our governance systems do not work because that makes sense they are unable to gather our people under a system that makes sense to them.”³⁸ And so how do we build our nation then, in the midst of instrumental rationality and hegemonic popular culture resulting to different variations of the common good? The solution should be a deliberation through discourse, as what Jurgen Habermas (another critical theorist) tackled for the past recent decades. Rodriguez’ promotion of Habermas’ discourse theory of will-formation to Filipino social reality should provide us the least possible way in order to maintain social order: “people are bound by discourse action because in the process of discourse two important things happen: (1) Participants are drawn to take the position of a decentered rationality.... (2) Participants in the process of decentering discourse are drawn into a dynamic movement of rationality seeking reason and justification... In discourse, no rationality is allowed to rest in its certainties and is pushed to commit to the quest for the shared meaning of communal existence.”³⁹ No Filipino would pursue something evil. It is just that we have different conception of what is good that some of them conflict each other and views each other as wrong and evil. Through deliberation by discourse, all of our notions of the good are examined of their validity to each citizen of the

country. Teleologically, this method would bring us into a mutual understanding not only for a shared pursuit of the deliberated common good, but also brings us in our consciousness the present awful situation of our social reality. It is for us to recognize the fact that our instrumental reason might be clashing with another's and try to accept each other's notion of what is good. To recognize that we are not the only ones whose pursuit is fulfilment in the social reality is the key to forming the grounds for solidarity. If we are in mutual understanding with the community, we are in the state of solidarity.⁴⁰

This method of will-formation might be the only choice that is left for us *Pinoy*s in order to maintain social order despite our distort mode of thinking, our "damaged culture", our ideological imprisonment, our awful situation. Reflection on our social reality should be enough a reason for the need of discourse in the country. For we think we are pursuing the common good, but what really is happening is the pursuit of one's subjective or instrumental reason. What is worse is that the method of such pursuit traps us in its ideological parameters invented by popular culture. We *Pinoy*s are, at some point, lost. "For they know not what they do", as Slavoj Žižek's allusion to the Christian phrase⁴¹ best describes the *Pinoy* in his contemporary Filipino social reality. As we inquired on who the *Pinoy* is, through his mindset and social reification, we find ourselves lost, specifically almost in the brink of social desolation. But such inquiry on ourselves gave us another chance of viewing ourselves, reflecting upon the reality we are situated. Such realization, I hope, may be a step for change, if not status quo, then at least the concerned Other.

Postscript

One thing comes into the mind as we ventured the inquiry of the Filipino mode of thought and its reification to contemporary social reality:

We are doomed to continual negation of ourselves so long as these two disasters – Filipino instrumental reason and *Pinoy* popular culture industry – imprison us for the rest of time. Our responsibility should be directed towards a certain "disaster risk management" – a discursive planning for a social development without determinate negation. For it is what we lack and neglected in the first place. After all, these two disasters might not leave our area of responsibility if we ourselves would not be responsible for them.

¹ Frances Mangosing, Julliane Love De Jesus, Nestor Burgos Jr., and Jamie Elona, "32 Dead, Power down as 7.2 quake hits Bohol," in *INQUIRER.net* <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/507169/6-dead-power-down-as-7-2-quake-hits-bohol>>, 15 October 2013.

² Frances Mangosing, "Supertyphoon 'Yolanda' enters Philippine area of responsibility," in *INQUIRER.net* <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/521845/supertyphoon-yolanda-enters-philippine-area-of-responsibility>>, 7 November 2013.

³ Julliane Love De Jesus, "Yolanda' death toll now over 4,000" in *INQUIRER.net* <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/530951/yolanda-death-toll-now-over-4000>>, 20 November 2013.

⁴ Kristine Angeli Sabillo, "Aquino justifies S. Korea trip as Visayas deals with quake devastation", in *INQUIRER.net* <<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/88055/aquino-justifies-s-korea-trip-as-visayas-deals-with-quake-devastation#ixzz2mfFmHfbh>>, 17 October 2013.

⁵ Xianne Arcangel, "Looting reported in Tacloban in aftermath of Yolanda", in *GMANETWORK.com* <<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/334750/news/regions/looting-reported-in-tacloban-in-aftermath-of-yolanda>>, 9 November 2013.

⁶ Randolph S. David, "The Powerless Public", in *Nation, Self and Citizenship: An Invitation to Philippine*

Sociology (Diliman, Quezon City: Department of Sociology, College of Social Science and Philosophy, University of the Philippines, 2002), 145.

⁷ Agustin Martin G. Rodriguez, *Governing the Other: Exploring the Discourse of Democracy in a Multiverse of Reason* (Loyola Heights, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 5.

⁸ This part of the paper contains fragmented excerpts from my final term paper in the course PHIL210 (Social and Political Philosophy) entitled “A Critique of Instrumental Reason in its Visibility on Philippine Civil Society”, delivered on 13th of March 2013 as a final requirement.

⁹ Resil B. Mojares, “Words that are not moving: Civil Society in the Philippines”, in *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 34 (March 2006), 33-52.

¹⁰ Civil Society International, “What is Civil Society?” in [civilsocietyinternational.org <http://www.civilsoc.org/whatisCS.htm>](http://www.civilsoc.org/whatisCS.htm), 2003.

¹¹ Alejandro Colas., *International Civil Society* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2007) 67.

¹² David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1980) 385.

¹³ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 1974) 9. [Hereafter mentioned as ER].

¹⁴ Ibid, 5.

¹⁵ Ibid, 21-22.

¹⁶ Lukas Kaelin, *Strong Family, Weak State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2012), 103.

¹⁷ Teresa Encarnacion-Tadem, and Noel Morada, *Philippine Politics and Governance: Challenges to Democratization and Development Vol. 2*, (Diliman, Quezon City: Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines, 2006), 3.

¹⁸ Ibid, 4.

¹⁹ Max Horkheimer, "The End of Reason", in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Edited by Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 2002), 28. [Hereafter mentioned as EndR]

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, 12-16.

²² Ibid, 28-36.

²³ Resil B. Mojares, “Words that are not moving: Civil Society in the Philippines”, in *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 34 (March 2006), 33.

²⁴ EndR, 28-29.

²⁵ EndR, 31.

²⁶ Ibid, 32-33.

²⁷ Temario Rivera, “The State, Civil Society, and Foreign Actors: The Politics of Philippine Industrialization”, in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 16 (September 1994), 157 – 177.

²⁸ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002) 95. [Hereafter mentioned as DE]

²⁹ *On Max Horkheimer: New Perspectives*, edited by Benhabib, S., BonB, W. and McCole, J., (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1999), 390.

³⁰ DE, 28-29.

³¹ Florentino H. Hornedo, “Notes on Filipino Religious Symbolic Action”, in *The Favor of the Gods, Essays in Filipino Religious Thought and Behavior* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2001), 147-152.

³² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Pasis City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1991 [Revised Edition]/ 1983 [First Published]), 38-42.

³³ Theodor Adorno, “The Schema of Mass Culture”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 61-64.

³⁴ J.M. Bernstein, “Introduction”, in Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 10-11.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ DE, 95-97.

³⁷ Gajo Petrović, “Reification”, in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by Tom Bottomore, Laurence Harris, V.G. Kiernan, Ralph Miliband (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 411-413.

³⁸ Agustin Martin G. Rodriguez, *Governing the Other: Exploring the Discourse of Democracy in a Multiverse of Reason* (Loyola Heights, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 42.

³⁹ Ibid, 40.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Slavoj Zizek, *For they know not what they do, Enjoyment as Political Factor* (London/ New York: Verso, 1991/2002)

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Approaching the Concept of Knowledge: A Synthesis of Sextus Empiricus, David Hume, and Edmund Gettier's Theories of Knowledge

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Abstract: Throughout the history of philosophy, many have questioned and argued about what knowledge is, how to attain knowledge, and if certainty is even possible. Some epistemological systems have not yet answered all questions that raise inquiry while others have some flaws within their methods. This makes synthesizing structures important in creating a stronger one that is better as a whole compared to each of them if taken individually. Taking Gettier, Sextus, and Hume's theories into the picture, one would see differences in their approach to knowledge. For instance, Sextus would see suspending one's judgment as an end to attain *ataraxia*, which is mental tranquility and calmness, because there is no absolute argument that has no equally reasonable rebuttal. David Hume focuses more on how one forms ideas through impressions, considering reality as sequence of events without causality. And lastly, Gettier defined knowledge as justified true belief, or beliefs that need true premises. Although different from one another, these systems can coexist because each considers the notion that everyone has an abundance of habitual knowledge and beliefs. In using their explanations on acquiring knowledge, one would understand a new and different view on the concept of knowledge and truth. With Sextus' Pyrrhonist system, which included the ten modes of suspension of judgment, he proved that perception is unreliable. While Gettier showed that one can be logically correct but his premises can actually be false. Hume then, disproved causality with his problem of induction. With these reasons as premises, one can see why the suspension of judgment is fair; for everyone should see and realize that they all constitute the idea of not taking things for granted, which is a principle of skepticism. They all imply the idea that man's grasp for knowledge is not enough. In fact, their systems, unlike the dogmatic ones, are the most flexible lines of thought which can still be applied today. They support continuous search and verification of knowledge, which is reasonable and definitely applicable to scientific research and a liberal way of dealing with social issues. This synthesis offers an approach which looks on all perspectives, the pros and cons of an issue, which should be used by everyone.

Keywords: Epistemology, Justified True Belief, Problem of Induction, Pyrrhonism

Introduction

Skepticism is predicated upon the idea that man's grasp for knowledge is not enough. As Grayling describes it, "skepticism is a healthy feature of all inquiry, prompting careful examination of evidence and argument, reminding us not to take too much on trust and to inspect the credentials of the sources and nature of knowledge claims"¹. Sextus Empiricus, David Hume, and Edmund Gettier have all exposed the inconsistencies of man's conception of knowledge. Although they did not come from the same era, all of them constitute a common notion: that there is a problem with society's established beliefs on knowledge. They have proven the weakness of man's judgment, from Sextus' ten modes as guide to *ataraxia*, Hume's discredit of induction, and to Gettier's problem with justified belief on propositional knowledge. All these systems can be synthesized into one strong form of skepticism. This form of epistemology is the one which constitutes a great reason for not trusting man's judgment, and seeing the suspension of judgment as an end. This is a system which is open to all possibilities, without the use of a narrow dogma which drains away people's desire to continuously seek knowledge.

Epistemic questions on knowledge

People answer questions promptly and quickly when asked, implying that they know the answer without even determining whether there is certainty. Epistemology dwells on these matters which center on the nature of knowledge. According to Pojman, there are three forms of knowledge: *propositional*,

competence, and knowledge by acquaintance.² *Knowledge by acquaintance* is one's assertion of familiarity of something, wherein a person has direct and personal experience of an object or a person. *Competence knowledge* is the performance of knowledge or the knowhow, this meant being able to assert that one can perform to show his or her knowledge (i.e. cooking a special recipe). Lastly, the *propositional knowledge* which asserts a proposition or another person's assumption of something which has truth value (i.e. I know that Manila is the capital of the Philippines).

Most philosophers dwell on matters that inspect the definition and nature of propositional knowledge which consists of statements that should correspond to facts to be considered true. But what makes a proposition true? What is truth? How do we obtain and determine that a proposition is true? These questions shall be answered by Sextus' pyrrhonism.

Propositional knowledge starts with a statement and proposing something means the person initiating it believes it is true, that is why belief became another element on propositional knowledge. Questions like "*Are beliefs necessary for propositional knowledge?*" and "*What conditions should we consider on beliefs that would prove its validity?*" arise. Because of these, justification became another issue on epistemology. Believing truly became an important factor on propositional knowledge. Justification is a standard and a normative act that would determine whether a set of beliefs is knowledge or not. When a person believes on something and that belief turned out to be true, is it knowledge immediately? Gettier would provide insights upon this issue on his inquiry on justified true beliefs.

Assuming that people already know the nature of truth and how they can determine beliefs that are knowledge from those that are not, how can they obtain knowledge? Is it through one's senses or intellect? This question dwells on the issue of knowledge acquisition. David Hume's empiricism and standpoint towards the process of how human beings acquire ideas and concepts try to answer this issue. In philosophy, where people seek for truth and wisdom, understanding knowledge is central to establishing what is right or wrong and determining the bigoted beliefs from reasonable beliefs. Answering these questions is essential for every person to have a good understanding of knowledge which people usually take for granted.

Sextus Empiricus' Pyrrhonism

Sextus says that *skepticism* originated in the hope of attaining mental peace or calmness.³ Pyrrhonists believe that the suspension of one's judgment is essential to attain *ataraxia* or 'mental peace'. This mental tranquility, as argued by Sextus, was not achieved by other philosophers who have already made a stance in their search for truth (i.e. the Stoics with their logic, the Epicureans with their simplicity, and Hedonists with their pleasure). Sextus made a clear distinction when he divided people's end in their philosophical research into three: 1) the dogmatists, who have already claimed that they have found the truth (i.e. Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics); 2) the academics, who claimed that it is a search for inapprehensible and that there is no truth or that it can never be found and; 3) the skeptics who continued to search for truth and knowledge unendingly. As perfectly elaborated by Sextus, a pyrrhonist does not make any positive assertions that anything he says is wholly true but rather reports accurately on each thing as his impression of the very moment. This form of skepticism is a

continuous search and examination for knowledge and truth with the help of doubting and indecision.

The whole argument of their epistemology is based upon the premise "to every argument an equal argument is opposed."⁴ They thought knowledge is provisional according to the perception and impressions of the society or an individual's view. Pyrrhonism is unique because it does not deny the possibility of an absolute knowledge. In fact, it is searching for the absolute. It is just that to every thesis, there is an antithesis that they both want to know. What they are doing is to attain moderation. They hate dogmas which are affirmations of beliefs without being assented. It shows that pyrrhonism is an attitude. This is clear with what an expert on ancient philosophy, According to Dr. Hankinson,

"Skepticism is an umbrella-term; and a wide variety of methods and attitudes can be found sheltering under it. In its original Greek sense a *skeptikos* is simply someone who looks, or examines (*skopein, skeptesthai*) ; and although Sextus does not bother to labour this point in the introductory paragraphs of 'Outlines of Pyrrhonism (PH), he does insist that the sceptic, no less than the members of the Dogmatic schools (and indeed the Academics) is a search after something. What divides them is their attitudes, expectations, and reactions to the search. So, while the Dogmatists think that they've found what they are looking for, and hence abandon the search in complacent contentment, and while the academics conclude (precipitately in Sextus' opinion) that nothing can be found (this reading is controversial: Chapter V, 75-8, 85-6), the sceptics just keeps on searching (PH 1 1-3). Indeed the verb 'to search' (*zēteîn*) gives rise to one of their other names: the Sceptics are, on their own account at least, Zetetics."⁵

Skepticism is an ability to place an antithesis in whatever manner to be able to see the equality of force in the objects and arguments opposed.

With the proper tools, one can see these two opposing arguments and find suspending one's judgment reasonable, and upon that 'aha' moment, you can attain mental tranquility. It is on appearances and judgments that people base their propositions. And from these appearances of objects that one perceives with their senses, one creates thought which turns into judgment as he infers. Now, one can formulate an antithesis by using appearances against appearances, judgments against judgments and appearances against judgments. Sceptics do not deny judgment, they only use antithesis as conflicts to the thesis. As Sextus defines the next move, suspension of judgment, a cessation of mental processes in consequence of which we neither deny nor affirm anything, one can attain *ataraxia* or the "undisturbed and calm state of soul".

Pyrrhonists do not hold any opinion but report their feelings because they pay high regards to appearances which means that they still follow a line of reasoning in a manner consistent with appearances. From this, they base their ways of living in accordance with customs, laws, institutions of one's country and their own feelings. The logic behind this reliance on appearance is that they ought to believe that it is the guidance of nature unto human beings like in cases of becoming hungry which leads us to eat and thirst which urges us to drink. To prove their point, the Pyrrhonists came up with the ten modes to attain *ataraxia*. To every belief or assertion, there is a flaw with (a) the subject judging; (b) the object judged; or (c) both subject and object. These modes would help people to have better understanding of the "antithesis" that Sextus speaks of.

The Ten Modes

The order from which the ten modes would be presented is based on their class which makes it

easier to summarize or interpret their meanings. Given that, the first four modes would be kept on their places as they are all grouped with the idea of showing flaws with the subject judging, the seventh and tenth mode would immediately follow for both exposes flaws with the object being judged, and the fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth would come last as all of them constitute flaws for both the subject and the object on the event of judgments being made.

(1) The subject judging (first to fourth modes)

The first four modes are essentially arguing that one's judgment over a subject is questionable, that there are existent flaws with the subject who is judging. Nature or essence is only arbitrary, which constitutes the idea that there is no one standard of being human or animal that one can know absolutely. It is because different people and animals have differences in terms of perception. Same objects produce different impressions on different animals because they have different origins and forms. Some were born as eggs like birds, while some were born alive like humans.

Even between the species of human beings, differences are evident. Preference of humans vary, their decision depends on pleasure and displeasure which roots sensation and sense impressions that guide one's perception of a thing. Then so, human beings have different viewpoints and perspectives on a given object or issue, which paved way to contradictory accounts they denounce.

Consistency of one's judgment is another issue. The vagueness of the difference between senses make one's judgment cloudy because people can't feel some things and their senses are limited. Man's senses are limited because their senses are influenced by one another. For instance, one can appreciate a sculpture by

touch or by sight. When one tastes an apple and says it is sweet, is there something that he misses? Surely at some point, people would disagree on what the 'essential' characteristic of an object is. One object gives humans different impressions which constitute different forms. Impressions are taken by one's different senses (i.e. sight, touch, and taste) and this is why the blind man's impression of an apple is very different with another man's appreciation of the very same thing. Sextus made it clear that the 'compounding' is the conflict, that there is a problem in determining every characteristic of an object.

Moreover, the conditions and moods of people are continuously changing with the circumstances making it hard to judge something. When someone is under the influence of alcohol, this can pave way to reckless judgment due to overconfidence. Even in cases of being hungry, almost any food seems to be delicious. The point is that there is so many discrepancies on one's judgment because of the state people are in. These discrepancies are irresolvable because you cannot just prefer one sense impression over the other. In doing so, a criterion has to be met by proofs. But such criterion is inexistent, and if there is, it is based on proofs. And Sextus argues that the mere fact that both of them, the preferred sense-impression's proof and the criterion, need each other to prove both is circular and is untrustworthy. There is room for doubt because there is great possibility to just invent a standard based on a real life event which is arbitrary and not necessarily true. Due to all of these conflicts with the subjects judging, suspension of judgment is the only way according to Sextus.

(2) *The object judged (Seventh and tenth modes)*

In the point of view of the object judged, the seventh and tenth modes generally talk about

how the composition of an object being judged is hard to understand due to the conjunction of their composition and parts. Some objects of the same kind may vary if each is inspected. There is categorical conflict in terms of determining an object's nature or state of being because one can see a conflict in terms of judgment over the object as it differs in quantity or size. Take medicine for example. Too much of it can be harmful to one's body while the right amount is considered good. But given the same amount to a different person with different needs at that moment, one account may say that it is good for one's health, while the other might say otherwise. The same principle may apply to poisonous substance, very minimal amount may seem tolerable and safe to human beings while too much lead to being poisonous. Therefore, it is hard to provide a nature or an absolute characteristic to external objects.

In cases wherein the object of judgment is an act, Sextus argues that it is greatly influenced by societal customs and traditions. Habits, or customs, are common acceptance of men in a society. These customs, which people view as right, are social norms which everyone tries to comply to. There are institutions and laws passed out there, who tries to impose unto society what is right and wrong. This influence, by the law and customs, greatly affects one's judgment in reality. People in the Philippines might see divorce as not good because people here are conservative, while in United States, it is very much acceptable and is pretty much a norm. Sometimes, people tend to unconsciously generalize and judge on a particular issue, without knowing that their judgment is clouded by culture, norms and laws, which are arbitrary. This is pretty much evident with myths, which people in the past view as reasonable to believe on, even with its lack of proof that it is possible or realistic. People tend to say something is

taboo or wrong just because it is prohibited by law, but ask them why it is in principle wrong, their answer may not suffice. How can the society say that when you are eighteen, you are automatically mature enough to make decisions for yourself, there are people out there who are as young as fourteen, but they are more mature than adults in their twenties. The point is, these norms are arbitrary, and using them as basis on one's stance or judgment is not sufficient. Given that there are conflicts on the objects people judge, why suspension of judgment is needed.

(3) *Both subject and object (Fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth modes)*

The view on the perspective of the object and subject's flaws, the fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth modes, talks about the conjunctions of ideas and their vulnerability on getting mixed up. Our judgments can be arbitrary because people create their own standards to justify or prove something. This is due to the fact that the objects' impression greatly relies on the one looking at it, and it is relative to the eye of the beholder, like beauty and art which constitutes different opinions on when something is beautiful. That is why Grammy Awards and the likes are widely seen as the standard for popular vote of what beauty but not entirely limited to it.

Moreover, people have different perspectives which make judgments inconsistent, with the likes of seeing optical illusions on different angles or perspectives. And with cases of rare events, the conditions may appear weird or alien to everyone just like eclipses in the past which paved way to myths. People value gold more because of its rarity. Society finds deeper meaning in meteor shower because of its rarity, unlike sun which is constantly near earth. If one would look at solar eclipse, it is so rare that

research of it comes by slower. One can create myths for an occurrence which cannot be easily explained. Humanity may not experience a new phenomenon yet, because it ceases to happen every hundred billions of years. The point is that there is some extent of arbitrariness on society's characterization of an event or how people value something just because of its rarity, astonishment is much higher in those scenarios, interpretations or attempts to explain those phenomenon should not be taken for granted, that is why suspension of judgment is the safest and most dignified way of assessment.

In short, Sextus wants people to understand that with all these ten modes,⁶ suspension of judgment is needed to calm our desire for knowledge without making an assumption. It is a continuous verification and search for truth which is progressive, because after all, what our minds can conceive and inquire to is limited.

Hume's concept of human understanding

In human understanding, Hume speaks of two forms of knowledge, the 'relation of Ideas' and 'matters of fact'. 'Matters of fact' is based on one's sense experience while 'relation of ideas' is based on how one correlates ideas. Before anything else, one should look into the most basic concept of Hume on matters of fact which is impression. Impressions are memories of a thing which comes from experience (i.e. impressions on a painting by Picasso,). It is said to be internal when it is subject to reflection of previous expressions, which in short, speaks of past memories like reminiscing previous experiences of seeing someone else's face. On the other hand, an impression is external when it comes from an actual perception of things or what one feels at present. The main difference is determined by one's vivacity, or the "freshness" of experience, of a thing, which Hume greatly values. This is why Hume thinks

that external impressions are more legitimate and credible than the internal, because he considers the latter as weak impressions with lack of vivacity.

Looking into the concept of 'relations of idea', this form of knowledge, as Hume argues, is only considered true when in contact with the source of impression. For one's idea of a thing comes from sensation or former impressions. If one would imagine the idea of a winged horse or what people call Pegasus on the fictional story of Hercules, it is generally the combined impressions of wings and horses. It does not mean that if one can imagine or formulate an idea, it will eventually become true. There are three types of ideas which society regards as reliable according to Hume; these are resemblance, contiguity, and causality. Resemblance speaks of idea which has its connection from its source or original perception. One can think of a photograph which resembles the real person in it. Contiguity is a type of idea which seeks connection between two different ideas in terms of their continuity like having the idea of a baby whenever one hears cries or thinking of what husbands feel in relation to a newborn baby. It generally exposes the conjunction of time and space in terms of human perception. Causality speaks of the relation one imagines between two experiences just like a child thinking that lightning causes thunder, or people thinking that chicken pox causes fever because it almost always happens consequently. All of these 'association of ideas' are considered as arbitrary by Hume.

The problem of induction

Hume generally tries to prove that induction is only a form of probability and that causality is arbitrary. He argues that there is no certainty in

matters of fact, while there is in relations of idea. This is evident when Hume says:

All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *Relations of Ideas* and *Matters of Fact*. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation, which is either intuitive or demonstratively certain. *That three times five is equal to the square of the two sides*, is a proposition, which expresses relations between these figures. *That three times five is equal to the half of thirty*, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is any where existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths, demonstrated by Euclid, would for ever retain their certainty and evidence.

Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise to-morrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that it will rise. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.⁷

This shows that one's knowledge of matters of fact is nothing but a probability at its best. Here is where the problem of induction arises. While certainty can be found in knowledge of relation of ideas, the way people acquire matters of fact is only through experience, where they use vivacity and impression. While these matters of fact are used and translated to a causal inference, Hume thinks that people make use of experience as a basis, not reason. That is why

Hume believes that causality is only arbitrary. As Beauchamp further expounded:

Though the rationalists did not articulate their beliefs about causation in careful and detailed arguments, the following are the pivotal rationalist beliefs that Hume rejects:

1. Causes contain their effects.
2. Causes entail their effects, just as premises entail conclusion
3. Causes entail their effects because there is a necessary connection between them.⁸

All that people know are impressions, and with keen observation, one would see that nature is continuously changing. There is no repetition of exact event that would make us sure that an induction from the past would happen again. It is nothing but an approximation. It is evident in measuring objects. In the realm of mathematics, everything is exact, but when applied it becomes an approximation. Induction, for Hume, is nothing but a probability which affects the society today because of customs and habits which asserts knowledge.

The Gettier Problem

Is justified true belief knowledge? According to Martin, “to understand Gettier’s reasoning, you’ll need a tiny bit of background about his two assumptions . . . in Gettier’s words, is that beliefs are entailed by other justified beliefs are themselves justified.”⁹ Edmund Gettier wants to prove that knowledge is not justified true belief. What people believe as true may not be so because one may infer with an assumptive premise. People use conditions that are set to create a parameter wherein their belief is justified.

In status quo, most people believe and use, consciously and unconsciously, the tripartite

definition of knowledge which states that “propositional knowledge, i.e. knowledge that p, has three necessary conditions: justification, truth and belief.”¹⁰ This can be elaborated by saying that the tripartite definition of knowledge asks a person to have reasonable evidence, belief in the proposition, and the proposition being real or true. This is very much evident on law trials in United States where the judgment in courts are based on the jury’s vote influenced by belief upon the proposition that the accused is guilty or should be acquitted and justified by the evidence given by the prosecutor which they think is already “beyond reasonable doubt”. The problem is the idea that a propositional knowledge may have false premises or assumptive conclusions that has no necessary logical links.

The point of Gettier is that the premises people set to create an inference or belief is unreliable and sometimes does not really fit. Truth is only arbitrary in these cases. What the foreseen future should not be limited to what they thought and inferred for how an event would happen. There are cases where it becomes false or true because of luck. Propositional knowledge, which constitutes our beliefs, is unreliable and cannot be knowledge. Having your proposition true does not necessarily suffice that you know it. If there is no propositional knowledge, how can one assert knowledge now?

Skepticism as the unifying tool for Sextus, Hume, and Gettier’s theories of knowledge

As Grayling defines scepticism, it is a "set of considerations which jointly challenge us to justify our claims to knowledge."¹¹ It makes people wary of the vulnerabilities of humans to error or illusion. “Skepticism is the view that we lack knowledge.”¹² In proving the proposition given in the concept of skepticism, Hume’s

discredit of induction by refuting causality is the necessary premise one can hold on to. With the help of Sextus' ten modes, it even proves furthermore on how weak one's sense perception and judgments are. Moreover, Gettier even argued that one's beliefs cannot be true even to the extent of propositional knowledge; skepticism spreads because of false premises and assumptive induction.

Now, the next step is to suspend one's judgments to attain *ataraxia* as encouraged by Sextus. Given that people would suspend one's judgments, how then should they approach propositions, matters of fact, and judgments? Here is where calculated risk comes in. Even though there is a skeptical notion of assessing judgments, one should still see matters of fact as probabilities. The only different act is the continuous verification of these "knowledge". Each and every one should start looking at the 'for' and 'against' of an issue. Same as the issue of Philippine divorce, one should consider the ideas of the Catholic Church being trampled and at the same time the situations of women being violated and the possibility of mistaken or unprepared marriage. What this synthesis forwards is a liberal attitude and mindset which promotes a compromise.

What is the nature of knowledge?

Even though there is no absolute knowledge that can be known because of human being's limits on grasping knowledge, there still is a relative knowledge which may exist in status quo. Knowledge can now be defined as a probability measured by continuous verification which may or may not be necessarily true.

Knowledge, as given by Hume's epistemology, is rooted from a person's ideas instilled on his or her mind. These ideas can be Matters of fact which comes from one's experience which

creates an impression. This means that the process by which people acquire knowledge is through gathering impressions from sense experience and translating it to matters of fact and create relation of ideas.

Knowledge should also have justification that would suffice one's beliefs. If the justification of beliefs as knowledge is questioned by Gettier's problem, this system is in line with the epistemology of Hume when he conceded that this knowledge is only from experience, which can be unreliable. Moreover, Sextus explicitly implied that truth can never be grasped by people, which is why continuous verification and search for it is needed, looking into the lens of the affirmative and negative is important to meet the end which is suspension of judgment. This synthesis does not assert that knowledge is absolutely true; it is just that it is most probable. That is why; it is open for a negative proposition of an established truth in the society, which is beneficial to the progress of knowledge.

Concluding Remarks

In an advanced world, a time when people are starting to be more liberal and open-minded, one's view on knowledge should keep up too. An open-minded approach on knowledge which stays away from dogma is an effective tool for the progress of sciences. If one would look at the medieval ages, the Church was in question because it slowed the progress of science due to their dogmatic ways. Moreover, looking at both sides creates a bigger picture where one can consider all key players that would be affected on an issue. Being close-minded on a particular stance paves way to a blind spot that can hamper progress.

Furthermore, the limits of a human being cannot be overlooked; one must admit that their

opinion or discovery might be accepted right at present but may be wronged in the future. Take homosexuality for instance, there was a time in the past when it is accepted by the Greeks, but it was condoned by the Church in the medieval ages that today, we are just starting to accept Homosexuality. Inconsistency is evident in this one that is why people should not consider the present time's norms as absolute. The goal is to attain the calmness of the mind, *ataraxia*. This is achieved, when each person thinks that he or she realizes that they are open or flexible to changes. They would be blessed with the knowledge of being aware of man's incapacities and imperfections in grasping knowledge. This synthesis constitutes a reasonable dogma-free stance, a continuous search for knowledge which eminently shows true passion for knowledge.

¹¹ A.C. Grayling, *Ideas that Matter*. (2010: Orion publishing, London), 461.

¹² Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa ed., *A Companion to Epistemology*. (1993: Blackwell publishers, UK), 457.

¹ A. C. Grayling, *Ideas that Matter* (London: Orion Publishing, 2009), 461.

² Louis Pojman, *What can we know?: An introduction to the theory of knowledge*. (California: Wadsworth publishing, Co., 1995), 2.

³ Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre: a history of philosophy*, 6th Ed. (Singapore: McGraw-Hill Co, Inc, Singapore, 1999), 111.

⁴ Sextus Empiricus, *Selections from the Major Writings on Scepticism, Man, and God*, tr. Sanford Etheridge, ed. Philip P. Hallie (Indiana: Avatar Books of Cambridge, Indiana, 1985), 32.

⁵ R.J Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (1995: Routledge, London),13.

⁶ See also: Sextus Empiricus, *Selections from the Major Writings on Scepticism, Man, and God*, tr. Sanford Etheridge, ed. Philip P. Hallie (1985: Avatar Books of Cambridge, Indiana) p.31-72

⁷ David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (1999: Oxford University Press Inc., New York) p.108

⁸ Ibid, p.26

⁹ Robert Martin, *Epistemology: A beginner's guide*. (2010: Oneworld Publications, UK), 23.

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