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# K R I T I K E

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## ABOUT THE COVER

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“Passage”



The cover photo displays a perspective of the grand clock in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, France. Designed by Victor Laloux, what is today France's second most-visited museum was once a bustling train station. The clock's location is intentional; on any platform may an individual tell the time. From this centrality, vital for departures and arrivals, it today serves an aesthetic purpose, bearing witness to the passage of time itself; one can be so drawn into the museum by the thousands of artworks to barely notice how many hours have passed, only to be surprised by the later positioning of the clock's hands. This central piece was a symbol of mobility as it was glanced at prior to embarking with places both near and far awaiting, while today those who are captivated by its curvatures, contrasting the parallel lines that characterize the Beaux-Arts Style, are enclosed by the museum walls—the clock as a symbol of immobility mirrored by the borders of a painting or the barriers surrounding a sculpture. This clock may represent the passage of time, however, in an increasingly digital and quantified age, the clock ironically seems to become passé despite time's constant progression. Perhaps we ought to be reminded that the clock is but a representation of time for we ourselves *are* time's passage.

*KRITIKE: An Online Journal of Philosophy*  
17:1 (June 2023)

Photograph by Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland, 2019  
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# About the Journal

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

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

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

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

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# K R I T I K E

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## ***Fides et Ratio* and the Evolution of the Thomistic Philosophic Tradition<sup>1</sup>**

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**Jovito V. Cariño**

**Abstract:** Twenty-five years after publication, *Fides et Ratio* remains the most definitive pontifical pronouncement on the state and direction of Catholic philosophy. One may consider it as an updated Thomist manifesto given its explicit endorsement of St. Thomas Aquinas' mind as the paradigm par excellence of the harmony between faith and reason. As an intellectual tradition, however, Thomism is not immune to change and over the years, Thomist scholars continuously attempt to re-read and re-interpret St. Thomas' thought vis-a-vis other philosophic worldviews. Such engagement though cannot proceed without engendering new crises or tensions. The outcome resulting from these philosophic experimentations was once described by Alasdair MacIntyre as the emergence of "too many Thomisms" in reference to the multiplicity of philosophic strands all vying to be the authentic expression of St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophic heritage. What I propose to do in this paper is to examine the critical implications of MacIntyre's remarks against the background of *Fides et Ratio's* consolidation of Catholic philosophic tradition and its recognition of St. Thomas Aquinas' exemplary articulation of the unity between faith and reason. My discussion is guided by the question: Is a plural Thomism compatible with the philosophic vision of *Fides et Ratio*?

**Keywords:** Thomism, *Fides et Ratio*, Aquinas, Catholic philosophy

In his book, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre called his readers' attention to the phenomenon of "too many Thomisms" in reference to an apparent domestic problem among the adherents of the Thomist philosophic tradition.<sup>2</sup> MacIntyre's critique was an

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<sup>1</sup> Written in commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (14 September 1998) by Pope Saint John Paul II.

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emphatic addendum to the same observation shared by other Thomist scholars like Gery Provoust, Gerald McCool, Fergus Kerr, and John Knasas. The suggestion offered was that a plural Thomism tended to undermine the aim of Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* to establish a consolidated front against the vigorous offensive of modernity. At first glance, the whole affair may seem like a mere instance of internal squabble until one reckons that a plural Thomism can indeed have an impact on the general direction of Catholic philosophic tradition vis-a-vis the global intellectual landscape invariably described as post-modern, post-metaphysical, post-Christian or even post-theological.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of one's descriptive preference, it is undeniable that the current intellectual environment has significantly diminished the place of either divinity or theological thought in the public sphere. This diminution or decentering of the *sacred* is what marks the "secular age," according to Charles Taylor. Although Taylor conceded that the secular age has not completely displaced either God or religion, neither of them, nonetheless, can no longer reserve to itself the former primacy it used to enjoy.<sup>4</sup> How can a splintered Thomism face up to this challenge? And if ever it could, how can a bundle of responses coming from multiple directions be as efficacious as a counteroffensive launched from a united front? At face value, it would seem that the current plurality of Thomism confirms *Fides et Ratio's* pronouncement that the Catholic Church has no philosophy of its own.<sup>5</sup> If such were the case, then the phenomenon of "too many Thomisms" poses no threat to Catholic philosophy and may in fact be seen as the real destiny of Catholic philosophic thinking. This is a rather convenient conclusion but one that requires further refinement to make sense of its fuller philosophic impact. The problem, it appears, is not so much the number of ways one may read St. Thomas Aquinas but whether this kind of multiplicity reduces, in any way, Thomism's potency to remain consonant with *Fides et Ratio's* championing of the unity between faith and reason. Seen this way, the plurality of Thomism may be read no longer as an intramural of sort but as a problematic that discloses the continuities and

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<sup>2</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 58–81.

<sup>3</sup> Gianni Vattimo, *After Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 41–56.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 505–535.

<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Encyclical on the Relationship between Faith and Reason (Vatican City: Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), 49, <[https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html)>.

discontinuities within the Thomist tradition in relation to the larger milieu of philosophic discourse.

### A Question of Legacy

At the outset of this segment, I shall use the term “Thomism” in its most generic sense, that is, as a scholarly tradition that promotes a reconstructive critical engagement of the intellectual legacy of St. Thomas Aquinas. As it appears, this definition is quite loose but specific enough to include theorists belonging to that early age when Thomism has yet to take its present shape and at the same time, cautious enough to exclude other figures who might have read St. Thomas but for reasons contrary to the basic core of his philosophic or theological positions. This is the reason why personages like Bishop Stephen Tempier or Robert Kilwarby may be reckoned as readers of St. Thomas Aquinas but may not be identified as Thomists.<sup>6</sup>

It is likewise worth noting that in its medieval context, philosophy is contiguous with theology. While St. Thomas Aquinas himself made an effort to delineate the two, it can hardly be denied that in actual practice, the two disciplines appealed to the same set of grammar and vocabulary although they diverged in what medieval scholars called their *terminus a quo* or point of origin. This should help clarify why Thomism, before it became a philosophic school of thought, was actually a campaign to restore St. Thomas’ ideas to their original theological contexts. The early Thomists were, in fact, theologians committed to unknotting St. Thomas Aquinas’ doctrinal entanglements as shown by the charges of errors heaped upon him by those who didn’t share his mind. As a philosopher, St. Thomas leaned towards Aristotle but unlike Aristotle, he thought knowledge could be gained, besides the mind’s reliance on sense experience, via receptivity to divine revelation. On this matter, St. Thomas was in league with thinkers from non-Christian traditions like Avicenna and Moses Maimonides and opposite the likes of Averroist Aristotelians like Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. As a theologian, St. Thomas was committed to the so-called three tasks of the medieval master of theology, namely, *docere*, *praedicare*, *disputare* or lecturing, preaching, and disputing the content of divine revelation via a healthy dose of rational discourse within the framework of *fides quaerens intellectum* or faith seeking understanding that

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<sup>6</sup> For a brief, yet substantive account of the history of Thomism, see Romanus Cessario, OP, *A Brief History of Thomism* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2003).

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was championed by St. Augustine and St. Anselm.<sup>7</sup> This benign recognition of the role of reason in theological discourse was what set St. Thomas Aquinas apart from other medieval scholars like St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and even Meister Eckhart.<sup>8</sup>

Another important detail worthy of consideration pertains to the unique relation between Thomism and St. Thomas Aquinas himself. The average perception looks up to St. Thomas Aquinas as the progenitor of Thomism and regards the link between the two as the backbone of Catholic philosophy. This view however, as mentioned earlier, has been challenged by *Fides et Ratio* where John Paul II asserted that the Catholic church has no philosophy of its own nor does it seek to espouse a specific philosophic system. In the same encyclical, John Paul II likewise recognized St. Thomas Aquinas, not so much for this philosophic speculation but for his theological mind.<sup>9</sup> It can perhaps be safely maintained that the tie that binds St. Thomas Aquinas with the splintered versions of Thomism is more nominal than doctrinal and a lot less historical. One may remember that St. Thomas Aquinas was a medieval thinker whereas the earliest form of what we, in retrospect, label Thomism was, in effect, a modern outgrowth.<sup>10</sup> Yes, it is possible to trace the intellectual stimulus behind the latter to the former but to consider it as the brainchild of our friar scholar might already be stretching it too far. Unlike a Plato or an Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas was not someone who intentionally gathered disciples around his school of thought, much less, his personality. He also did not cultivate or attract a hefty following during his lifetime and while scholars did pore over his works after his death, their outputs might be seen more as an apology under duress (given the accusations of heterodoxy against him) rather than a conscious campaign to perpetuate his intellectual legacy. During his active days as a medieval scholar, St. Thomas Aquinas did enjoy a certain level of fame and influence as attested by the letters and manuscripts solicited by people from all walks of life—popes, monarchs, bishops, fellow friars, politicians, students—who sought his intervention in their respective predicaments.<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding such positive influence, St. Thomas never

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<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Inaugural Lectures: Commendation and Division of Sacred Scripture*, trans. by Ralph McInerney in *Thomas Aquinas, Selected Writings* (London: Penguin, 1998), rev. by Joseph Kenny, O.P., <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/Principium.htm>>.

<sup>8</sup> Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), 31–60, 92–121.

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 43.

<sup>10</sup> See Victor B. Brezick, CSB, (Ed.) *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards, A Symposium* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> For a complete list of St. Thomas Aquinas' works online, see Joseph Kenny, O.P., ed., *St. Thomas Aquinas's Works in English* <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/>>.

ran out of detractors who preferred to impute error or malice even in his most earnest efforts of truth-seeking. Most of these “haters” came from the ranks of secular clerics, fellow professors at the Faculty of Theology or counterparts at the Faculty of Arts. One may remember that St. Thomas Aquinas’ appointment as a master of theology at the University of Paris was met with strong resistance from the secular masters. And even when he was already serving his tenure, his name was always associated with rumors of loose scholarship from his colleagues at the Faculty of Theology (due to his forays into Aristotelian philosophy) and from professors at the Faculty of Arts (given his known reservation for the primacy of divine revelation). From various corners, in other words, the prevailing opinion saw St. Thomas as a misfit. This adverse situation came to a head in 1277 when, three years after St. Thomas’ death, Bishop Stephen Tempier condemned his teachings along with those of others, due to their perceived Aristotelian compromises. While the condemnation based itself on a misreading rather than a fair critical assessment of St. Thomas’ works, it was an episode worthy of mention given its foundational role in shaping the early formation and reception of St. Thomas’ intellectual patrimony. It is not without a tinge of irony that the master celebrated now as a paragon of orthodoxy was once considered an outlier from his own domain. It became then the self-appointed task of the first wave of Thomists to rehabilitate the works of their master by disclosing the cogency of his theological insights beneath the trappings of Aristotelian philosophy.

### **From Thomism to St. Thomas Aquinas**

Given the above, one may say that Thomism, in its early beginnings, was constituted mainly by curative efforts to sanitize St. Thomas Aquinas’ alleged tarnished memory. The well-respected Thomist commentator Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange referred to this episode as the age of the “defensiones” or apologists.<sup>12</sup> This is yet another interesting feature of St. Thomas’ intellectual history. The preponderance of cases of misreading and, alongside it, the expressed need for a posthumous clinical treatment of his works clearly indicates the telling absence, on St. Thomas’ part, of a self-conscious attempt to perpetuate an intellectual tradition within a neatly established theological or philosophic system. Such monumental project would have required a handful of dedicated collaborators who could comment, critique, consolidate and propagate his

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<sup>12</sup> Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, quoted by Roman Cessario, *A Brief History of Thomism*, 28.

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corpus of works. Unfortunately for St. Thomas, he didn't enjoy that privilege. His closest associate, who was likewise his secretary and confessor, Reginald of Piperno, did have access to his master's writings but was more pre-occupied with other friar duties rather than developing his own commentaries on St. Thomas' oeuvre.<sup>13</sup> The next person most qualified and most capable to do so would have been St. Albert the Great but by the time of St. Thomas' death, St. Albert was already too advanced in age although it was recorded that, despite his frail health and against the wishes of his fellow friars, he did travel to Paris to defend his beloved student upon learning about the allegations of heresy hurled against the latter.<sup>14</sup> The other potential collaborators would have been Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome, two of the most influential theologians in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. Henry of Ghent, however, didn't share St. Thomas' fascination with Aristotle. He was, in fact, against St. Thomas' Aristotelian stance as shown by his active participation in the censorship campaign that led to the inclusion of St. Thomas in the 1277 condemnation.<sup>15</sup> Giles of Rome did maintain certain intellectual affinity with St. Thomas Aquinas but opted to develop his own scholarly interests rather than follow the footsteps of his former professor.<sup>16</sup> The two other most likely pioneer proponents of Thomism would have been Hannibal de Hannibaldis and Romanus of Rome, St. Thomas' successors as Chair of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris. They would have welcomed the task of cultivating Thomistic thought had they not died much earlier than St. Thomas Aquinas himself. Hannibal died in 1272; Romanus in 1273. St. Thomas would have his time a year later, that is, 1274.<sup>17</sup>

Thomism was born, in other words, with neither a parent nor an heir. The earliest form of Thomism, if we can call it such, was born almost at the threshold of modernity and this, as has been suggested earlier, has the primary mission of cleansing the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas from their perceived Aristotelian contaminants. St. Thomas' close dependence on Aristotelian thought made him a prime target of bitter criticism from the theologians of Paris and Oxford. Even the Franciscan order itself was

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<sup>13</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Volume 1, His Person and His Work*, trans. by Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2005), 272–275.

<sup>14</sup> Simon Tugwell, OP, *Albert & Thomas: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 25–26.

<sup>15</sup> John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy, Routledge History of Philosophy, Volume III* (London: Routledge, 1998), 291–293.

<sup>16</sup> Armand A. Maurer, CSB, *Medieval Philosophy: An Introduction, Second Edition* (Ontario: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982), 204–213, 350.

<sup>17</sup> Cessario, *A Brief History of Thomism*, 40.

vehemently opposed to St. Thomas' appropriation of the pagan Greek philosopher. In fact, in a General Chapter of 1282, the so-called friars minor forbade the use of *Summa Theologiae* in all of the Franciscan learning institutions.<sup>18</sup> What became the pressing task then of the early Thomists was the rehabilitation of the teachings of the Dominican magister and the defensive campaign against their fierce opponents. In a way, one can say that the initial shape of Thomism was a redacted version of St. Thomas' thought. It was not, in other words, a set of doctrines handed down via a seamless transmission but one that resulted from a series of reconstruction aimed at restoring St. Thomas Aquinas' orthodoxy. At the heart of these reconstructive attempts was the question concerning the viability of St. Thomas' tapping of Aristotle to buttress the conceptual scaffolding of his version of *fides et ratio* intersection. In other words, granted that theology requires an interface between faith and reason, it begs one to ask whether reason should be restricted to Aristotle's notion and demonstration of such. Is there a way of demonstrating the reasonability of faith without necessarily exposing it to the potential threats of Aristotelian doctrines that directly opposed the foundational claims of Catholic theology?

It does seem that when one talks of Thomism, one cannot summarily claim it to be St. Thomas' mind in its purest in as much as, historically, and theoretically, the two are distinguishable from one another. Were such purity readily accessible, the proto-Thomists as narrated above would not have devoted huge efforts to rehabilitate St. Thomas from his own complicity with his pagan interlocutor, Aristotle. The next stage of the evolution of Thomism would take place at the height of the modern period, specifically, in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Aristotle and his vaunted system were sidelined and rendered outmoded by the emerging sciences. While the early Thomists strived to merely minimize the Aristotelian undertones in St. Thomas' writings, modern Catholic thinkers would confront the challenge of discoursing about faith *against* the debilitating effects of Aristotelian metaphysics.<sup>19</sup> Actually, the question was a lot larger than St. Thomas Aquinas himself; what was, in fact, at stake was the fate of the version of *fides et ratio* unity which relied on the foundation of Aristotelian philosophy. Can such unity continue to find acceptance in a world that has turned its back on both Aristotle and his metaphysical legacy?

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<sup>18</sup> Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, 296.

<sup>19</sup> See Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophic Tradition* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 131-143.

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Against the background of this quandary, the Catholic magisterial preference remained on the side of St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1567, via the papal bull *Mirabilis Deus*, Pope Pius V declared St. Thomas a Doctor of the Church and established his feast day in the same level of significance as that of the four other great doctors of the Church, namely, Saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory. The same reverence for St. Thomas was likewise shown by the Council of Trent which, in its sessions between 1545 and 1563, had ordered the *Summa Theologiae* displayed at the altar alongside the Sacred Scriptures. The influence of St. Thomas could likewise be gleaned in Vatican I's document *Dei Filius* (1869-70), specifically in its discussion of the complementary interaction between faith and reason. This ecclesiastical preference for St. Thomas Aquinas would be capped in 1879 with Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* which served as the launching pad of the grand revival of Thomistic scholarship. In the popes' mind, St. Thomas Aquinas was the pill they thought the Church needed against the deleterious effects of modernity. They were reliant on the efforts of the Thomists who, ironically, in those days, that is, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, were busy debating as to which among their brands of Thomism was better. In a sense, these skirmishes do tell us why it is necessary to keep in mind the crucial distinction between Thomism and St. Thomas Aquinas. The former is a tradition in transit; the latter is the tradition's intellectual wellspring. What seemed to detract then from the gains of the modern renewal of Thomism was not so much the fact that it became plural; it was rather the assumption that such plurality was a drawback on the cogency of both the Thomist tradition and its source, St. Thomas Aquinas himself. Against this view, one may remember that modernity is a dispersed phenomenon and against it, a monolithic Thomism will prove to be counter-effective. Apparently, plurality does belong to the destiny of Thomism given modernity's multiple facets; a plural Thomism, however, would be a weak resort unless it stays close to the original spirit of its founding inspiration, St. Thomas Aquinas himself.

### St. Thomas Aquinas and Philosophy

It was Leo XIII, in his *Aeterni Patris*, who inaugurated the call for a return to the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas in modern times.<sup>20</sup> The same appeal was repeated more than a century later by John Paul II in his *Fides et*

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<sup>20</sup> Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, Encyclical on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy (Vatican City: Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1879), 25 <[https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_04081879\\_aeterni-patris.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html)>.

*Ratio*.<sup>21</sup> However, what John Paul II did that Leo XIII didn't was to make official the Church's withholding of an endorsement of a particular philosophic system, not even St. Thomas' own. One may perceive in this stance John Paul II's own acknowledgement of the equivocal relationship between St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomism as well as his openness to the multiplicity of philosophic notions and practices within the ambit of the interaction between faith and reason.<sup>22</sup> In fact, in one part of the encyclical, John Paul II did recognize the contributions of a host of other philosophers to the promotion of Catholic thought.<sup>23</sup> Another significant matter that John Paul II raised in the encyclical was the non-intervention of the Church in matters involving philosophic questions.<sup>24</sup> The only time that the Church would make its case, according to John Paul II, was when a specific philosophic standpoint impinges on doctrinal issues related to faith and morals. Despite the disclaimer, one can detect some degree of ambiguity in the overall tenor of the encyclical. On one hand, it seems *Fides et Ratio* is suggesting that the relationship between Catholic faith and philosophy (e.g., Aristotelian metaphysics) is fundamentally secured while, on the other hand, it makes it seem that such relation is flexible and open-ended. Does the encyclical indeed harbor such ambiguity? A century before John Paul II issued his encyclical, that is, around the time of *Aeterni Patris'* promulgation, Catholic theologians of countries like Germany, France, Italy and Netherlands had ventured to do their theological explorations via the philosophic routes that once were dominated by Aristotle and now, charted by the likes of Descartes and Kant.<sup>25</sup> This is an important juncture in the history of Catholic thought as we see on one end, nineteenth-century neo-Scholastics and on the other, the advocates of the so-called "new theology," entangled in a bitter tug-of-war. Catholic theologians themselves, in other words, were divided between those who preferred to stick to the realism of St. Thomas and Aristotle and those who were adventurous enough to marry Thomism with the transcendental epistemology of Kant.<sup>26</sup> The charge that *Aeterni Patris* had resulted to "too many Thomisms" was based on the notion that it was the encyclical that set the favorable condition for the flourishing of the so-called transcendental Thomism, which for its critics,

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<sup>21</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 43.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 72–74.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Royal, *A Deeper Vision: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Twentieth Century* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), 36–37.

<sup>26</sup> Gerald A. McCool, SJ, *Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism: The Search for a Unitary Method* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), 17–36.

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was merely a code for Thomism sleeping with the enemy.<sup>27</sup> Seen from this context, it would appear that the plurality of Thomism was not so much a numerical problem but a crisis of division incited by the question of keeping or abandoning the conventions of Thomist realist position. The crisis would drag on until the turn of the twentieth century. By the time of the 1930's, the debates would continue to rage, this time, involving continental thinkers who were arguing about the legitimacy of Christian philosophy in the face of new problems posed by the philosophy of Henri Bergson, existentialism, Marxism, and phenomenology among others. Thinkers like Emile Bruhier, Xavier Leon and Maurice Blondel were dismissive of Christian philosophy. Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain and Gabriel Marcel thought otherwise.<sup>28</sup> The debates actually stemmed from Xavier Leon's proposal to Etienne Gilson for a dialogue to determine the status of Thomism as a philosophy.<sup>29</sup> The idea to extend it to a debate on the general status of Christian philosophy came from Etienne Gilson.<sup>30</sup> The opposition of certain sectors against Thomism as a philosophy was one of the adverse reactions generated by Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris*. The antagonism was deeply felt by the French intelligentsia who viewed the pontiff's move as another attempt to proselytize the European intellectual culture. The "Thomism" targeted by the critics was its generic version espoused by *Aeterni Patris* but they were also eyeing a specific strand of Thomism, the kind that rubbed elbows with Kant as exhibited by the writings of Desire Joseph Mercier and Joseph Marechal.<sup>31</sup> There is some ground that warrants the dismissal of Thomism as philosophy as there is another to dispute it. True, Thomism may not be considered a *philosophy* if we adhere strictly to the original intent of St. Thomas' medieval project. Back then, it was clear to his mind that what he was doing was not *philosophy* nor did he consider himself a philosopher in its medieval or even modern sense. And yet, regardless of this distinction, it

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<sup>27</sup> Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 17–21.

<sup>28</sup> For an account of the debates on Christian philosophy, see Greg Sadler, "Christian Philosophy: The 1930s French Debates," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (n.d.), <<https://iep.utm.edu/christian-philosophy-1930s-french-debate/>>. See also Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy (Gifford Lectures, 1931-1932)* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940); Jacques Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955); and Maurice Blondel, *Philosophical Exigencies of Christian Religion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021).

<sup>29</sup> See also Greg B. Sadler, "The 1930s Christian Philosophy Debates," in *Acta Philosophica*, II, 21 (2012), 393–406, <<https://ojs-aphil.pusc.it/article/view/3880/2023>>.

<sup>30</sup> Gerard Sadler, *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation: The 1930s Christian Philosophy Debates in France* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019), 40.

<sup>31</sup> Gerald A. McCool, SJ, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 32–33, 87–113.

can hardly be argued that St. Thomas works did not have adequate philosophic merit. It would be extremely difficult to subscribe to the opinion that Thomism loses its claim to being philosophical because of its inclusive association with faith.<sup>32</sup> This view, besides being arbitrary, is rather selective and drastically detached from the wide expanse of the history of philosophy. Readers may count Etienne Gilson's *The Spirit of Thomism*<sup>33</sup> and *Being and Some Philosophers*<sup>34</sup> as well as Jacques Maritain's *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*<sup>35</sup> and *The Degrees of Knowledge*<sup>36</sup> as some of the best and most definitive responses against those who opposed Thomism's philosophic status. What Gilson and Maritain attempted to do in their respective endeavors was to disclose the rigorous and coherent philosophic character of Thomism without diluting its integration with faith and its theoretical mooring on realism. In effect, Gilson and Maritain were arguing that Thomism cannot simply be converted into another theory of knowledge at the expense of its realist commitment. Such realist commitment may be interpreted differently from the way Gilson and Maritain did, but it could not be abandoned without losing its ties with St. Thomas Aquinas and the traditional understanding of the unity between faith and reason. John Paul II did not explicitly claim it in his *Fides et Ratio* but it is not difficult to see how realism was valued by the encyclical as the philosophic guarantor of faith and reason interface. This special valuation of realism was such not because it was issued from Aristotle but because it sat well with the whole economy of revelation. With realism, one becomes more keenly aware of existence as the most primordial gift, bestowed by the creative generosity of God in the very mystery of his givenness. The starting point will always be the acknowledgement that one has been given so as to relish the experience of givenness itself. The articulation of this phenomenon of "gift" requires both the testimony of the deposit of human wisdom (reason) as well as the assent to the self-disclosure of God in the

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<sup>32</sup> Bertrand Russell infamously claimed: "There is little of the true philosophic spirit in Aquinas. He does not, like the Platonic Socrates, set out to follow wherever the argument may lead. He is not engaged in an inquiry, the result of which it is impossible to know in advance. Before he begins to philosophize, he already knows the truth; it is declared in the Catholic faith." See Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 1961), 463.

<sup>33</sup> See Etienne Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> See Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1952).

<sup>35</sup> See Jacques Maritain, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism* (Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955).

<sup>36</sup> See Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (London: The Centenary Press, 1937).

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unfolding of history (faith). The best synthesis of this inter-relation between faith and reason, for John Paul II and all his predecessors, can be found in no less than St. Thomas Aquinas.

### St. Thomas Aquinas on Faith and Reason

St. Thomas was an astute reader of Aristotle proven no less by the commentaries he wrote on almost all the known works of the Greek philosopher during the last decade of his life. The extent of Aristotle's influence on our Dominican friar was unmistakable but there were also significant points of deviation between the two. In other words, St. Thomas did follow Aristotle closely, but he did not do so blindly.<sup>37</sup> The common perception then that St. Thomas merely baptized Aristotle is not just a caricature but a gross misrepresentation as well of the dialogical relationship between them.<sup>38</sup> Specifically, St. Thomas was reliant on Aristotle's version of realism which was actually central to the ancient Greek philosophic tradition. Due to their proclivity to understand the workings of nature, the Greeks, from the pre-Socratics down to the classical age, were wont to treat what was given, what was out there, as a starting point of their theoretical explorations. A variant of this tradition was Plato whose version of realism had him turn to the world of *forms* as his philosophic takeoff point. Plato undervalued the natural world and reckoned that, since it was subject to change, it had nothing of epistemic value to offer. Anything that partakes of change was beneath the prominence of thought; only what was changeless and eternal was worthy of thinking, and this was precisely the warrant that lends *form* its preeminence.

As in the image immortalized by Raphael in his fresco *The School of Athens*, Aristotle reversed the position of Plato by locating the *form* in the world of nature and integrating it within the domain of change. Like Plato, Aristotle acknowledged the role of *form* in thinking but unlike Plato,

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<sup>37</sup> Leo J. Elders, *Thomas Aquinas and his Predecessors: The Philosophers and the Church Fathers in his Works* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 20–66.

<sup>38</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre will go as far as saying that St. Thomas Aquinas was a "better Aristotelian" than Aristotle himself. As he wrote in the "Prologue" of *After Virtue's* third edition: "When I wrote *After Virtue*, I was already an Aristotelian, but not yet a Thomist, something made plain in my account of Aquinas at the end of chapter 13. I became a Thomist after writing *After Virtue* in part because I became convinced that Aquinas was in some respects a better Aristotelian than Aristotle, that not only was he an excellent interpreter of Aristotle's texts, but that he had been able to extend and deepen both Aristotle's metaphysical and his moral enquiries." See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), x.

Aristotle's version of *form* was embedded in the world of senses, the very world of senses which Plato considered as deceiving but reckoned by Aristotle as the starting point of thought. Aristotle also affirmed a fundamental coincidence between the mind and the *form* such that, barring any kind of impediment, the *form* was always knowable to the mind just as the mind was always susceptible to receiving the *form*. Aristotle, in other words, was disposed to recognize universal human access to knowledge which for Plato, as it appeared in such works like *Republic* and *Meno*, could only be acquired in a mediated fashion, that is, through the pedagogical mediation of a philosopher.

Eventually, St. Thomas would favor Aristotle and would find in him an appropriate theoretical grounding to support his argument for our knowledge of God. In St. Thomas' time, most people either thought God was immediately knowable (fideism) or hardly knowable at all (agnosticism). Those who claimed that God was immediately knowable, the fideists, believed that God had revealed himself completely through the Sacred Scriptures and that there were no other sources of our knowledge of him except what had been revealed through the testimony of the sacred texts. Those who denied such claim, the agnostics, thought that attempts to know God were a futile exercise in as much as the transcendence of God lay precisely on its being inaccessible to knowledge.

Midway between these two extreme positions was St. Thomas' proposal for a knowledge of God which included both the testimony of the created world and the revelation enshrined in the Sacred Scriptures. Neither of these sources excluded each other; they were in fact complementary and, to one another, mutually necessary.<sup>39</sup> The entirety of creation was revelatory of the artistry and genius of its creator; the Sacred Scriptures, in turn, served as a narrative of the covenant which binds God and his creation. Thanks to such creation, knowledge of God becomes accessible which would have been impossible otherwise. The same grandeur of creation was reckoned by St. Thomas as an important prelude to understanding God's Word. There shouldn't be any conflict then between the world and the Word as they both lend witness to God's radical givenness. In a very subtle way then, St. Thomas was able to overcome the fideists' exclusion of the natural world as a window to knowing God and the agnostics' absolute denial of any

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Benziger Bros. edition, 1947), Ia.Q1.a1, resp.; Ia.Q2.a2, ad i-iii, <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/summa/>>. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. by Anton C. Pegis, James F. Anderson, Vernon J. Bourke, and Charles J. O'Neil, ed. by Joseph Kenny, O.P. (New York: Hanover House, 1955-57), I.8, <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/ContraGentiles.htm>>.

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possibility of theological knowledge. The way St. Thomas put it, God is unknowable as it is, that is, in its essence but its existence is perceptible via the mediation of its created effects.<sup>40</sup>

Up to this point, St. Thomas evidently was following the basic lead of Aristotelian realist epistemology which relies on the prior acknowledgment of the nature of existing things. In other words, in agreement with Aristotle, St. Thomas adhered to the functional relationship between epistemology and metaphysics. In this framework, knowledge was possible by virtue, not of the human subjectivity alone, but of human subjectivity's conjunction with the existence of the knowable world (the subject—object correspondence).<sup>41</sup> Evidently, epistemology did not enjoy a singular preeminence in Aristotelian and Thomist realism the way it did in Descartes or Kant. In the Aristotelian-Thomist schema, epistemology was merely a function of metaphysics or the recognition of the nature of things. St. Thomas, however, disagreed with Aristotle in limiting knowledge to the natural plane. He was not convinced that the fullness of the human capacity to know could be exhausted only by our ability to apprehend the *forms* of existing things. Using the basic Aristotelian teleology against Aristotle himself, St. Thomas reasoned that if indeed the human person could fulfill his or her rational nature by knowing, then there was no other most suitable way to do this than for him or her to know that which is best.<sup>42</sup> St. Thomas qualified *best* as that which was radically different, or that which, for lack of a better term, he designated as God.<sup>43</sup> Knowledge of God does not involve acquisition of *form* for God itself is formless.<sup>44</sup> One may remember that, in the Aristotelian schema, *form* is implicated in the changing physical world. In the domain of natural sciences, the scientist relies on the apprehension of such *form*. But when it comes to knowing that which is changeless (being the author and end itself of change), reason recedes from the scene to make room for faith. Faith is not the opposite of knowledge but a different kind of

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<sup>40</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q8.a1, resp. and ad i-iii; Ia.Q8.a3; and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II.2.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on De Anima*, trans. by Kenelm Foster, O.P. and Sylvester Humphries, O.P. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), III.4 429a10–429b4, <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/DeAnima.htm>>, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Metaphysics*, trans. by John P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), VII.1–2 (on Aristotle's 1028a 10–1028b 32), <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/Metaphysics.htm>>. See also Aristotle, *De Anima*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (The Revised Oxford Translation) ed. by Jonathan Barnes (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), III.8, 431b20–432a1–10.

<sup>42</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q1.a1, resp. and ad i-iii; Ia.Q2.a1 resp. and ad i-ii; and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I.7–8.

<sup>43</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q2.a.1, ad ii; Ia.Q2.a2, ad ii.

<sup>44</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q12.a11; Ia.Q12.a12; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I.14.

knowledge.<sup>45</sup> Whereas reason takes its promptings from the natural world of change, faith draws its inspiration from God's self-communication as inscribed in the Sacred Scriptures. It was Aristotle himself who determined the limits of reason when he confined its horizon within the range of beings.<sup>46</sup> St. Thomas attempted to surpass this metaphysical limit when he shifted the focus of metaphysical inquiry from the metaphysics of *ens* to the metaphysics of *esse*.<sup>47</sup> When Aristotle restricted the concern of metaphysics to the study of *ens*, it gave St. Thomas an opportunity to assert its inherent limitation. *Ens* and *esse* were radically distinguished as suggested by Avicenna and there seemed to be nothing that could connect one with the other except to say that *ens* participates in *esse*.<sup>48</sup> *Esse* is the vast horizon where all existing things, that is, *ens*, lend themselves to experience or appearance. One does not perceive *esse* itself, but one gets an insight into it by virtue of an apprehended *ens*. *Ens*, in other words, may be traced to *esse* but *esse* cannot be traced back to *ens* and yet when Aristotle talks of a divine or supreme being, he alludes to it in the sense of a divine or supreme *ens*<sup>49</sup> and not, as understood by Aquinas, in the fashion of a divine or supreme *esse*.<sup>50</sup> It would seem that metaphysics by nature was confined to the question of *ens* because Aristotle himself took for granted the question of *esse*. He reckoned it as something given or apodictic and hence needless to

<sup>45</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q12.a13, ad iii.

<sup>46</sup> Aquinas, *Commentary on Metaphysics*, IV.1-2 (1003a-1003b 22); see also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV.1003a-1003b.

<sup>47</sup> This is a theme elaborated by St. Thomas Aquinas in an earlier short but greatly significant treatise, *De Ente et Essentia* translated in English as *Being and Essence*.

<sup>48</sup> In *De Ente et Essentia*, St. Thomas Aquinas built on the distinction between essence and existence as well as between necessary existence and contingent existence put forward by the Islamic scholar Avicenna. A salient part of the said text reads: "We should notice, therefore, that the word 'being,' taken without qualifiers, has two uses, as the Philosopher says in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*. (1) In one way, it is used apropos of what is divided into the ten genera; (2) in another way, it is used to signify the truth of propositions. The difference between the two is that in the second way everything about which we can form an affirmative proposition can be called a being, even though it posits nothing in reality. It is in this way that privations and negations are called beings; for we say that affirmation is opposed to negation, and that blindness is in the eye. In the first way, however, only what posits something in reality can be called a being. In the first way, therefore, blindness and the like are not beings. So, the word 'essence' is not taken from the word 'being' used in the second way; for some things which do not have an essence are called beings in this way as is clear in the case of privations. Rather, the word 'essence' is taken from the word 'being' used in the first way. It is for this reason that the Commentator says in the same place that the word 'being' used in the first way is what signifies the essence of a real thing." See Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, ed. by Joseph Kenny, O.P. (1965), 4-5, < <https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/DeEnte&Essentia.htm>>.

<sup>49</sup> Aquinas, *Commentary on Metaphysics*, XII.6 (1071b3-1071b22); see also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.1073a1-10.

<sup>50</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia.Q4.a2, resp.; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I.22, 11.

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explain. Like Aristotle, St. Thomas likewise did not think of pursuing the question of *esse* as an epistemic problem; unlike Aristotle though, he did consider it as a fertile ground for theological reflection given the well-established Biblical tradition which identifies God with *esse*.<sup>51</sup>

Aristotle did consider that knowledge is impossible without the existence of things but apparently, he took for granted the question as to why they existed in the first place.<sup>52</sup> This is also where Aristotle's realism as appropriated by St. Thomas takes a surprising turn for not only does something indeed exist instead of nothing, it does in fact exist as a gift.<sup>53</sup> It is important to note that the God of *esse* as identified by St. Thomas in the Sacred Scriptures is a God which gives itself in covenant. It is not some distant or disinterested efficient cause (as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*) or demiurge (as in Plato's *Timaeus*) but one that conveys itself as one already implicated in human history.<sup>54</sup> The response proper to this kind phenomenon is faith. In the Biblical sense, faith is a theatrical act, that is, an activity of beholding.<sup>55</sup> Similar to viewing a play on stage, one fulfills this experience by relinquishing any attempt to explain or categorize what is seen in favor of a fuller appreciation of beauty in its unfolding. This is not to say that knowledge has no role in the act of faith. St. Thomas did talk of "preambles of faith" which should help anyone to see the rational grounding of a theological claim.<sup>56</sup> But even such preambles of faith, according to St. Thomas, should be prompted not by a recollection of *form* nor the perception of being nor by recognition of clear and indubitable idea nor by the imposition of the transcendental categories of human subjectivity. St. Thomas maintained, as did St. Augustine, that *intellectus* follows the lead of *fides*.<sup>57</sup> It is *fides* that opens the path for understanding and if it indeed one succeeds to understand, it is mainly because he or she, at the first instance, commits himself or herself to believe.<sup>58</sup> In this context, realism, more than a quest for an explanation, becomes an encounter with the gift that gives itself in revelation.<sup>59</sup>

St. Thomas Aquinas inherited realism from Aristotle and, like the many ideas he received from him, he appropriated and fashioned it

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<sup>51</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q13.a11; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I.22, 10

<sup>52</sup> See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XI.1061a1–15.

<sup>53</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q45.a6, resp.; Ia.Q44.a4, ad i.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Ia.Q12.a13.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, Ia.Q12.a11, ad iii.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Ia.Q2.a2, ad i.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, IIaIIae.Q2.a1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, IIaIIae.Q1.a4.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Ia.Q12.a13; IIaIIae.4.8, ad iii.

according to his theological purpose. Realism was what enabled Aristotle to know “being as being,” hence, his conviction that metaphysics was the first philosophy and also a divine science.<sup>60</sup> The pursuit of the best way to demonstrate knowledge of being via recourse to first principles convinced the Philosopher that metaphysics was the most suitable path towards achieving *episteme*.<sup>61</sup> For St. Thomas Aquinas, however, knowledge did not end with knowing “being as being” but knowing being as an ensemble within the whole order of providence.<sup>62</sup> This means that the destiny of being does not lie on its being merely known but on its being known as something given and invested with love. To recognize something as given, that is, as gift, immediately invites acknowledgment of a relationship.<sup>63</sup> If something is a gift, it must have ensued from the generosity of a giver. This whole dynamics of giving, as St. Thomas Aquinas held, is only possible within the economy of gratuity, or in a more theological expression, the economy of grace.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, this performance of giving which the term *creation* evokes is far beyond the horizon of Aristotle or his metaphysics. Aristotle could only imagine a world of beings as existing on their own; even his notion of a supreme Being was depicted as some entity that was self-contained, unfamiliar and estranged. Yes, metaphysics could disclose the purported nature of things, but their true nobility will always remain hidden from its view. It was this inherent limitation that led St. Thomas to think that when it comes to the grammar of grace, metaphysics would be utterly constrained.<sup>65</sup> One can genuinely speak of radical self-giving, which the term “God” suggests, only within the framework of the narrative of God’s self-disclosure, the Sacred Scriptures. The Sacred Scriptures is traditionally considered as the testament of God’s revelation. Such revelation however is neither a mere datum nor an idea but an enactment of a covenant.<sup>66</sup> The key to seeing or recognizing God, in other words, involves an acknowledgment of this covenant which is history-bound yet history-

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<sup>60</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI.1026a1–30.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.1105b1–15; see also Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 73a.20–25.

<sup>62</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q20.a2, ad ii.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei*, trans. by the English Dominican Fathers, ed. Joseph Kenny, O.P. (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1952), Q5.a1, ad xvi, <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/QDdePotentia.htm>>.

<sup>64</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q8.a3, ad iv.

<sup>65</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.Q1.a1, resp.; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I.5; and Thomas Aquinas, *De Trinitate Boethii*, trans. by Rose E. Brennan, S.H.N. and Armand Mauer (Herder and Toronto, 1946 and 1953), Q2.a2, <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/BoethiusDeTr.htm>>.

<sup>66</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 7-12; see also Aquinas, *Inaugural Lectures*.

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disruptive.<sup>67</sup> Within this framework, metaphysics loses its potency. In the face of the event of God's covenant-making, the appropriate response is not *cogito*, or I think, but *credo*, that is, I believe.<sup>68</sup> Fundamentally, what is involved in this act of believing is not a set of logical or epistemological categories, not even a compendium of first principles but an ethical commitment. This ethical commitment undergirds the person's decision to live her life as a constant practice of self-donation not so much because God needs her but because the person finds fulfillment in imitating God in its very act of self-giving.<sup>69</sup>

Hence, in a rather ironic twist, St. Thomas Aquinas managed to articulate the unity between faith and reason by stipulating the demarcation line that secures their respective autonomies. It is this odd union by segregation that makes the interface work.<sup>70</sup> Reason and faith are distinct, but they are not exclusively apart. Reason is united to faith because the human person's desire to know also includes what lies beyond the mind's fragile grasp. Faith is united to reason because one's religious belief cannot allow itself to be an easy prey to incoherence.<sup>71</sup> As asserted by St. John Paul II and later amplified by Alasdair MacIntyre, faith and reason are two autonomous modes of inquiry whose answers to their own questions may or may not overlap.<sup>72</sup> The challenge therefore is not so much to ask whether or not such overlap should take place but whether one is willing to push reason to its limits up to the point it can recognize the possibility of faith and to demonstrate faith to such extent that one is willing to examine its own fundamental truth claims. In thought and in practice, this is exactly what St. Thomas Aquinas demonstrated.

### Conclusion

What I have been trying to develop in the preceding discussion may be summed up in three important points. First, Thomism drew its inspiration from St. Thomas Aquinas, but one may not equate the former as a comprehensive embodiment of the thought of the latter. St. Thomas Aquinas himself did not set out to establish a well-defined speculative

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<sup>67</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 23, 92-95.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium Theologiae*, trans. by Cyril Vollert, S.J. (St. Louis & London: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), Chapters 1-2, <<https://isidore.co/aquinas/Compendium.htm>>.

<sup>69</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IaIIae.Q3.a2.

<sup>70</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 43-44.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>72</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 77-79; see also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 165-171.

system under his name nor, in his intellectual pursuits, sought to secure his legacy for posterity. Thomism, at best, was an appropriation of St. Thomas' intellectual heritage carried on by readers and commentators across generations. That such generations of scholars were confronted with different problems and questions of their times partly explained the plural nature of Thomism's own evolution. There could be, in other words, as many Thomisms as there were issues and problems directly or indirectly related to St. Thomas' thought. In other words, the continuing relevance of his legacy lies precisely in the countless ways by which the questions and answers he propounded are read and interpreted in response to situations that may require a distinctly Thomist perspective.

Second, St. Thomas did follow Aristotle closely, but he was not the only one he followed, and neither did he follow him carelessly. Although St. Thomas did acquire various ideas from Aristotle, it can nonetheless be argued that his engagement with the Greek thinker was itself connected with his dialogue with various other influences like Plato, St. Augustine, Boethius, the Neo-Platonists not to mention, the Roman literati, the Fathers of the Church, the Stoics as well as the Islamic and Jewish thinkers. The charge, therefore, that St. Thomas Aquinas merely baptized Aristotle is clearly a case of oversimplification. In fact, the extent of his dependence on the Stagirite may be gauged by his intention to show the clear demarcation line between the latter's version of divine science (metaphysics) and Christianity's sacred theology. While St. Thomas himself admitted that there was no inherent conflict between reason (as represented by Aristotle) and faith (as narrated in the Sacred Scriptures), each of them, as he saw it, enjoyed impermeable autonomy in its respective sphere. The unity between faith and reason, in other words, is neither a fusion nor amalgamation but a dynamic relationship characterized by respectful cooperation amidst a well-defined distance between two different but complementary worldviews.

Third, and intimately related with the preceding point, the unity between faith and reason advocated by St. Thomas Aquinas, may be best appreciated within the context of philosophic realism adopted by him from Aristotle. Thanks to such version of realism, St. Thomas succeeded to develop a philosophic and theological grammar which lent theoretical support to his explication of creation, his philosophy of the human person besides his ethical and political theories. As shown in the paper, however, not all Thomists were amenable to this Aristotelian bent of Thomism. The Neo-Thomists of the nineteenth century were prime examples of the attempt to extricate St. Thomas' thought from its Aristotelian bind. As shown earlier, this move was key in establishing the pivot for Thomism from metaphysics to transcendental orientation of Kantianism. In recent

years, this resistance to Aristotle has also gained significant traction from such scholars who would rather read St. Thomas via his engagement of Plato or Neo-Platonism or even St. Augustine or lately, analytic philosophy or phenomenology. It does seem that the evolution of Thomism as an intellectual system remains an open story. This has undoubtedly tremendous implication on the hermeneutical status of the interface between faith and reason. It remains to be seen whether there would be a paradigm or paradigms which could match or even dislodge the Aristotle-inspired realist framework of the faith and reason dynamics. This shouldn't really be a problem as long as the collaborative space between faith and reason is kept guarded. After all, St. Thomas Aquinas' solicitation of Aristotle's genius had always been guided by his theological goals and his recognition of the ancillary function of philosophy. In the process of studying and commenting on the oeuvre of the Stagirite, St. Thomas himself managed to produce outputs that equal and, in some cases, surpass, in terms of insight and relevance, the very works of the so-called "Philosopher." Aristotle supplied the terms, ideas, and discursive strategies that allowed St. Thomas to demonstrate the efficacy of the Greek metaphysical thought alongside its inadequacy. On this account, other versions of Thomism may seem justified to turn to other interpretive sources to further extend St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophic-theological enterprise. But notwithstanding its shortcomings, it would be extremely difficult to refute Aristotle's realism without calling into question the theoretical context of faith and reason dialogue as conceived by St. Thomas Aquinas.

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## The Language of Indigeneity in Filipino Philosophies (Second of Two Parts)<sup>1</sup>

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*Victor John M. Loquias*

**Abstract:** This paper reconstructs the language of Indigeneity in the discourses of Filipino Philosophies. It starts with an initial tracing of the diachronic presence of the concept of Indigeneity in the Philippines before it was employed as a qualitative modifier for doing philosophy. Following this is an exposition of the equation of Indigeneity to the inception of the idea of Filipino Philosophy thereby making the nationalist context of Filipinization coterminous with the early beginnings of Indigenous philosophizing. The next part elaborates the post-nationalist employment of the language of Indigeneity as exemplified by various works unified by the pluralist subtext of Indigenous philosophies in the peripheries. The final part first deploys the concept of indeterminacy as the precondition for both the nationalist and post-nationalist employment of the language of Indigeneity then redescribes Indigenous philosophizing as a critical enterprise of doing philosophy in its *particularity* understood in a recognitive framework.

**Keywords:** indeterminacy, Filipino Philosophies, recognition, (critical) indigenous philosophizing

### Indigenous (Filipino) Philosophies in the Peripheries

A different deployment of the language of Indigeneity could be seen among works in diverse geospecific and sociocultural environments that resist subsumption into a singular category. This is evident in the usage of “Indigenous” in reference to localities, the employment of local

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language(s) and concepts, articulations of the experience of Indigenous peoples, and the thematic local “material” concerns and scope of its studies. The respective (regional) assertions in the act of philosophizing among the authors in this part show a multiplicity of identities that defy homogenization. It is in this sense that their works could be identified as a post-nationalist employment of the language of Indigeneity. They are also called “philosophies in the peripheries” not only in their distance from the centers where Filipino Philosophy has taken mainstream, but also for their coverage of marginal themes, issues, experiences, and subjects. But although these works deflect from a nationalist project, they could still be identified *conventionally* as “Filipino” in either the geographical or sociopolitical affiliations of the authors or of the thematic subjects and coverage of their work.<sup>2</sup> Roland Theuas Pada’s reminder is useful here in treating the conventionality of “Filipino” for purposes of identification. “We should not forget the fact,” he says, “that the word ‘Filipino’ is simply a marker that tells us that a person belongs to a political and geographic area of the Philippines.”<sup>3</sup> In this vein, one should set aside “the illusion of unity” of an ontological and universal definition of Filipino but look instead at “shared experiences and concerns” of the people located geo-specifically in the archipelago.<sup>4</sup>

Danilo Alterado’s referential description of “Ilokano,” for instance, merges linguistic competence with subjects’ domicile. Geographic location, however, is more loosely applied than linguistic competence insofar as Ilokanos in the diaspora are still pulled in the self-ascription if the latter is maintained.<sup>5</sup> The Indigeneity of Ilokano Philosophy in Alterado’s works and of other fellow Ilokanos is given distinction and unified by the common feature of articulating concepts in Ilokano language deemed as philosophical through an appeal to a shared collective ethnic worldview. “Ilokano language,” as Alterado writes, “can never be divorced from the Ilokano philosophy.”<sup>6</sup> The efficiency of this ethnolinguistic grounding is leveraged by

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<sup>2</sup> For other qualifications of being a Filipino in this sense, see Napoleon M. Mabaquiao, Jr., “Isang Paglilinaw sa Kahulugan at Kairalan ng Pilosopiyang Filipino,” in *Malay*, 23, no. 2 (2011), 39–56, <<https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=8014>>.

<sup>3</sup> Roland Theuas DS. Pada, “The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy,” in *Kritike*, 8, no. 1 (June 2014), 28, <[https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue\\_14/pada\\_june2014.pdf](https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_14/pada_june2014.pdf)>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Danilo S. Alterado and Aldrin S. Jaramilla, “‘Maiyannatup a Panagripirip’: Towards an Ilokano Indigenous Doing of Philosophy,” in *Philosophia*, 20, no. 1 (2019), 107, <<https://www.doi.org/10.46992/pijp.20.1.a.6>>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

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Aurelio Agcaoili in tracing the contours of Ilokano cosmology,<sup>7</sup> epistemology,<sup>8</sup> and education and social life.<sup>9</sup> Agcaoili's articulation of the interconnection of these three areas evidently bears resemblance to the common patterns of Indigenous philosophies' premium on the interconnectedness of reality, ecology, and identity.<sup>10</sup>

This rising esteem in doing philosophy in the local languages is already shared amongst scholars in different regions of the Philippines at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Alfredo Co testifies to this occurrence in his 2004 update on the practice of philosophy in the Philippines, reporting the advent of "the search for a Bicolano Philosophy, Bisayan philosophy, perhaps also for Ilokano philosophy"<sup>11</sup> whose legitimation he questioned nonetheless as being philosophical by mere codification in the language.

In the Bikol region, Indigenous philosophizing has been spearheaded by Wilmer Joseph Tria who does not merely use Bikol language for writing and teaching philosophy but reasonably defines the conceptual contours of the Indigeneity of philosophy itself rooted in the native language. Tria alludes to the Latin definition of *indigena* and designates primarily the use of native language for thought disciplines like philosophy as the initial means of Indigenization. Tria makes an important distinction between connotative and denotative terms granting premium to the former as the locus and material for culture-specific ideas for philosophical articulation. What renders thematic reflections as philosophical furthermore would be the capacity of the developed connotative concepts to extend its ambit of signification to common experience transcending its cultural origination.<sup>12</sup> This employment

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<sup>7</sup> Aurelio S. Agcaoili, "Nakaparsuaan, Kadagaan, and Panaglunit ti Daga: Climate Justice and Environmental Ethics in Ilokano Life," in *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture*, XXII, no. 3 (2018), 1–26, <<https://ajol.ateneo.edu/budhi/articles/149/1695>>.

<sup>8</sup> Aurelio S. Agcaoili, "Sanut, Wayawaya, and the Naimbag a Biag in Ilokano Philosophy," in *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture*, XXIII, no. 1 (2019), 87–102, <<https://ajol.ateneo.edu/budhi/articles/236/2581>>.

<sup>9</sup> Aurelio S. Agcaoili, "Saan a Maymaysat' Aldaw: Education in Democracy, Social Justice, and Inclusion in Ilokano Life," in *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture*, XXIII, no. 3 (2019), 65–94, <<https://ajol.ateneo.edu/budhi/articles/238/2599>>.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Paul E. Elicor, "Philosophical Inquiry with Indigenous Children: An Attempt to Integrate Indigenous Forms of Knowledge in Philosophy for/with Children," in *Childhood and Philosophy*, 15 (June 2019), 10–13, <<https://doi.org/10.12957/childphilo.2019.42659>>. See also Lesley L. Grange and Carl Mika, "What is Indigenous Philosophy and What Are Its Implications for Education?" in *International Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, ed. by Paul Smeyers (Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 499.

<sup>11</sup> Alfredo P. Co, *Doing Philosophy in the Philippines and Other Essays*, in *Across the Philosophical Silk Road A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co*, Vol. VI, 58.

<sup>12</sup> See Wilmer Joseph Tria, "Developing Indigenous Philosophies," in *Gibon: Ateneo de Naga University Journal*, 6, no. 1 (2006).

of Bikol languages in writing philosophy has gained quite a momentum following this pioneering initiative.<sup>13</sup>

A similar trend can be traced among disparate efforts of scholars in the Visayas and Mindanao. In the report of Kahambing and Demeterio, a handful of mavericks pursued the writing of philosophy in the Cebuano language.<sup>14</sup> Amosa Velez' work, for instance, is a piece enunciating in Cebuano language what she describes as an "intellectual need" of man.<sup>15</sup> In her study of academic journal publishing in Mindanao, Pamela Del Rosario-Castrillo records an early work of Renante Pilapil on philosophizing in Bisaya and Albert Alejo et al.'s Bisayan article on the ethics, aesthetics, and epistemology of cockfighting.<sup>16</sup> Both Kahambing and Demeterio and Castrillo observe the minor preference of the Cebuano and Bisayan languages in writing philosophy among most scholars in Central and Southern Philippines. The former attributes this to the autonomous preferences of scholars in writing, while the latter situates it in the structure of academic publishing bounded by the official language of English strategically instituted to grow knowledge and cultural capital.

The employment of regional languages in philosophizing and writing philosophy largely remains in the periphery with a scant number of advocacy-driven laborers in the field. However, while local and Indigenous languages may not be an attractive medium for philosophizing, thematizations of Indigenous peoples'<sup>17</sup> experience for philosophical articulation abound in literature. No single definition or approach in philosophizing could be used as a univocal category for these multitudes of works. To mention a few authors whose notable works have served as

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<sup>13</sup> For an inventory of the two-decade-old philosophizing in Bikol since Tria's pioneering efforts, see Victor John M. Loquias, "Roots and Offshoots of Bikol Philosophizing," in *Philippiniana Sacra*, LVII, no. 172 (January–April 2022), 23–48, <<https://philsacra.ust.edu.ph/admin/downloadarticle?id=9C32D7A18C3000D0E66FB10B2550EE DB>>.

<sup>14</sup> Jan Gresil S. Kahambing and Feorillo Petronillo A. Demeterio III, "Doing Philosophy in Central and Southern Philippines: Interviews with PHAVISMINDA Presidents Velez, Gallamaso, and Suazo," in *PHAVISMINDA Journal*, 16 & 17 (May 2018), 161–198, <<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/028b0f1b-224c-45f2-944a-0a4e4bbf7b2b/downloads/7%20PHAV%2017-18.pdf?ver=1643335799663>>.

<sup>15</sup> Amosa Velez, "Mga Yangongo Sa Usa Ka Bata," in *PHAVISMINDA Journal*, 4 (2005), 1–7, <[https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/028b0f1b-224c-45f2-944a-0a4e4bbf7b2b/downloads/1chta7bo6\\_251262.pdf?ver=1643335801128](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/028b0f1b-224c-45f2-944a-0a4e4bbf7b2b/downloads/1chta7bo6_251262.pdf?ver=1643335801128)>.

<sup>16</sup> Pamela Del Rosario-Castrillo, "Text, tension, and Territory: The Field of Academic Journal Publishing In Mindanao, 1968–2005," in *Tambara*, 29, no. 1 (2012), 14, <[https://www.addu.edu.ph/tambara/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/07/Tambara\\_Vol29-December2012.pdf](https://www.addu.edu.ph/tambara/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/07/Tambara_Vol29-December2012.pdf)>.

<sup>17</sup> That is, in the context of Casumbing-Salazar's definition of Indigenous peoples. See Melisa S.L. Casumbal-Salazar, "The Indeterminacy of the Philippine Indigenous Subject," in *Amerasia Journal*, 41, no. 1 (2015), 74–94, <<https://doi.org/10.17953/aj.41.1.74>>.

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references for succeeding studies in this line, we have Karl Gaspar and Albert Alejo who are both hailed by Raymundo Pavo as exemplars of what he calls as “social-scientist-philosophers” to be consulted in the south.<sup>18</sup> Both are trained anthropologists and are deeply immersed in the ground with Indigenous peoples.<sup>19</sup> For Pavo, this grounding on the empirical experience of specific (Filipino) groups provides the particularity of philosophy that is captured by the social scientist but is yet to pass the litmus test of universality. Pavo himself anticipates the conception of an “Indigenous Logic” with “sufficient and reliable” ground “experience with some indigenous people.”<sup>20</sup>

Back to the north, Florentino Hornedo—another philosophy luminary in the Philippines—had already practiced the multidisciplinary approach in research advocated by Pavo. Hornedo’s ethnographic studies on Ivatan culture and other Indigenous peoples in northern Luzon did not only provide valuable accounts of their experiences but also gave Hornedo material bases for his claims on some aspects of Filipino experience such as the Indigenous aspects of religion, society, cosmology, and relation with the environment.<sup>21</sup>

This recognition of Indigenous peoples’ experience as a resource of philosophical insights for articulation proves valuable for various themes in philosophy. In the south, Jeffry Oca’s project of understanding a “philosophy at the margins” from the experiences of Indigenous communities in the Philippines contributes to this still growing literature of “Filipino Philosophies” in the peripheries. Through his ethnographic study of the philosophy of work of the elderly people of Sitio Pinayuna-an in Negros Oriental, Oca finds material basis for reinforcing the notion of “indigenous work ethics” with its elements of sustainability, cooperation, small-scale progress, uncommodified labor, and environmental friendliness

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<sup>18</sup> Raymundo Pavo, “Filipino Philosophy and Postmodernity,” in *PHAVISMINDA Journal*, 10 (May 2011), 28, <[https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/028b0f1b-224c-45f2-944a-0a4e4bbf7b2b/downloads/d%20PAPER\\_PAVO.pdf?ver=1643335800367](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/028b0f1b-224c-45f2-944a-0a4e4bbf7b2b/downloads/d%20PAPER_PAVO.pdf?ver=1643335800367)>.

<sup>19</sup> Among their numerous works, see Karl Gaspar’s *Manobo Dreams in Arakan: A People’s Struggle to Keep Their Homeland* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2011) and Albert Alejo’s *Generating Energies in Mount Apo: Cultural Politics in a Contested Environment* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Pavo, “Filipino Philosophy and Postmodernity,” 33. Pavo’s proposal of a “local grounding” for philosophizing which merges the function of social science and philosophy necessitates him to go to the peripheries—to Indigenous experiences as material bases for his project. See also Raymundo Pavo, “The Social-Scientist Philosopher Perspective: A Possible Contribution to a Filipino Philosophy,” in *ACTA: Proceedings of the Quadricentennial International Philosophy Congress* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> See Florentino H. Hornedo, *The Favor of the Gods: Essays in Filipino Religious Thought and Behavior* (Manila, Philippines: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2001).

as a richly philosophical resource for “countervailing the destructive tendency of globalization.”<sup>22</sup>

Through his fieldwork with Indigenous peoples in Mindanao, Roger Bayod writes about the prospect of “developing an indigenous ethics” based on their concept of land as sacred that conditions a holistic outlook in life and community as manifested by their Indigenous knowledge of healing that both treats the physical and spiritual elements, and their Indigenous perspective of justice which has nonetheless been misrecognized as immoral from the outside by mainstream community.<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein, Christopher Ryan Maboloc opines that the local wisdom of Indigenous peoples “are good models for the harmonized relation between human beings and nature”<sup>24</sup> which could counter the effects of global climate change. This claim is premised on almost the same outlook that Oca and Bayod who have already gleaned from the experience of Indigenous people’s communities such as the sacredness of nature and respectful intercourse with nature for material subsistence. This time however, Maboloc highlights the viability of Indigenous people’s lifeways for global environmental sustainability which are still largely unutilized.

Whether Indigenous concepts can be employed in teaching a required philosophy course standardized in the curriculum has been proven to be both empirically and practically doable by Guiraldo Fernandez and Geraldine Villaluz. By integrating Cebuano-Visayan Indigenous peace concepts on the relation between subjects, environment, and the transcendent into the K-12 course Philosophy of the Human Person, Fernandez and Villaluz report a more relevant, responsive, culture-sensitive, and context-based learning of philosophy among students.<sup>25</sup>

Still in the area of education—perhaps even most importantly in this line—a pathbreaking attempt to articulate the theoretical foundation for integrating Indigenous forms of knowledge in the emerging child-centered

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<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey Oca, “Philosophy at the Margins: Exploring the Philosophy of Work of the Elderly People in Some Remote Areas of Negros Oriental,” in *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 1, no. 1 (October 2015), 10, <<http://ses-journal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Philosophy-at-the-Margins-Exploring-the-Philosophy-of-Work-of-the-Elderly-People-in-some-Remote-Areas-of-Negros-Oriental.pdf>>.

<sup>23</sup> Roger Bayod, “Developing an Indigenous Ethics: On Recognition and Social Justice,” in *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics*, 29, no. 1 (January 2019), 10–13, <<https://eubios.info/assets/docs/EJAIB12019.226220136.pdf>>.

<sup>24</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc, “Liberal Environmentalism and Global Climate Change,” in *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics*, 30 (March 2020), 54, <<https://eubios.info/assets/docs/EJAIB32020.226215907.pdf>>.

<sup>25</sup> Guiraldo C. Fernandez and Geraldine D. Villaluz, “Teaching Indigenous Peace Concepts from Visayan Fisherfolks and Farmers through the Course Philosophy of the Human Person,” in *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 5, no. 1 (2017), 32–50, <<https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=13063>>.

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educational program of Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC) is performed by Peter Elicor.<sup>26</sup> Grounded in his experience of the program with Indigenous children in a rural area in Southern Philippines, Elicor introduces “presentational epistemology” as a “counter-weight” to the analytic-representational epistemology which dominantly forms the current assumption of knowledge in P4wC. This characterizes the epistemic condition of Indigenous knowledge based on the common patterns of relationality and situatedness of Indigenous thinking culled by Elicor from the literature of Indigenous studies. Correlatively, pedagogy itself is equally rethought whereby the pedagogue should become increasingly aware of their positionality<sup>27</sup> in order to mitigate the epistemic violence that could accrue from the learning process. This violence could manifest when the pedagogue assumes the “view from nowhere,”<sup>28</sup> which is a kind of a disentanglement from their normative social milieu, thereby impinging upon their relationship with the children taking on an objective attitude instead of the participative and relational mode in the learning process. The latter entails the recognition of the context and thought resources of children and an Indigenization of the communal experience of philosophical inquiry *with* children.

This partial inventory of research that substantiate discourses in different areas of philosophy using field experience with Indigenous peoples commonly showcase the nonchalance towards the signification of Filipino philosophy as a nationalist endeavor. Although they could be conventionally identified as Filipino philosophies, their works cannot be subsumed under the homogenous context of Filipinization in their shared signification of Indigeneity in the peripheries. What is observable rather is a translocation of philosophy into the proximity of peoples’ experience distinguished from each other ethnically, linguistically, and culturally yet esteemed as potent material resources for doing philosophy itself—in other words, the agentive shift of doing philosophy in the immediacy of culture specific contexts. However, this agentive emphasis in doing philosophy was also previously shown as operative in the context of Indigenization as Filipinization. What is the precondition for the flexibility of the language of Indigeneity to be iterated in both nationalist and post-nationalist levels of signification? The next part addresses this question and further introduces a way of understanding Indigenous philosophizing based on the practices that have already been introduced.

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<sup>26</sup> Elicor, “Philosophical Inquiry with Indigenous Children.”

<sup>27</sup> See his separate discussion of this concept in Peter Paul E. Elicor, “Resisting the ‘View from Nowhere’: Positionality in Philosophy for/with Children Research,” in *Philosophia*, 21, no. 1 (2020), 19–33, <<https://doi.org/10.46992/pijp.21.1.a.2>>.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–22.

### **(Critical) Indigenous Philosophizing as Coping with Indeterminacy**

Indigenization in the context of Filipinization emerged as a response to the exposure to difference and experience of “indeterminacy” or a lack felt as a “vital need”<sup>29</sup> by the luminaries of Filipino philosophy that led them to engage in a project of self-determination in the philosophical enterprise. For instance, Emerita Quito’s pioneering initiative of teaching other philosophical frameworks like phenomenology, existentialism, and structuralism, which she learned from her doctoral studies abroad, provided a “fresh air”<sup>30</sup> in the mode of thinking that was dominated by Scholasticism during her time. As de Leon reports, Quito perceived the need for more freedom in philosophizing.<sup>31</sup> Translation of mainstream philosophies and the use of the Filipino language itself in doing philosophy was deemed instrumental for the flourishing of philosophy in the country. Hence, even those who professed non-allegiance to the project of Filipino philosophy were implicated in it via their utilization of the Filipino language(s) in philosophizing.

Claro Ceniza’s statement articulates best that generation’s penchant for nationalism that Filipino Philosophy hopes to realize despite Ceniza’s non-enthusiasm to this project: “if we are to build our spirit of nationalism,” he says, “we must first build a spirit of pride in ourselves as a people.”<sup>32</sup> However, he adds, “a national philosophy must not be the ultimate goal of Filipino philosophizing.”<sup>33</sup> Nationalism is but a historical reaction to colonial oppression experienced by the people which could nevertheless become a powerful tool for mobilizing collective determination. Once nationhood is attained, Ceniza proposes a transcending of nationalism so that Filipino philosophy could be steered towards the course of a philosophy of being.<sup>34</sup>

The agency in doing philosophy is manifestly intrinsic to the employment of Indigeneity as a qualitative modifier of philosophizing by Filipino philosophy luminaries. Yet it has also been shown in the preceding section that the conventionally labeled Indigenous “Filipino” philosophies in

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<sup>29</sup> This is Charles Taylor’s famous description of what recognition has become in the present. See Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. by Amy Gutmann (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> This is Romualdo Abulad’s description of Quito’s teaching. See Emmanuel De Leon, “Emerita S. Quito (1929–): Ang Ugat ng Isang Panibagong Direksyon ng Pamimilosopiya sa Pilipinas,” in *Malay*, 29, no. 2 (2017), 37, <<https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=11538>>.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Claro F. Ceniza, “Self-identity and the Filipino Philosophy,” in *Sophia*, XII, no. 1 (Manila: De La Salle University, May–August 1982), 21–22.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

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the peripheries are likewise fueled by the esteem for the culturally specific contexts of the philosophers, or of their subjects, in the region—confidence in agency albeit detached from the nationalist project. We can glean from these claims a view that the language of Indigeneity shared among these scholars is an applied context of the struggle for recognition in the agentive authorship of philosophy. This can be aligned with the characteristic features of struggles for recognition that lay focus on “identity and difference, equality and inclusion, and concern for differential treatment.”<sup>35</sup>

The precondition for the self-determination mobilized in the deployment of Indigeneity among the preceding discourses in philosophy is the inherent element of indeterminacy of Indigeneity itself. Indigeneity, as Benjamin Gregg underscores, does not have a “broadly accepted understanding” but “in its indeterminacy, the term allows for very different groups to claim indigeneity and to claim it in very different ways.”<sup>36</sup> We can further glean from Francesca Merlan’s contention that Indigeneity does not have an “objectively ascertainable” meaning “but like many other social categories, is a contingent, interactive, and historical product.”<sup>37</sup> With Merlan, Gregg insists that Indigeneity is hence a social construct. It is from this point of view that the Indigenous phase as a historical response to the extended colonialism in the towering system of Scholasticism appears. Rhoderick John Abellanosa’s claim would synchronize with this as he explains that “the beginnings of Filipino philosophy...must be understood within the context of the struggle, not just for political recognition, but more importantly to establish a distinct identification of the Filipino people, capable of reflecting about the world and the events around them.”<sup>38</sup> Postwar nationalism was a strengthening—thus, a postcolonial extension—of the ascription of Indigeneity attached to colonial resistance in the Philippine revolution against Spanish rule. This was a coping with indeterminacy in a wider scale or what Merlan identifies as “indigeneity in the first-order sense of local

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<sup>35</sup> Renante D. Pilapil, *Recognition: Examining Identity Struggles* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015), xi.

<sup>36</sup> See Benjamin Gregg, “Indigeneity as Social Construct and Political Tool,” in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 41, no. 4 (November 2019), 824, <<https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2019.0063>>. A notable example closer to home is Alejo’s stratification of at least ten identity assertions that Lumads, or the Indigenous peoples in Mindanao, can take to advance their solidarity strategies respective of the forms of struggle that they experience locally, nationally, and globally. See Albert Alejo, “Strategic Identity: Bridging Self-determination and Solidarity among Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao, the Philippines,” in *Thesis Eleven*, 145, no. 1 (2018), <<https://doi.org/10.1177/072551361876383>>.

<sup>37</sup> Francesca Merlan, “Indigeneity: Global and Local,” in *Current Anthropology*, 50, no. 3 (June 2009), 319, <<https://doi.org/10.1086/597667>>.

<sup>38</sup> Rhoderick John Abellanosa, “Local Discourse, Identity and the Search for a Filipino Philosophy: A Re-exploration through the Lens of Reynaldo Ileto,” in *Asian Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities*, 3, no. 1 (2013), 39, <<https://ajol.ateneo.edu/paha/articles/53/483>>.

connections and belonging” where Indigeneity is “applied much more broadly than to just those we might understand as ‘indigenous peoples’.”<sup>39</sup> The nationalist claim for Indigeneity was not an impossibility because “claims to indigeneity can be expansive, elastic and dynamic, and driven by any number of disparate goals.”<sup>40</sup> The “fundamental criterion”<sup>41</sup> of self-identification in being able to philosophize is herein deployed in Indigeneity as a quality of the imagined community as a nation. This “self-grounding” element of Indigeneity, as Gregg further avers, is not primarily bent on asserting truth claims about one’s Indigeneity but of advancing goals and value commitments such as that of gaining recognition and rights.<sup>42</sup> In the case of Filipino philosophizing, it is the esteem in the agency of philosophizing itself grounded on their experience and cultural and linguistic resources.

Michael Roland Hernandez’s critique articulates the dangers of a monolithic nationalist project, either in historiography or in philosophy — that is, not only the epistemic violence of a colonial identity trap but the tendency of vertically aligning geo-politically and culturally diverse collective projects into a homogenous identity of the nation-state.<sup>43</sup> This implies that even if the nationalist project identified with the idea of Filipino philosophy emerges as a historically critical response to oppression, it is not a project immune from problematizations. “Indigeneity is not tied to any one particular historical experience.”<sup>44</sup> Not only did Indigeneity shift in its significance historically but the archipelagic context of the Philippines with diverse ethnicity, culture, historical experience, and identity makes the terms “Indigenous” and “non-Indigenous” fluid categories.<sup>45</sup> The post-nationalist category of Indigeneity has therefore always been a possibility once decentralization from the homogenous project of Filipinization is mobilized. The emergence of Indigenous philosophies in the peripheries has shown the practical actualization of this decentralized mode of philosophizing from nationalism. However, what was not displaced in either the nationalist or the post-nationalist level is the agentic owning of doing philosophy.

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<sup>39</sup> Merlan, “Indigeneity: Global and Local,” 304.

<sup>40</sup> Gregg, “Indigeneity as Social Construct and Political Tool,” 829.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 825.

<sup>42</sup> Gregg clarifies nevertheless that “goals and truths are not mutually exclusive” and therefore do not make the truth claims irrelevant. “Constructions also create facts about systems of belief and forms of life, and in this respect, they can be assessed in terms of truths claims.” *Ibid.*, 826.

<sup>43</sup> See Michael Roland F. Hernandez, “Trapping Identities: Filipinization and the Problems of a Nationalist Historiography,” in *Suri*, 5, no. 2 (2016), <[https://suri.pap73.org/issue7/Hernandez\\_SURI\\_2016.pdf](https://suri.pap73.org/issue7/Hernandez_SURI_2016.pdf)>.

<sup>44</sup> Gregg, “Indigeneity as Social Construct and Political Tool,” 831.

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

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Indigeneity, so to speak, has become, among Filipinos, a framework that coincides with the clamor for recognition in the enterprise of philosophy—that is, the indeterminacy which initially manifested as a symptom in the consciousness of the absence of a formal history of philosophy compared to the long history of both the Western and Eastern traditions and in the search for a distinguishing mark of a “Filipino” way of thinking. Furthermore, indeterminacy could be interpreted as a clamor for a more normative orientation in philosophy accruing from the “freedom” in its performance or activity.

Indigenization as coping with this indeterminacy can be qualified as a critical turn in doing philosophy in the Philippines. This clamor was fully articulated by Paolo Bolaños in what he identifies as “the social deficit of philosophy.”<sup>46</sup> “The philosophical enterprise here in the Philippines, as we know it,” according to him, “suffers from a failure to reflect on factual realities that materially shape our psycho-sociopolitical behavior and the ensuing pathological consequences therein.”<sup>47</sup> Hence, there is a need for a departure from speculative-essentialist thinking towards a reorientation of philosophy into social and political life which is “both the *sanction* and *critique* of [our] normative standards” (Italics mine).<sup>48</sup>

In Demeterio’s classification of Filipino philosophy discourses, however, a critical philosophy was identified as already being practiced in the form of “Filipino Philosophy as Academic Critical Analysis.” He describes this as a discourse that “examines the political and economic structures of the Philippine society and culture”<sup>49</sup> drawing inspiration from critical theoretical systems such as Marxism. He also describes the proximity of this way of philosophizing with Filipino Philosophy as the application of phenomenology and hermeneutics, and its conduct of “current methodologies brought about by postmodernism and post-structuralism.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Paolo A. Bolaños, “The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations: Some Notes on Axel Honneth’s Materialist Philosophical Anthropology,” in *Suri*, 1, no. 1 (2011), 16, <[https://suri.pap73.org/issue1/Bolanos\\_SURI\\_2012.pdf](https://suri.pap73.org/issue1/Bolanos_SURI_2012.pdf)>.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 16. Bolaños attributes this deficit to three reasons, namely: the failure to appropriate critical theory because of the neglect of intellectual history, the fear of materialist/Marxist philosophy, and the failure to overcome the language of transcendentalist or essentialist philosophy in the body of Scholastic metaphysics. See also Paolo A. Bolaños, “What is Critical Theory: Max Horkheimer and the Makings of the Frankfurt School Tradition,” in *Mabini Review*, 2, no. 1 (2013), 15, <<https://mabinireview.weebly.com/uploads/9/0/9/1/9091667/bolanos.pdf>>.

<sup>48</sup> Bolaños, “What is Critical Theory,” 16.

<sup>49</sup> Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, “Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy,” in *Philippiniana Sacra*, XLIX, no. 147 (May–August 2014), 195, <<https://philsacra.ust.edu.ph/admin/downloadarticle?id=59B579D8D8B39A52239B019E33ABFF2B>>.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

It is obvious that the reasons<sup>51</sup> mentioned by Demeterio for the high sustainability of this discourse already speak of the materiality of philosophy that Bolaños speaks of. However, Demeterio understood “Academic Critical Analysis” from the perspective of nationalism. On the other hand, if one of the theoretical inspirations of Bolaños’ critique—the theory of recognition by Axel Honneth—is extended, the very inception of the idea of Filipino philosophy could in turn be already identified as an early manifestation of this normative thinking and coping with indeterminacy. Philosophy as social critique, in Honneth’s recognitive theory, demands a grounding in the intersubjective structures of human experience which are culturally defined.<sup>52</sup> It is in this context that the efforts of the early proponents of Indigenization as Filipinization could be aligned as normative. It was a stage naturally undertaken as a reaction to colonialism but, as a homogenous representation of a collective in a singular history, its “illusion of unity” is inimical to difference and diverse normative struggles for recognition.

Indigenous philosophizing in the peripheries is this post-nationalist mobilization of the language of Indigeneity. The empirical methodological approach that accompanies this mode of philosophizing is a symptomatic response.<sup>53</sup> This is a response to the “social deficit” of philosophizing, thus a critical turn—in the sense of localizing philosophy, or rendering philosophy normative in the different social conditions of the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> Indigenization in the peripheries emerged as a struggle for recognition which could be aligned with Honneth’s third sphere of the struggle for recognition applied specifically to the performativity of philosophy in their *particularity*. This is the sphere that grants individuals or social groups a healthy self-understanding in being able to contribute to the flourishing of society. Recognition in the form of esteem is a precondition for social solidarity in so far as it allows for inclusion in discourse and collective decision-making in

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<sup>51</sup> “...the context of our tottering economic structures, deformed democracy, ailing bureaucracy, and colonial culture.” *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> See Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundation of Critical Theory*, trans. by John Farrell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Demeterio has already noticed earlier that the critical analysis is engaged more by specialists in cultural studies, humanities, and social sciences. See Demeterio, “Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy,” 214. See also Pavo, “The Social-Scientist Philosopher Perspective” for another advocacy of the social-empirical approach in philosophizing.

<sup>54</sup> This coincides with the anthropological turn of critical theory. Bolaños writes, “Critical Theory focuses on ‘real situations’ or social and historical factors that condition the possibility of scientific inquiry in the first place.” Philosophizing in this sense is no longer thinking in a vacuum but should be anchored in the material conditions of life. “Through the anthropological turn, the social, political, psychological, and cultural dimensions of life are regarded as grounds for critical analyses.” Bolaños, “What is Critical Theory,” 6–7.

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various areas of human concerns.<sup>55</sup> Philosophizing, as it were, is something owned and even modified in the agentive appropriation of individuals or groups who claim Indigeneity. This is something observable in the literature of Indigenous studies like that of Joe Kincheloe's vision for a critical ontology from which emerges the importance of Indigenous and subjugated knowledge. Kincheloe turns philosophy both into a diagnostic and programmatic enterprise for while individuals gain "critical ontological awareness" that signifies understanding of "how and why their political opinions, religious beliefs, gender role, racial positions, and sexual orientation have been shaped by dominant cultural perspectives," new insights for becoming or of "ways of being" are charted.<sup>56</sup>

Indigenization is itself transformative of thinking. Indigenous philosophizing (in the peripheries) activates the "mobility of thought"<sup>57</sup> which I take to signify the precondition of operative local ideas and concepts to become more interactive thereby rendering itself open to further thought connections, meaning attachments, wider significations, parallelisms, or transversality<sup>58</sup> with other thought systems. In their definition of Indigenous philosophy, Grange and Mika identifies two ways in which the term "Indigenous philosophy" could be used; the first is in reference to the distinctive philosophies of disparate local Indigenous communities while the second "concerns doing philosophy from the standpoint of all colonised peoples of the world and has a decolonising agenda aimed at decentring (not destroying) Western philosophy by giving legitimacy to Indigenous philosophy in the academy."<sup>59</sup> The recognitive dimension of self-determination and project is immediately visible in the second sense. But

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<sup>55</sup> See Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. by Joel Anderson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

<sup>56</sup> Joe L. Kincheloe, "Critical Ontology and Indigenous Ways of Being: Forging a Postcolonial Curriculum," in *Keywords in Critical Pedagogy*, ed. by Kecia Hayes, Shirley R. Steinberg, and Kenneth Tobin (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2011), 334.

<sup>57</sup> I take a similar view with Jessica Dubow who redescribes mobility as an "originary condition of thought" contesting the modern Enlightenment view of the traversal of boundaries as a conquest for the Same, and imperial logic of progress in knowledge. Mobility installs a "radical open-endedness" to thought as an origin which is at once "distance and dislocation itself" and thus, "remains irreducible to the gains of positive knowledge." See Jessica Dubow, "The Mobility of Thought: Reflections on Blanchot and Benjamin," in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 6, no. 2 (2004), 227, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801042000238346>>.

<sup>58</sup> I follow Hwa Yol Jung notion of transversality as a "seismic confluence of differences ... which deprovincializes and widens our intellectual horizons concerning foreign lifeworlds as more than the negative mirrors of our own." This entails for Jung a going beyond ("trans") and "overcoming of all polarizing dichotomies" that paves the way for a more planetary thinking. Hwa Yol Jung, *Transversal Rationality and Intercultural Texts: Essays in Phenomenology and Comparative Philosophy* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 10.

<sup>59</sup> Grange and Mika, "What is Indigenous Philosophy and What Are Its Implications for Education?," 499–500.

what leverages local Indigenous philosophies into a collective movement is the very mobility of Indigenous thinking itself. Decentralization is apparently the mobilization of thought that dominant systems have rendered static and invisible. The language of Indigeneity has provided a platform for academic philosophizing. Philosophizing in academia overlaps with the social, cultural, and political recognition that collective (Indigenous) groups struggle with in coping with indeterminacy. The very contents of academic works that bear the language of Indigeneity has translocalized thinking to diverse environments which grant the materiality of diverse philosophical discourses.

The language of Indigeneity in the discourses of philosophy in the Philippines as reconstructed herein has been a series or process of “strategizing identity.”<sup>60</sup> From the inception of the idea of Filipino philosophy to the emergence of Indigenous (Filipino) philosophies in the peripheries, what can be seen is a multiplicity of identity assertions that Indigeneity itself has rendered possible. Yet in each mode of Indigenization, philosophizing has been showcased as a critical enterprise in the particularization or translocation of philosophy into the material conditions of thought itself. Hence, the assertion of identity becomes coterminous with social praxis as it articulates and addresses material concerns unique to different social and historical conditions through philosophizing.

### Concluding Remarks

Indigeneity in the preceding considerations has been demonstrated as a conceptual base for self-determination, for owning the philosophical enterprise, and for providing a particularity of thinking. Based on the conditions of its emergence or deployment, Indigeneity is a critical act of thinking—on the one hand, as a decolonial project in its Filipinist orientation; on the other hand, as a differential recognition of the experience of diversely normative historical and sociocultural conditions of thinking through Indigenous philosophizing in the peripheries. Indigenous philosophizing, in other words, activates the critical aspect of philosophy in that thinking can no longer take “the view from nowhere” or thinking apart from normativity; but rather, a kind of thinking that is not confined in its situated conditions for articulation as the indeterminacy in Indigeneity itself allows for the mobility of thought. Critical Indigenous philosophizing, as coping with indeterminacy, grants particularity to philosophy as it brings home the

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<sup>60</sup> I borrow this term from Alejo who employs it more specifically in reference to the Lumads as a conceptual bridge between their struggle for self-determination and their search for solidarity in the context of globalization. See Alejo, “Strategic Identity.”

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philosophical enterprise to the material conditions of human experience from where thinking should be fundamentally grounded.

In the Philippine experience, Indigeneity has been a strategic language for doing philosophy “with a normative content,” that is, in response to the historical exigencies and diverse environments of the people. From its earliest deployment, Indigeneity exclaims the value and importance of the labor which philosophy practitioners in various regions of the Philippines must carry out in making philosophy more socially and politically responsive to the demands of their locality, in preparing the intellectual and moral conditions for social change and engagement in the society. However, in the archipelagic context of the country where material concerns are as diverse as its people (critical) Indigenous philosophizing remains to be fully mobilized in terms of its normative thrust and value.

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## How is Lying to Oneself Possible? The Dialetheism Reading of Sartre's Bad Faith

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**Abstract:** One of the most important debates in Sartre scholarship today comes from the question, how is it possible to be in bad faith? In other words, how is self-deception possible, given that, in lying to ourselves, we are both the liar and the lied to at the same time? On the face of it, this sounds paradoxical, if not downright contradictory. This article aims to address this question (1) by analyzing secondary literature on Sartre that tries to prove that bad faith is not a contradictory concept and (2) by defending the “dialetheism reading” of bad faith, that is, the reading that views bad faith to be evidence for the true existence of contradictions.

**Keywords:** Sartre, bad faith, contradiction, dialetheism

One of the most provocative concepts of Jean-Paul Sartre's work, bad faith—the concept of lying to oneself—has sparked a number of significant debates. These debates include discussions from commentators about whether bad faith stems from an ontological claim about being or whether it is primarily an ethical concept. Is it a revision of Heidegger's analysis of inauthenticity in *Being and Time*? How does it relate to the Husserlian insight from intentionality, that consciousness is always consciousness of something? Should we always avoid bad faith whenever we can? Or is it in some respects productive to be in bad faith? What are the sources of bad faith? What triggers it and causes it to continue? How frequent is bad faith? Is it common or rare? Debates have also surfaced about the examples Sartre uses to illustrate bad faith—the woman and the waiter, in

particular, have led to controversies about what strategies and methods we use to enter into and relieve ourselves of bad faith.

Yet, perhaps the most perplexing question that emerges from Sartre's discussion of bad faith comes from the seemingly simple task of establishing how bad faith is possible at all. This article analyzes the underlying paradox of how bad faith is possible given that, by lying to ourselves, we are both the liar and the lied to. On the face of it, bad faith sounds paradoxical, if not downright contradictory. Obviously, lying in general (lying to others) is possible, since, in this case, the liar and the lied to are separate people. Lying in general is that conventional form of lying that upholds the category distinction between the deceiver and the deceived, or, in Sartre's vocabulary, upholds the "conditioning duality."<sup>1</sup> But Sartre claims that there is a significant distinction to be made between lying *tout court* and lying to oneself. The paradox of bad faith comes about when the agent and object of the deception are the same person. How can the liar as the source of the lie also be the one who is lied to? Bad faith thus seems to be impossible. Sartre expresses this fundamental problem when he writes: "The person to whom one is lying and the person who is lying are one and the same person, which means that I must know—in so far as I am the deceiver—the truth that is hidden from me in so far as I am deceived ... How then can the lie survive, if its conditioning duality is abolished?"<sup>2</sup>

There is a lot of good secondary literature about this logical question of how bad faith is possible. This article has two primary purposes: (1) to catalog and critically analyze some of the most persuasive arguments from the secondary literature that argue for the possibility of bad faith, mainly by presenting bad faith as a non-contradictory concept and (2) against these readings, to defend the dialetheism interpretation of bad faith, that is, the reading that views bad faith to be evidence for the true existence of contradictions. To set up the problem, I begin by reviewing arguments that claim that bad faith is impossible or possible only in a very qualified sense. The most notable of these comes from the thesis that bad faith is overtly contradictory and therefore impossible. I then look at Sartre's objection to the Freudian distinction between the id and the ego as a "hard distinction" that would resolve the paradox of bad faith by showing that it is not contradictory. From there, I look at a series of "soft interpretations" that, in one way or another, attempt to resolve the paradox of bad faith and thereby avoid the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (London: Routledge, 2018), 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

contradiction by dividing the self in subtle ways:<sup>3</sup> there is the Stevenson-Gordon-Hymers debate in the 1980's that focuses on the question of whether a distinction between reflection and pre-reflection saves bad faith from contradiction; there is also the translucency interpretation from Phyllis Sutton Morris and David Detmer's strategy of establishing the possibility of bad faith through the non-paradoxical structures of lying in general and lying to others. All of these readings assume that contradictions are impossible, but that if we establish either a hard or soft distinction in the self, this will resolve the paradox of being both the liar and the lied to at the same time and save bad faith from contradiction. These readings stand in contrast to the position I defend at the end of the article, which is that bad faith demonstrates the real existence of contradictions and should be embraced as thoroughly paradoxical, in the tradition of Graham Priest's dialetheism.

### Arguments that Bad Faith is Impossible

There are at least two ways to argue that bad faith is impossible. The first way comes from the claim that Sartre conceives of consciousness as transparent, and that, if it is transparent, then lying to oneself is also transparent and therefore impossible. M.R. Haight argues for this position in *A Study of Self-Deception*.<sup>4</sup> Haight claims that because he is a follower of Descartes, Sartre views consciousness to be completely transparent. If that is right, then there is no real possibility of lying to oneself since the self sees itself and knows itself with full lucidity. It is not hard to disregard this position. Since the textual evidence of the chapter on bad faith shows that Sartre thinks of bad faith as possible (and experiential evidence also shows this to be true), it is reasonable to conclude that he departs from Descartes on this point and views the revelation of consciousness to itself to be a complex structure with barriers, thus returning us to the question of the possibility of bad faith.

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<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey Gordon uses this distinction between hard and soft views of bad faith in his analysis of Leslie Stevenson's work Sartre. I broaden Gordon's distinction to include a series of readings that attempt to soften what would otherwise be the contradiction of bad faith. Jeffrey Gordon, "Bad Faith: A Dilemma," in *Philosophy*, 60 (1985), 258–262, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819100051147>>.

<sup>4</sup> Phyllis Sutton Morris interprets M.R. Haight to be arguing for this position. Phyllis Sutton Morris, "Sartre on the Self-Deceiver's Translucent Consciousness," in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 23: 2 (1992), 104–105, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.1992.11006980>>. Also see M.R. Haight, *Self-Deception and Self-Understanding: New Essays in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Mike W. Martin (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 53–54.

A more persuasive way to argue that bad faith is impossible is to claim that it is paradoxical to the point of being a full-blown contradiction. Proponents of this position start from the common-sense assumption that contradictions are always impossible, and then claim either that bad faith is contradictory and therefore impossible or that bad faith is not truly or fully an act of self-deception. This is either because the deceiver knows about the deception, in which case, there is no deception after all, or because the deceived truly does not know, in which case, the deception takes on the common form of lying in general. In either case, according to this position, it would be wrong to say that self-deception is possible.<sup>5</sup>

Since bad faith seems to be a common everyday experience, and since Sartre clearly views bad faith to be possible, commentators have worked to resolve the paradox of bad faith by drawing on various distinctions in the self or in the act of bad faith, which, if realized, would exonerate it of contradiction. Let's start by looking at the hard distinction that Sartre himself critically responds to, and then at softer variations, which all attempt to prove bad faith to be non-contradictory.

### **The Hard Distinction Between the Id and the Ego**

Sartre devotes a long passage of the subchapter "Bad Faith and Lies" to a sustained discussion of Freud's distinction in the self between the "id" and the "ego." Here, Sartre claims that one of the primary strategies to avoid the problem of bad faith is to find recourse in the unconscious.<sup>6</sup> By projecting the theoretical division of the mind into the id and the ego, we can thereby explain away the paradox of bad faith. The self, then, becomes like two people. The barrier between the id and the ego allows the self to hide from itself and lie to itself, without, thereby, causing a contradiction or paradox. Even though it is the self that is lying to the self, the hard distinction between the two sides of the self compartmentalizes the lie so that the liar and the lied to can both share the same source of the self but also be ignorant of the other side.

Sartre's critique of Freud's divided consciousness reveals a lot about the nature and paradox of bad faith. Freud's division creates, in Sartre's analysis, an artificial difference that falsely compartmentalizes the act and

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<sup>5</sup> Santoni suggests this interpretation in his article "Bad Faith and 'Lying to Oneself'" when he claims that bad faith is only possible in a very qualified sense. Ronald E. Santoni, "Bad Faith and 'Lying to Oneself,'" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 38: 3 (1978), 384–398, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2107007>>.

<sup>6</sup> Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 91.

object of consciousness, essentially dividing the self into an other, and making a dualism where there is not one. Sartre claims here that, although the deceiver and the deceived are one and the same person, we are not able to release ourselves from this unity by creating a hard difference in the self. To divide the self in this way turns bad faith into a variation of lying in general, which, according to Sartre, covers over the issue and leads to even deeper expressions of bad faith.

Some commentators have pointed out that Sartre's reading of Freud in the Bad Faith chapter is not that sophisticated. According to Jonathan Webber, Sartre over-emphasizes the "resistance" concept in psychoanalysis, which Webber defines as "the purported phenomenon of a psychoanalytic patient engaging in a variety of strategies to prevent the analyst from getting to the truth."<sup>7</sup> But even if Sartre has misinterpreted Freud and his reading should not be viewed as a fair treatment or effective guide of Freud's work, knocking down the Freudian strawman nevertheless leads to revealing insights about the nature of bad faith: it cannot be resolved by dividing the mind and attempting to demonstrate non-contradiction through the compartmentalizing of the id and the ego, nor by any other opposition of the mind to itself.

The question a number of commentators then ask is whether a softer division of the self can resolve the paradox of bad faith. Obviously, Sartre is opposed to any hard division of the mind that creates a separation and barrier in the self, such that the self appears as the other of itself. But is there a softer temporal, modal, orthetic distinction that can be used to clear bad faith of contradiction?

### The Stevenson-Gordon-Hymers Debate

The journal *Philosophy* published a series of response articles in the 1980's about how to resolve the paradox lurking in bad faith. This series of articles is known as the Stevenson-Gordon-Hymers debate. In the first of these articles from 1983, "Sartre on Bad Faith," Leslie Stevenson proposes a distinction between pre-reflective and reflective acts that demonstrates how, even though the liar and the lied to are one and the same person, bad faith is

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<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Webber, *The Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 89. For other discussions that focus on whether Sartre's reading is fair to Freud, see Jerome Neu, "Divided Minds: Sartre's 'Bad Faith' Critique of Freud," in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 42: 1 (1988), 79–101, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20128695>>. Also see, Mary L. Edwards, *Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis: Knowing Others* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 55–60.

nevertheless possible and non-contradictory.<sup>8</sup> Stevenson's reading is intuitive enough: We may very well know the truth of the matter in our pre-reflective consciousness and at the same time lie to ourselves as we reflect on the matter. Because the truth is posited in our pre-reflective consciousness and the lie occurs in the act of reflection, there is nothing inherently contradictory about lying to oneself.

In the second article of the series, "Bad Faith: A Dilemma" (published in 1985), Jeffrey Gordon repositions Stevenson's analysis by proposing that there is a hard and a soft interpretation of Stevenson's distinction.<sup>9</sup> Even though Stevenson uses analytically precise language—such as, "for all conscious predicates *F*, and all people *x*, *x* is *F* if and only if *x* is *pre-reflectively* aware that he is *F*"<sup>10</sup>—Gordon objects that there is an ambiguity in Stevenson's analysis. It is not clear to what extent Stevenson is proposing a distinction in the self. If the difference between reflection and pre-reflection leads to a hard distinction in the self, then Gordon thinks that Stevenson has devised a similar solution to the ego-id distinction, which would face all of the same objections that Sartre leveled against Freud.<sup>11</sup> But, according to Gordon, if we think of pre-reflective consciousness and reflective consciousness as merely the difference between two modes of the self, rather than as a full distinction, then the division does not do enough work to solve the paradox of bad faith.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Stevenson's dilemma, as Gordon sees it, is that no matter whether he goes along with the hard or soft interpretation of reflection, bad faith does not work out conceptually. Gordon thus knocks down Stevenson's position, while claiming that even though the reading aligns well with Sartre's intended concept of bad faith,<sup>13</sup> it is not a sustainable reading. Gordon does not go on to propose an alternative reading that would clarify how bad faith is possible, leading his reader to assume that his underlying conclusion is that bad faith is impossible.

Michael Hymers offers a further layer of critical analysis in his 1989 response article "Bad Faith." He claims that neither Stevenson nor Gordon have adequately considered Sartre's discussion of how lying in general differs from lying to oneself,<sup>14</sup> and that because of this oversight, their

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<sup>8</sup> Leslie Stevenson, "Sartre on Bad Faith," in *Philosophy*, 58 (1983), 254–256, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819100068741>>.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon, "Bad Faith: A Dilemma," 258–259.

<sup>10</sup> Stevenson, "Sartre on Bad Faith," 254.

<sup>11</sup> Gordon, "Bad Faith: A Dilemma," 259–260.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 260–261.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Hymers, "Bad Faith" in *Philosophy*, 64 (1989), 397, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819100044740>>.

readings are problematic. Hymers thinks that because Stevenson confuses the unique structure of bad faith with lying in general, he ends up with too much of a division in the self; even the soft version of Stevenson's reading is too strong. This oversight also leads Gordon to the erroneous conclusion that Stevenson's reading aligns well with Sartre's intentions about bad faith, causing Gordon to dismiss bad faith as impossible. After outlining these criticisms, Hymers offers a positive reading of bad faith by claiming that its character is marked by ambiguity, double-negation, and half-truths, and that the reason why it is possible is because it relies on a level-distinction between implicitly and explicitly knowing something.

### The Translucency Reading

In addition to positing a distinction between reflection and pre-reflection, there are a number of other soft strategies that attempt to mitigate the puzzle of self-deception. In "Sartre on the Self-Deceiver's Translucent Consciousness," Phyllis Sutton Morris presents a translucency reading of bad faith. Morris claims that translucency is not the same as transparency.<sup>15</sup> Sartre's view of consciousness is sometimes misunderstood as a transparency theory of consciousness,<sup>16</sup> where the self has unconditional access to itself. Morris claims, instead, that Sartre's view of consciousness is translucent, which means that our mental life is public, that consciousness is out there in the world,<sup>17</sup> but also that our access to ourselves is opaque, like "looking through frosted window glass."<sup>18</sup>

The concept of translucency is multi-layered. On the one hand, translucency means that the self is all of one piece and that it cannot be divided into strict compartments, as the hard distinction between the id and the ego purports to do. But, on the other hand, Morris' thesis that translucency is not transparency aims to resolve the seemingly paradoxical nature of bad faith by exploring a series of opacities, which enable the self to lie to itself. These opacities can be viewed as low-level barriers, processes of organization, or even marginally divided compartments of the self. By Morris' estimation, they include (1) the distinction between thetic and non-

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<sup>15</sup> Morris, "Sartre on the Self-Deceiver's Translucent Consciousness," 105-106.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Haight, *Self-Deception and Self-Understanding: New Essays in Philosophy and Psychology*, 53-54.

<sup>17</sup> Sartre discusses the idea that consciousness is out there in the world in terms of the concept of intentionality in Husserl. See Jean-Paul Sartre, "Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology," trans. by Joseph P. Fell, in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1: 2 (1970), 4-5, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.1970.11006118>>.

<sup>18</sup> Morris, "Sartre on the Self-Deceiver's Translucent Consciousness," 105.

thetic experience, (2) the soft version of Stevenson's distinction between reflection and pre-reflection, as well as (3) the temporality of the self, and (4) being-for-itself in contrast to being-for-others.<sup>19</sup> (1) thetic versus non-thetic positioning organizes human experience through the lens of attention, thereby softly dividing the translucent intentionality of consciousness and the world into foreground and background structures, which leads to enough opacity in the self to lie to oneself. The other three structures work in similar ways: (2) reflection allows the self to re-interpret and thereby to deceive pre-reflective consciousness; (3) temporality allows the self to undermine the responsibility that we have towards the past with the projection of the future; and (4) Sartre's well-known distinction between being-for-itself and being-for-others opens paths for bad faith through the difference between first and third person perspectives. Together, these four translucent structures work in synergy to demonstrate the underlying conditions that allow bad faith to be possible and prevalent in our lives. Morris' main argument is that, because of these four structures, the seemingly paradoxical nature of bad faith is resolved and the contradiction of being both the liar and the lied to is averted.

### **The Deceiving-Others-Makes-Deceiving-Oneself-Possible Interpretation**

In *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, David Detmer proposes a different strategy from the soft reflection and translucency readings that Stevenson and Morris propose. Detmer's solution to the paradox of bad faith is to recognize that lying in general has a specific structure and tactics that make it possible—namely misleading statements and the discordance of ambiguity and vagueness—and that just as these tropes make lying in general possible, likewise they make it possible to conceive of lying to oneself. In the section of his book called "Bad Faith,"<sup>20</sup> Detmer follows a two-step process of diagnosing the fundamental categories of lying in general and then extending these categories to self-deception. Since lying to others is clearly possible and commonplace, the advantage of Detmer's strategy is that he can rely on simple inductive arguments by pointing to the experiential evidence of conventional lying in general and then establish how the self can turn these tactics of deception on itself.

Detmer claims that there is a whole array of tropes that makes deception and misdirection possible, from simply misleading the other to the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 107–110.

<sup>20</sup> David Detmer, *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* (Chicago: Open Court, 2008), 75–89.

more complex exploitations of the double- and multiple-meanings of ambiguity and vagueness. These tactics are commonly directed towards others in the form of political rhetoric, courtroom guile, and deceitful salesmanship. However, these same tactics can be folded back on the self to initiate bad faith. Detmer points to our common propensity to advocate for one or another side of a debate, while pretending, at the same time, that we are also being receptive and open-minded to the other sides of the debate, as an instance of bad faith. We also have a propensity to let ourselves be persuaded by weak evidence,<sup>21</sup> and we also commonly direct fallacies of distraction, such as the red herring, on ourselves as often as we do on others. Each of these instances demonstrate, on Detmer's reading, how the typical shapes of lying to others equally enable self-deception to be possible. Through the exploitation and manipulation of ambiguity and vagueness, the self becomes able to play both roles—both the liar and the lied to—simultaneously without causing a full-blown contradiction.

There is a notable disadvantage to Detmer's approach, however. Similar to Hymers' criticism of Stevenson and Gordon, one can object that Detmer conflates bad faith with lying in general. To make his reading work, Detmer has to argue that bad faith is simply a carry-over of lying in general, even though Sartre clearly wants to uphold a category distinction between the two structures. What if lying to oneself requires a different set of conditions? What if it cannot be explained in the way that the conventional tactics of exploiting ambiguity and vagueness explain lying in general? What if bad faith requires the contradictory unity of opposites, where the same person is both the liar and the lied to and this cannot be explained away by projecting and othering the self? Furthermore, Gordon's objection to the soft version of Stevenson's pre-reflection strategy—that it does not do enough work to save bad faith from contradiction—can also be applied to Morris' more complicated synergy of soft distinctions of translucency.

### The Dialethism Reading

What if bad faith is genuinely contradictory and the point is not that we should avoid or explain away the paradox, as most Sartre commentators have assumed? What if the point, instead, is that we should embrace it as contradictory, not so that we can live in bad faith and saturate ourselves in it, but so that we can diagnose its paradoxical nature as one of the fundamental structures of reality and consciousness? This type of questioning leads to the dialetheist reading of bad faith. Most commentators (and Sartre himself at

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

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some places in the text)<sup>22</sup> assume that the seemingly paradoxical nature of bad faith needs to be rooted out and resolved, that if bad faith is contradictory, then it is impossible. But to approach bad faith in this way is to undermine Sartre's overall position about the self, which is that it cannot be divided in the way that other people are divided from the self. Moreover, to approach bad faith in this way is to reduce lying to the self to an extended mode of lying in general. The proponent of the dialetheist reading claims that, far from needing to resolve the seemingly paradoxical nature of bad faith, its perplexity should be embraced. This proponent believes that bad faith is contradictory but that this does not make bad faith impossible. Let's briefly analyze some of the main ideas and examples of dialetheism, as Priest states them generally, and then draw up insights about bad faith based on the reading that it is a productive contradiction of consciousness and reality.

Central to the project of dialetheism is the controversial claim that some contradictions genuinely exist. It is important to note, however, that for Priest only *some* contradictions exist, not *all* contradictions exist.<sup>23</sup> One of the reasons why we tend to react strongly against dialetheism is because we conflate *some* with *all*. Priest agrees that the claim "all contradictions exist" is problematic; nevertheless, he thinks that there are cases of contradiction, i.e., states of affairs where both something and its opposite occur as one unity. Proponents of the dialetheism reading of bad faith think that lying to oneself is one of these contradictions that genuinely exist. Against a long tradition of Sartre commentators who attempt to resolve the contradiction of bad faith, the dialetheists uphold bad faith as a prime example of *a* contradiction that exists. Let's look at three different explanations Priest gives of dialetheism and decide whether, or to what extent, bad faith aligns with these examples.

First, in his full book-length study of dialetheism, *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, Priest delineates the field of dialetheism in purely formal terms by presenting an exhaustive list of the logical possibilities for the truth function of a given entity, *x*. There are four permutations in total: (1) *x* is true and not false; (2) *x* is false and not true; (3) *x* is neither true nor false; and (4) *x* is both true and false.<sup>24</sup> Because of the prejudices of traditional logic and our commonsense abhorrence of contradiction, the standard assumption is that only (1) and (2) are acceptable. Based on the conventional definition of bivalence, *x* is either true or false, but not neither and certainly not both. Priest

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<sup>22</sup> For example, Sartre says phrases like "if we wish to resolve this difficulty [of the paradox of bad faith]..." Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 97.

<sup>23</sup> Graham Priest, "What is so Bad about Contradictions?," in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 95: 8 (1998), 410, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/i323997>>.

<sup>24</sup> Graham Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 4.

claims that logicians who are more liberal might go along with (3), but accepting (4), that  $x$  is both true and false, is definitely not something traditional logicians would entertain. This tradition can be traced back to Aristotle, who articulates the law of non-contradiction in the *Metaphysics* to the effect that something cannot both be itself and the opposite of itself at the same time, manner, and place.<sup>25</sup>

Priest often expresses dialetheism in purely formal and logical terms, as he does when he presents the four possibilities of truth function. In this way, he both challenges traditional logicians by exposing longstanding commonsense prejudices about the law of non-contradiction but also remains faithful to traditional logic by upholding the project of formalizing reason. He challenges the conventions of logic by demonstrating that there clearly are other possibilities of truth function than those produced from the limitations of bivalence, and that, moreover, there is no good justification for assuming that (1) and (2) are acceptable while (3) and definitely (4) are unacceptable.

The proponent of the dialetheism reading of Sartre's bad faith believes that self-deception can be interpreted as a uniquely non-formal expression of the real existence of contradiction as it occurs through the negativity of the self. In *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, Priest's discussion of contemporary philosophy post-Hegel is mostly concerned with formal articulations of dialetheism, preferring to analyze debates about the nature of contradiction in contemporary philosophy of language and logic.<sup>26</sup> One of the values of the dialetheist reading of bad faith is that we become able to demonstrate contradiction from the insights of descriptive, non-formal phenomenology and existentialism. A short chapter on Sartre's bad faith would have made for a worthy addition to Priest's contemporary account of dialetheism in *Beyond the Limits of Thought*. Such a chapter would have fit well alongside Priest's discussion of Heidegger and Derrida and would have helped to develop avenues for the analysis of non-formal, experiential accounts of contradiction in terms of the self.

Let's look at two more of Priest's examples of dialetheism, which are more friendly to non-formal articulations of contradiction, and which align well with the dialetheism reading of bad faith. In one of his most lucid expositions of the basic principles of dialetheism to date, "What is so Bad

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<sup>25</sup> For Aristotle's discussion of the law of non-contradiction. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, in two volumes, ed. by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book IV, Sections 3-6, 1005a20–1011b22. Also see Graham Priest, "To be and not to be - that is the answer. On Aristotle on the Law of Non-Contradiction," in *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis*, 1 (1998), 91–130, <<https://doi.org/10.30965/26664275-00101007>>.

<sup>26</sup> Two notable exceptions to this are Priest's discussions of Derrida and Heidegger. See Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, 219–222 and 235–248.

about Contradictions?," Priest discusses the existence of contradiction as a paradox of self-reference, such as the liar's paradox.<sup>27</sup> The liar's paradox can be triggered from the simple statement, "I am lying," which, if true, is false, and if false, is true. Priest suggests that our attempts to mitigate such paradoxes of self-reference are futile and that we would be better off accepting these paradoxes as paradoxes.

Lying to oneself is a paradox of self-reference, similar to the liar's paradox, in the sense that if we deliberately lie to ourselves and acknowledge this, then we are telling the truth and not lying. Thus, it seems to be impossible to catch oneself in bad faith. Or, as Sartre writes, "if I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I must completely fail in this undertaking: the lie recedes and collapses before our eyes; it is ruined, *from behind*, by the very consciousness of lying to myself that constitutes itself before my project, as its very condition."<sup>28</sup> The liar's paradox can be set in formal terms, as the truth function of statements, but it can also be set in more general non-formal terms as well, especially in terms of lying to oneself. This comparison helps us to understand why Sartre claims that bad faith constantly evades us whenever we try to articulate that we are definitely doing this to ourselves.

Priest also mentions another explanation of dialetheism in "What is so Bad about Contradictions?" in terms of standing inside and outside of a room:

I walk out of the room; for an instant, I am symmetrically poised, one foot in, one foot out, my center of gravity lying on the vertical plane containing the center of gravity of the door. Am I in or not in the room?<sup>29</sup>

If you are standing both inside and outside of the room, then it is both true and false that you are inside the room and both true and false that you are outside of the room. Different from a self-reference paradox, this example illustrates the existence of a contradiction in our everyday sphere of experience. We are often faced with double-positions, ambiguities, and vagueness in our everyday lives. According to the dialetheist, there is nothing wrong with these common experiences, and we should not flee from them or dress them up as non-contradictory.

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<sup>27</sup> Priest, "What is so Bad about Contradictions?," 415.

<sup>28</sup> Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 90.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

Priest's example of standing both inside and outside of a room presents us with a significantly different way of perceiving these seemingly mundane everyday spatial relations. We perceive movement and position as containing the possibility of being both something and its opposite as one unity. This leads to statements such as that it is both true and false that I am standing inside the room. But this also leads to dialetheist insights about movement, perception, as well as a re-conception of the identity of things in the world. Bad faith has a similar effect. According to Sartre, because the self is constituted by the concept of negativity, the self therefore contains, as one of its fundamental modes of being, the act of self-deception, not as a division of the self, nor even as a folding of the self upon itself, but as an immediate pure act of its being. To conceive of this requires a significantly different way of perceiving the identity of being a self, such that the self has the capacity to lie to itself without being an other to itself.

## Conclusion

There is a lot of good secondary literature about Sartre that focuses on the fundamental question of how bad faith is possible, given that in lying to ourselves, we are simultaneously the liar and the lied to. An effective way to organize and catalog this secondary literature is to recognize that, in one way or another, most commentators aim to save bad faith from its seemingly paradoxical nature by demonstrating why bad faith is not contradictory and therefore impossible. The Stevenson-Gordon-Hymers debate does this by discussing the distinction between reflection and pre-reflection in the self; Morris does this by proposing a translucency reading that establishes a series of soft divisions in the self; Detmer does this by claiming that lying to oneself is possible because it follows similar patterns to the tactics people use to lie to each other. All of these voices contribute, in one way or another, to the conclusion that bad faith only seems to be paradoxical but that it is, in truth, a non-contradictory concept.

However, in this article, I outline an alternative reading of bad faith that embraces bad faith as genuinely contradictory rather than a reading that attempts to save it from paradox. To this end, I discuss some of the main principles and examples Priest offers in his account of dialetheism. I ultimately draw the conclusion that this alternative reading of bad faith converges with Priest's project of dialetheism in the sense that both claim that contradictions exist and can be productive. But the reading of bad faith diverges in terms of Priest's project of formalizing dialetheism. Following the practice of descriptive phenomenology and existentialism, Sartre presents

bad faith in non-formal, experiential terms. Formalizing dialetheism is an abstraction derived from the more primary structures of existence. These structures appear first through the experience of our everyday lives, through what the phenomenologists call “the givenness of the phenomena in intuition.” If bad faith can be included as a moment in Priest’s historical account of dialetheism, it belongs to a unique branch of dialetheism that resists formalization.

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Article

## The Other Animal: Levinas at the Juncture of 'Rights' and 'Welfare'

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*Mira T. Reyes*

**Abstract:** There is a growing number of Levinasian scholars who are interested in examining if Levinas's ethics could also be applied to problems in animal ethics, discerning in what ways it could contribute to this discourse. This article aims to define how Levinas would lodge himself between the two popular movements in normative animal ethics: animal rights and animal welfare in view of defining the contribution of the Levinasian framework of ethics of otherness when applied to the nonhuman (nh) animal. I proceed in three parts: discuss three case problems in animal ethics and define how the animal rightists and welfarists would pose their ethical questions on them; criticize the difference of the value principles of rightists and welfarists from the point of view of Levinas's idea of otherness of the nh animal; and identify the uniqueness of Levinas's ethical stance and mark down what domains of research would support him. My conclusion is that Levinas would be ineffectual in answering directly the practical problems for conflictual situations in normative animal ethics, but he could point out the *a priori* meaning of ethics that should subtend normative animal ethics.

**Keywords:** Levinas, animal ethics, animal rights, animal welfare

The history of animal ethics is spurred by two groups which I characterize into two paradigmatic forms: the wing of animal rights and that of animal welfare. Morton Silberman writes that in the history of animal ethics, the consciousness for the cause of animals began with the movement for animal welfare as an offshoot of husbandry. "One movement is that of the traditional humane interest groups who feel that their goals

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embody an enhancement of animals' life quality."<sup>1</sup> The welfarists are concerned about raising the quality of life for animals in husbandry, for those who serve as aides to humans, and for those who serve as companions or simply live within urban environs. They house stray animals, monitor nutrition and comfortable dwelling conditions for livestock, and guard against animal abuse and torment. Silberman says that "The second movement centers around those groups advocating animal rights."<sup>2</sup> While the welfarists group would permit the use of nh animals for human benefit, i.e., companion, labor, meat, clothing, and medicine, provided that welfare regulations are followed; the rightists group would *not* allow such utilizations because they believe in the concept that animals have rights. Most nh animals, in as much as they have life and sentiency, have an interest for their own ends, and thus, have rightful claims not to be killed, not to be used for labor or as natural resources for products, nor to be kept as companions or workers. To be sure, there are denominations and admixtures of belief positions lodged between these two groups, but I choose to hold the wedge of difference not only because of their prevailing prominence in the animal ethics discourse but for the special purpose of characterizing them from the unique character of Levinas's concept of the other when applied to the nh animal.

In this article, I am interested to ferret out the unique contribution of Levinas's concept of otherness to animal ethics, particularly, in the discourse of animal rights and welfare. This discussion will proceed in three parts: *first*, I will present three cases of how animal rights versus welfare is problematized in specific animal ethics discourses in order to characterize their structural value formations; *second*, I intend to analyze the difference of the framework of animal rights and welfare discourses from the point of view of Levinas's concept of otherness; and, *third*, I would conclude by pointing out the uniqueness of Levinas's perspective and eke out what trails of research could support a Levinasian animal ethics.

### **Problematizations of Animal Rights versus Welfare**

The aim of this part is to employ particular case problems in animal ethics to determine how the rightist and welfare groups would pose their questions in order to draw out their value premises. These three cases are

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<sup>1</sup> Morton S. Silberman, "Animal Welfare, Animal Rights: The Past, the Present, and the 21st Century," in *The Journal of Zoo Animal Medicine*, 19: 4 (December 1988), 161, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/20094884>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

chosen because the ways the rightists and welfarists would pose their problems will correspond to three significant aspects of Levinas' issues about classical normative ethics: its subscription from systemic ethics that has forgotten the other; the problem about an ethics of freedom and equality; and, the problem of competition of claims in the rule of justice.

The *first* case is proffered by Clare Palmer who presents the situation of the American Pika living on the talus rock slopes of the American West. The American Pika is on the IUCN's<sup>3</sup> red list of the indicator species affected by climate change. They "suffer from chronic heat stress and risk of hyperthermia at temperatures of 78F and above 52 and they have specialist habitat needs making their ability to self-relocate extremely limited."<sup>4</sup> From the general principles of climate change ethics, humans have obligations to nh animals being harmed by the effects of anthropogenic climate change; otherwise said, these Pikas have a positive right to claim aid from humans who caused the climate harms if expert and competent assistance could be made available. Palmer mentions the possibility of assisted-migration or relocating these lagomorphs to colder habitats.

Animal welfarists would interrogate the aspect of the health and life risks involved in the relocation of individual Pikas. Their question is precisely if "assisted migration jeopardizes the negative rights to life, health and subsistence of the pikas being relocated, and 'hinges on whether we can justify imposing risks on animals in order to prevent rights violations further down the line.'"<sup>5</sup> Animal rightists would, for sure, consider the same question but their difference from welfarists is that the latter would interrogate the fundamental right of individual animals to be used instrumentally as adjustment species who will suffer to renegotiate their territory and food (against other species already inhabiting the new habitat they are thrown in) in order to pave the way for the future breeding of their own species line, whether or not this project succeeds.

Levinas would, instead, investigate the motivation for preserving the lives of these lagomorphs: why care about these Pikas? There is a need to investigate the motivation of ethics: is it because we feel obliged to make reparation for the fault of anthropogenic climate change or is it because there is now cognizance of nh animal rights as a result of the awakening that they are more intelligent than what they seemed? The idea here is that Levinas has

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<sup>3</sup> International Union of Conservation of Nature

<sup>4</sup> Claire Palmer, "Assisting Wild Animals Vulnerable to Climate Change: Why Ethical Strategies Diverge," in *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 38: 2, (May 2021), 189, <<https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12358>>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

something to offer about the meaning of ethics that may have been sidestepped by the normative classical animal ethics discussions.

The *second* case is a report by Alasdair Cochrane that in September of 2013, “Nottinghamshire police force in the UK announced an innovative new policy. They decided that their service dogs were to get state pensions upon retirement.”<sup>6</sup> Cochrane says that one of the primary beneficiaries of this new policy was Rossi, an 8-year-old Belgian Shepherd who heroically saved the life of his human by lunging at someone who attacked him with an axe. Rossi, as well as other service dogs, would receive £500 a year from government funds as a contribution to their aging care expenses.

I surmise that this policy had been prodded by welfarists for the cause of service animals who have grown too old for their jobs, i.e., as bomb and drug sniffers for the police, firefighters, companion aides for the handicapped, etc. Welfarists would interrogate: shouldn’t these animals receive retirement compensation just like human workers? Cochrane shies away from the term ‘animal welfare’ and prefers the term ‘humane animal use’ in order to provide more stringent grounds for the use of the nh animal that do not simply cancel out cruelty and suffering. This suggests a more fundamental matter that animal rightists, most especially the abolitionists would stress: if humans at all have the right to use nh animals for labor.

Levinas would pose his question this way: does animal ethics flow from rights, or labor rights, for this matter? The idea here is to reinvestigate the common notion that rights are inherent in the substance of one’s person which subtends an obstinate debate advanced by both welfarists and rightists. Humans, by the very fact of being ‘person,’ have rights, and arguably, if nh animals are shown to share the same substantial qualities as that of being a person, should also have the same rights. But if Levinas would be able to show that the meaning of ethics does not originate from the possession of rights, then, what should motivate ethics in general, and subsequently, animal ethics?

The *third* case I draw from an article by Ian Campbell which discusses the problem of invasive species within the debate between animal rights and environmental ethics. He tells about “the feral goats on San Clemente Island—originally left on the island by Spanish explorers—whom the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service asked the U.S. Navy to systematically slaughter

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<sup>6</sup> Alasdair Cochrane, “Labor Rights for Animals,” in *The Political Turn in Animal Ethics* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 261.

because of the threat they posed to three of the island's endangered endemic plant species."<sup>7</sup>

In this situation, both the animal rights and welfare groups would protest the killing of the goats but from different frames. The rightists would problematize the inherent right of each individual animal not to be killed most especially since their evolution into an 'invasive species' is due to an anthropogenic intervention. The welfarists, who operate on the plane of utilitarianism, and thus, value sentience, would scrutinize why the life of endemic plants has been valued over non-endemic but sentient animals; in short, plants will not suffer in being killed but animals will. In any case, if the welfarists concede to the extermination of invasive species, they would insist on the ethical issue of finding the most humane method for slaughter, however painstaking, as preferable over downright systematic slaughter.

Levinas would interrogate in this way: what justifies 'just killing?' What this implies is that the ethical justification to expend one species for the 'convenient' existence of another species, for Levinas, is atrocious.<sup>8</sup> But what is missing for him is for animal ethicists to ask what makes that question even possible.

### **Levinas and the Animal-Other: A Critique of Rights and Welfare as Ethical Bases**

This part will accomplish the aim of criticizing the concepts of rights and welfare of animals as ethical bases for animal ethics from the point of view of Levinas's ethics of the Other. Levinas would criticize, upon three axes, principle-based or rationalist normative ethics<sup>9</sup> to which the value concepts of rights and welfare belong.

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Campbell, "Animal Welfare and Environmental Ethics: It's Complicated," in *Ethics and the Environment*, 23: 1 (Spring 2018), 51, <<https://doi.org/10.2979/ethicsenviro.23.1.04>>.

<sup>8</sup> Levinas did say, "We do not want to make the animal suffer needlessly," which implies that Levinas does allow sacrificial suffering when it has responsible meaning. See Emmanuel Levinas, "The Animal Interview" in *Face to Face with Animals: Levinas and the Animal Question* (New York: Suny Press, 2019), 4. I am interpreting 'convenient' existence in the utilitarian value of happiness in terms of sentient comfort and since plants are non-sentient, the argument for their convenience does not apply. The argument for the life principle does apply but not 'convenient' existence. Only the goats as sentient animals, could argue for convenience.

<sup>9</sup> I define 'principle and rationalist-based' normative ethics to be an ethics in search of (mostly, universal philosophical) reasons to justify certain moral actions as 'right' or 'wrong.'

*The Search of an Ethics for the Other.*

The *first* reason that puts Levinas at odds with the rightist and welfarist concerns about the mathematics of risk in assisted-migration and the ethics of instrumentalized breeding is that they are preceded by something more fundamental: why care about the Pika at all? Is it motivated by guilt and shame for anthropogenic climate change and the desire to make reparations in the name of justice? Is it for the altar of human or nh animal dignity?

I begin with a significant statement that Levinas said in his interview in *Ethics and Infinity* when asked if the ethics he is constructing begins from experience. Levinas said:

My task does not consist in constructing ethics; I only try to find its meaning. In fact I do not believe that all philosophy should be programmatic ... One can without doubt construct an ethics in function of what I have just said, but this is not my own theme.<sup>10</sup>

This suggests that there are many ethical systems constructed for different purposes, i.e., virtue ethics, for inculcating good habits; utilitarianism, for evaluating values using happiness and wellness as standard; Kantian ethics, aiming for the standard of the universal and subjective in the act of duty, etc. There is no doubt that they are profound reasons for guiding moral action. The only caveat of Levinas is that these forms of ethics tend to elide the Other when the focus of the discourse is on the rationality of philosophical principles. For example, the interrogations of animal rightists and welfarists are pegged on the mathematics of risk in the implementation of assisted migration and the 'right' of particular animals cannot be instrumentalized even for their own species propagation. It may be argued, of course, that all these concerns underscore the invaluable life of the Pika, which is none other than valuing the other. Animal ethics, in that sense, does remember the nh animal other. What, then, does Levinas mean that an ethics has to 'remember the other' or is truly 'for the other?'

Why care for the Pika? What Levinas criticizes in this frame of questioning is if the Pikas gained value not because of who they are to humans but only because the principles of goodness that dictate moral action for the upholding of 'human dignity' dictate that we render justice for

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<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1985), 90.

anthropogenic climate change. In short, this being good is still all about *us*. In the thought of Levinas, the motive of ethics is not the search for the truth about the good, and in this sense, not philosophy. This means that the reason why the human philosophizes is to be good to the Other; not to search for the truth of goodness (as an onto-theological principle) nor to become good for the sake of self-perfection.

In what does the good consist? The good is not in nature, and it is not in the preachings of the prophets, either, or in the great social doctrines, or in the ethics of the philosophers. But simple people bear in their hearts the love of all living things; they love life naturally; they protect life.<sup>11</sup>

Levinas says that the good is not a representation. This implies that in as far as moral values are principles of generalized representations of the good, then the rumination of the good is not the event of the ethical. For Levinas, the event of the ethical is when the other, without even one's choosing, ambushes for help and pressures one to turn away from oneself toward the other. This event arrests one's freedom and spontaneity and puts it into question. It wounds one's ego and renders one vulnerable to the other. Levinas says:

The Good cannot become present or enter into a representation. The present is a beginning in my freedom, whereas the Good is not presented to freedom; it has chosen me before I have chosen it. No one is good voluntarily ... And if no one is good voluntarily, no one is enslaved to the Good.<sup>12</sup>

Vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding ... trauma of accusation suffered by the hostage to the point of persecution, implicating the identity of the hostage who substitutes himself for the others; all this is the self, a defecting or defeat of the ego's identity. ... It is a

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<sup>11</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 107.

<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 11.

substitution for another, one in the place of another, expiation.<sup>13</sup>

Levinas has a problem about the notion of ethics as a preoccupation with moral integrity (also called 'dignity') which refers to the habitual ability of one to act accordingly to one's moral principles, and as an effect, constructs and fortifies an edifice of the moral self and affirms the moral universe that surrounds it. Levinasian metaphor is the opposite: he does not speak of integrity but woundedness—the 'I' is always fractured for the other.

The difference this metaphor of woundedness makes is that it welcomes the nuance of the dynamism of the moral life; that one's moral self and universe is never whole because they are always broken by the questioning of the other. For example, as an objective principle, one has always valued the integrity of human life (that is above the life of a dog). But what happens if one has a dog who is considered a 'significant other?' In a unique situation, one may prefer to save one's dog over one's (human) life. The moral imperative that dictates that humans should never sacrifice their lives for nh animals because the human species has more value weight may proceed from an objectively held philosophical principle but it could be interrogated by the living emotional relation between one and one's dog. This may appear immoral from a societal moral standard, or even an act of folly. But this is what Levinas means by the richness of an ethics which proceeds directly from the encounter of the other that is the pristine moment before established moral principles. That a beloved animal could be worth dying for: would that be acceptable for a moral constellation that places a higher value on human life above other species?

The above pokes at a reality of the human-nh animal relations that precedes the moral evaluation of the risks of assisted-migration or instrumental breeding. But normative ethics of climate change justice focuses on technical questions that miss relationships that are at the center of ethics. These may not even be the formulations of the problematic when it proceeds from human-nh animal relations, i.e., the animals concerned may not even be Pikas or may not be viewed 'as a species' but a community of different living beings in place with whom mountain dwellers or indigenous peoples may have established relations. Proximity to the nh animal may also bring in the marginalized question of whose expertise is considered in saving the lives of wild animals under anthropogenic climate change: biologists only? politicians only? What about ethologists, mountain dwellers, indigenous peoples, or Pika-afficionados who have rescued some of them in the past?

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

What this interrogates is: why is the authority on this subject almost always the scientific experts? In other words, the moral landscape differs when the moral motivation is informed by neighborly relations with particular animals who would not even regard them as a 'species.'

### *The Problem of an Ethics of Freedom and Equality*

The *second* reason why Levinas would not consider rights and welfare as bases of ethics is because these concepts suckled from the libertarian ethics that champions freedom, equality, and fraternity. The problematic with this is that it begs the discourse of comparative analyses between humans and non-human animals which is already exhausted, and the nagging issue remains: yes, non-human animals are slaughtered but Treblinka is still something else; service dogs guide the blind but Amistad is still something else. The conclusion is predictable: that humans are still the highest species and so their suffering is incomparable, but certain concessions could be made for certain animals whose sufferings are somewhat comparable to humans. What Levinas offers is an alternative way of looking at the animal as 'face' and 'other' which transcends agential comparisons.

In Levinas's ethics, only the justice that proceeds from third-party institutions permits such analyses of agential qualities in moral subjects but the face-to-face encounter with the other does not permit this analytical hesitation; otherwise, it would be a shortcoming in the ethical response. Levinas wants the intuitive aspect of the ethical response to be unconditional and untainted by historical conditions. He describes this intuitive cognizance of otherness in the phenomenology of the face of the other. He says that the otherness of the other is recognized as a face:

You turn yourself toward the Other as toward an object when you see a nose, eyes, a forehead, a chin, and you describe them. The best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes! When one observes the color of the eyes one is not in social relationship with the Other. The relation with the face surely cannot be dominated by perception, but what is specifically the face cannot be reduced to that.<sup>14</sup>

Levinas uses the face as a metaphor for the other. Generally, in social decorum, it is taboo to stare at the faces of strangers. I could, of course, look

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<sup>14</sup> Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 85-86.

intently at the faces of people I am talking to but the 'soft' gaze in conversations carries the demeanor of respect which is not the look of a psychopath. It is also impolite to look at the person in a way as if to show that a part of her body sizes her up, i.e., the head-to-toe assessments of fashion and social class, lascivious glances on the breasts or bum of a woman. Levinas mentions that the look of respect is one that does not betray social definitions: it is the regard for the invisible, which for Levinas, means the infinity of the other.<sup>15</sup> Levinas also mentions that the ethical regard of otherness in the face is what makes it difficult to kill someone while looking straight at the face, which explains why in many practices of penal executions, the face of the condemned is covered when being put to death.<sup>16</sup> The statement, is precisely, that the otherness of the other is not perceived (the meaning of perception here is knowledge that has cultural and social wrappings) but is intuited as a metaphysical category. A Filipino citizen, an ignominious person, or Madame President is something perceived but 'the other' is metaphysically intuited when greeting a stranger, giving way for her on the road, or making space in the bus seat.

This is an example of what happens when the ethic of equality rules in the moral consideration for the nonhuman animal. Mark Rowlands cites the case of Tommy the chimpanzee who starred in the 1987 film *Project X*, and who had been living in an isolated car lot in Groversville, Texas. The Nonhuman Rights Project filed a petition of the writ of *habeas corpus* for Tommy to grant him the status of a legal person for protection of rights under the law but it was denied in 2015 by Justice Karen Peters on the ground that chimpanzees cannot be legal persons because they "cannot bear any legal duties, submit to societal responsibilities, or be held legally accountable for their actions."<sup>17</sup> The way to explain the place of the Levinasian intuition of otherness here is that before the rationalist assessments of agential qualities in the human and nonhuman animal are made, many people encountered 'something' in Tommy that goes beyond the cultural and scientific categories of what 'chimpanzee' or 'animal' is. That is what Levinas meant by a recognition of face and other. It is that intuitive moment of the meeting of the face-to-face that rallied the people who brought the case to court.

But what is it in rationalist qualitative comparisons that Levinas is uncomfortable with? It is not that they are wrong or nonsensical or even less

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<sup>15</sup> This is why in institutions like the military and the monastic religious, it is an established decorum not to look straight at the face of the superior, as an act of respect.

<sup>16</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 197.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Rowlands, *Can Animals Be Persons?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 6.v.

ethical: but that we have identified the entirety of ethics with that intellectual enterprise. The discourse of ethics is big on words like ‘justice,’ ‘fairness,’ ‘rights,’ and ‘obligation,’ but are defined by principles. It has forgotten the face of the other.<sup>18</sup>

The essence of otherness is that it cannot be contained in any category. The other is infinite and infinitely other. This is what Levinas means by a difference that is not only a mere difference under a mutual category but a radical difference to which he ascribes the term ‘alterity.’ Levinas says:

The Other is not other with a relative alterity as are, in comparison, even ultimate species, which mutually exclude one another but still have their place within the community of a genus- excluding one another by their definition, but calling for one another by this exclusion, across the community of their genus. The alterity of the Other does not depend on any quality that would distinguish him from me, for a distinction of his nature would precisely imply between us that community of genus which already nullifies alterity ... The Other remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign; his face in which his epiphany is produced and which appeals to me breaks with the world that can be common to us ...<sup>19</sup>

To return to Cochrane’s case about the service animals who will get retirement pay from the government, we remember that rightists and welfarists would either fight for equal labor rights as well as/or for the equal integrity of the nh animal not to be used as a means for labor. So how would Levinas criticize this ethic of equality based upon his ethic of alterity? The criticism may scrutinize the approach of classical animal ethics in demonstrating that the nh animal deserves equal rights if it could be proven

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<sup>18</sup> In Levinasian animal ethics discourse, there is a big question concerning the possibility of all animals having faces. In the animal interview, Levinas actually scoffed at the idea that a flea has a face. Levinas makes a statement that all animals deserve moral consideration. See Levinas, “The Animal Interview,” 4. He has also said that embodiment alone which is subject to suffering and immortality could serve as a face, which implies the inclusion of all animals. This means that even a flea (and other insects) cannot be hurt or killed irresponsibly. But I do agree that intuition of face in animals is not as direct as that among humans; the experience varies but may not always be dependent upon agential qualities of the nh animal (i.e., more intelligent animals relate more easily to humans) but also upon the uniqueness of life orientations.

<sup>19</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, “The Trace of the Other,” in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 194.

that it could be a moral agent. In Hobbes' social contract theory, one is entitled to rights only when one is a moral agent. A moral agent is defined as having the capacity to respect equally the rights of others.<sup>20</sup> Animals cannot be moral agents and so the solution of animal ethicists is to use the obscurity of the species overlap argument (that many animals are 'like' children who do not have moral maturity and yet have unquestionably many equal rights as adults). The premise of species overlap is used to differentiate between moral agents and moral patients to come up with the idea that animals, like children, are not exactly moral agents, but could nevertheless have rights, even as mere moral patients.

Levinas would trailblaze an alternative approach in proving not via an agency or an ethic of equality but via otherness. The problem that ensues is what proves that the nh animal has otherness that would not purely depend on subjective mystical intuition nor the objective path of scientific definitions of agential qualities, and yet, could offer a firm ground that could generate a strong people's veto. Levinas would not tread the path of biology but of social scientists in focusing on the emotional toll the nh animal other impresses on the human, specifically, behaviors that are self-sacrificing and self-abnegating. In other words, the testimony to the otherness of the other animal is how the human expends resources, undergoes risks not only to save the nh animal but to testify to the value of who the animal is to one's life at the stake of one's peace and reputation, and thus, wounding one's self-dignity. The idea is that the extent to which one forgets the self and risks self-dignity and comfort for the nh animal other becomes the very act of witnessing that the other animal is really other and that this relation is invaluable.

Hanoch Ben Pazi employs as a foil Sontag's idea of photography as witnessing in order to explain Levinas's philosophy of ethical testimony. The modern technology of pictures allows a person to become a witness to things, places, and events, as a detached spectator. He says:

Consider, for example "nature photographs, in which man stands on the other side of the camera, protected by technology, and, in a certain sense, conquers nature by acquiring and retaining its image. It is an appropriation of nature, yet one that is not achieved by venturing forth into the wild but rather by placing it in a guarded box that is kept at home—a collection of pictures that others

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan with Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668* (Indiana: Hackett, 1994), 22 and 88.

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photographed that document the phenomena of nature. It is a form of bearing witness that is silent and does not take risks.<sup>21</sup>

Pazi focuses on the defining moment when the witness is 'tempted to witness,' as this is the moment in which the witness is willing to expose the truth, and for that reason, must bear responsibility for what she says. In a sense, an outside observer becomes privy to the event herself; she shares the dark secret. She enters into the interior zone of the crime but does not remain within the safe zone of subjectivity; she speaks for the victim and suffers the social risks in doing so.

What I am aiming at here is a turn away from the analyses of what is *in* the nonhuman animal toward research studies on the sacrificial acts and testimonial risks that individual humans and human communities take to bear witness to the reality of who the other animal is. The *who* refers not to agential qualities but the emotional worth of the other animal's relation to the human. The event of ethics is when the suffering of the other animal evokes the human to suffer willingly to ease the suffering of the other animal. He calls this giving meaning to the meaningless suffering of the other which opens the dimension of the interhuman:

The suffering for the useless suffering of the other, the just suffering in me for the unjustifiable suffering of the other, opens suffering to the ethical perspective of the inter-human. In this perspective there is a radical difference between the suffering in the other, where it is unforgivable to me, solicits me and calls me, and suffering in me, my own experience of suffering, whose constitutional or congenital uselessness can take on a meaning ....<sup>22</sup>

Classical animal ethics studies and measures what is *in* the nh animal but does not pay attention to what the human sacrifices for the nh animal, i.e., human companions of animals who stay in disaster and war-stricken countries refusing to leave their beloved wards behind, ordinary civilians who risk their lives to rescue animals, the ALF or Animal Liberation Front,

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<sup>21</sup> Hanoch Ben Pazi, "Ethical Dwelling and the Glory of Bearing Witness" in *Levinas Studies*, 10 (2015), 227, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26942974>>.

<sup>22</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, "Useless Suffering" in *Entre Nous: On Thinking of the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 94.

judged by many as a pack of ‘crazy terrorists.’ This approach could be used in establishing the nh animal as deserving of moral consideration that does not wallow in the obstinate classical normative animal ethics argument about the dignity of the nh animal based upon agential qualities. Yet, this approach is not an established one in normative animal ethics.<sup>23</sup>

### *The Problem About Justifying Claims of Rights*

The *third* reason why Levinasian ethics turns away from discussions of rights and welfare is that it misconstrues ethics with just partitioning of claims on which peace stands, and conversely, when it is absent, war occurs. In short, it paints a picture of a world of egos in competition with one another, kept at bay by treaties. This is not Levinas’s picture of what ethics should be. He describes the origin of ethics in his own version of the Genesis myth. Levinas describes a kind of mythical history wherein the ‘I’ takes a place in the sun and lives in a paradise of nourishment. This enjoyment of the world of givens is what he calls *jouissance*.<sup>24</sup> It is a moment of innocence. This innocence is destroyed when the other enters into the turf and calls to question the freedom of the ‘I’ to be: this is the advent of ethics: “We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other ethics.”<sup>25</sup> Before the other came, there is no ethical life; there is no need for it. In short, the origin of ethics is not the virtuous ‘I’ nor is it produced from the principles of goodness and the good.<sup>26</sup> The other entered into one’s otherwise

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<sup>23</sup> This approach could have many creative forms of analyses. For example, Sophia Efstathiou makes an analysis of cultural vestments and gestures of scientists in the laboratory who do animal experimentations that betray their inner conflicts and disturbance in what they are doing. See Sophia Efstathiou, “Facing Animal Research: Levinas and the Technologies of Effacement,” in *Face to Face with Animals*, 139-166.

<sup>24</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other* (Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 63.

<sup>25</sup> Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

<sup>26</sup> To be sure, virtue ethics, Kantian ethics, and consequentialism cannot function without first, the entry of the other. Virtue ethics is focused on the goodness of the giver and both Kantian and consequentialist ethics are negotiated on rational principles. Levinasian ethics is not geared at cultivation of virtue in the self nor at a rumination of principles which underscore duties, justice, and egalitarianism. The idea is that the ethics that passes through rationalization asks questions like: do I have an obligation or not? If so, what is my obligation? And what are the obligations of others vis-à-vis mine? Levinasian ethics does not take this attitude. Levinasian ethics is primarily focused on addressing the needs of the other in a non-negotiable kind of demand (he describes it like a hold-up by a robber) and is experienced in a radical solitude (I am the one called to help, not another; their succor is their prerogative). Levinasian ethics is very much attuned to the suffering body of the other in which urgent succor is non-negotiable on principles or reasons; the attitude it takes is very much like that of a mother on her crying child. The ethical response is ambulatory.

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self-centered world and rescued one from the solitude of being. Thanks to the other and the otherness that the other brings: the world became rich and infinitely meaningful.

This is what makes 'rights' and 'welfare' in Levinas misfitting concepts. In Levinas, what we call the 'Rights of Man,' the 'I' that makes claims for freedom, is originally the rights of the other.<sup>27</sup> The meaning of goodness in Levinas is not a quality, virtue, or principle. Goodness is the act of hospitality. The image that Levinas gives is one who gives away the bread that one is about to put in one's mouth. Levinasian hospitality emphasizes sacrifice: feeding the other by one's fasting.<sup>28</sup> One does not say "I also have a claim, so we divide, to be fair." That is not Levinasian hospitality, even though it is reasonably justified.

The common world wherein rights and welfare are ethical axioms always paints a picture that the natural world is finite in resources, and so people make certain pacts of partitioning based upon claims. The land is divided, and food is distributed equally. In the Levinasian ethical universe, what is emphasized is that the world is a paradise not because resources are infinite, but that benevolence is infinite. There is some wisdom in the saying that "the world has enough for everyone's needs but not for everyone's greed."

Returning to Campbell's case about the feral goats who were all summarily slaughtered to protect the existence of the endemic plants which are their prime diet, I pointed out that the question of the rightists and welfarists would be: who gets to be killed and upon what grounds? I would like to call attention here that many thought experiments on dilemmas in animal ethics take the structure of the either/or: whom to rescue, humans or non-human animals? whales or the fishermen's livelihood? pigs or the CAFO workers?<sup>29</sup> the cow's integrity or the Swiss national culture of eating fondue? The departure of Levinas would be faith in personal goodness.<sup>30</sup> The challenge is

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<sup>27</sup> Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, 149.

<sup>28</sup> Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 56. This also settles the problem of meat in animal ethics. The American and Canadian dietetic associations have published their statements that proper management of the vegetarian diet is sufficient nourishment to the human body at any age, whether ailing or not. See ADA Reports, "Position of the American Dietetic Association and Dietitians of Canada," in *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 103: 16 (June 2003), 748-765. <<https://doi.org/10.1053/jada.2003.50142>>.

<sup>29</sup> Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations.

<sup>30</sup> The basis for this is the quote of Levinas from Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate* wherein he extolls the resistance of individuals from totalitarianism in order to help victims. He is a testimony to this because he is a Jew whose family had been saved from the holocaust by Catholic nuns. "The only thing that remains vigorous is the goodness of everyday life. Ikkonikov calls it the little goodness," Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, 109.

the exhaustion of self-sacrifice and the resourcefulness it necessitates to keep everyone on the boat; not either/or fatalistic choices.

The either/or is a trap of a false dichotomy. The attitude of infinite benevolence is there are always alternatives to keep everyone on the lifeboat, if the participants concerned would perform generous adjustments in self-comfort. I am referring to the revisioning of ethics that is not justifying claims but the freedom of forging new arrangements of relationships in order to escape the sameness of choices within the lifeboat traps. When the false dichotomies presented by the lifeboat trap are not transcended, then this is the failure of the ethical. In short, the failure is not whether the choice made is indeed a higher or lower value but the ability to make new social arrangements so that fatal choices could be transcended.<sup>31</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Other Nonhuman Animal**

Levinas does not answer the practical questions of the welfarists and rightists because they prioritize rationalist modes of thinking in which the experience of the other is elided. Classical normative ethics operate on the level of thinking, definition, and abstraction and this informs the distribution of justice by third-party institutions. This is not to say that these kinds of ethics are not ethical nor just but that the ethical life has a dynamism that requires ongoing conversations with the face of the other. The infinity of the other always changes frameworks of questioning and upheavals in established personal, social, and global moral constellations.

The utilitarian calculation of health and life risks in assisted-migration is motivated by the justice afforded by human (and nh animal) dignity. The theme of dignity belongs to the discourse of the intactness of the subjective ego. Levinas stands at the crack of the vulnerability of the human for the nh animal which reminds us that the origin of justice is the face-to-face relation and not human virtue (nor does nh animal dignity proceed exclusively from agential subjectivity). But when the ethical prioritizes relations and the care for the animal, the question about the risks of assisted migration is thwarted by the more fundamental question: why care at all? What happened to that care for the nh animal (and to the rest of the natural world) which should have been there in the first place?

This prods the significance of the social sciences that study human and nh animal relations, but they seem to play second fiddle to the biological

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<sup>31</sup> Levinas would call this pursuit of novelty in relationships 'fecundity' or 'filiation.' "The relation with such a future, irreducible to the power over the possible, we shall call fecundity." Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 267.

sciences when it comes to solving problems in animal ethics. Classical animal ethics does not realize the importance of and does not consider the authority of biographical accounts of relations with and love for animals; critical histories of animal contributions to human civilization, cognitive and psychoanalytical development; animal-inspired poetry and literature, etc. These research fields would explain the disappearance (or negation) of the animal in ways of thinking and valuing and cultivate ways of reversing it.

The abolitionist question about the rights of animals against all exploitative use arises from an ethics of equality whereas Levinasian ethics prioritizes the other over oneself and values the sacrifice of the self for the other. In Levinasian ethics, there is no equality: the ethical concern of the other is higher than one's self-maintenance. This prompts animal ethics to turn away from approaches that call upon comparisons of human and nonhuman animal agential qualities and a focus on research that question human standards of excellence. The idea is to magnify how much nonhuman animals have informed human existence in more fundamental ways that are not all about meat, fur, wool, and leather. For example, anthropological studies show that nonhuman animals participated in the formation of human language and cognition. The sounds of nonhuman animals contributed to the basic syllabification of language in the same way that thought relied on dynamically lived human-nonhuman animal relations. Nonhuman animals are co-thinkers in the evolution of the human mind.<sup>32</sup> But this also puts to question that abstractive thinking is the highest form of intelligence. Nonhuman animal kinesthetic intelligence that is intimately related to the environment, the kind that leads salmon to go back to their birthplaces which we simply call 'instinct' in the derogatory sense, may cultivate new pathways of relearning how to relate to the nonhuman animals so that to die for the love of dogs or mountains would appear as ordinary and ethical as dying for persons, peoples, and cultures.

The question about which species to expend in lifeboat situations, a common structure of argument in classical normative animal ethics, stems from an ethics of justice that distribute goods accordingly and measure the weight of claims one over another. This is not to say that this is wrong but what is being emphasized here is that this is not the origin of ethics. Animal ethics is a satellite of an ethics of justice. In the ethics of Levinas, the question of who should be served first is replaced by the question of hospitality: of giving, not claiming. A world that has finite resources is multiplied by the infinity of everyone's benevolence which is the true picture of ethics.

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<sup>32</sup> Merlin Donald, *Origins of the Human Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 332.

Relative to this that is worth citing is the research of Carol Gilligan about the gendering of ethics. In her experiment, two child respondents were presented the famous Heinz dilemma about whether or not to steal medicine from the drugstore owner to help a poor man who cannot afford the medicine to save his dying wife.<sup>33</sup> The boy respondent answered that the man should steal the drug, thus falling into the either/or dichotomy. The girl reimaged the dichotomy: the man should not allow his wife to die but should not steal either, implying that the owner of the drugstore could be talked into some kind of arrangement. The idea it proffers is that when the ethics of care rules over justice, the either/or structure disappears, and ethics becomes a conversation between faces rather than a ruling of claims; yet animal ethics takes the latter kind. The imperative this demands on the practice of animal ethics is the focus on multiplying local systems of succor for all natural beings who live in particular ecosystems, instead of smithing out global or national principles of justice in the ruling of claims between species. For example, members of human communities could be trained and educated such that when they choose to live within a place, and thus an ecosystem, they should contribute and cooperate in the personal and communal care of the biodiversity within that specific environment.

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<sup>33</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 26–38.

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# The Zhuangist Primitivist Attitude Towards Technology: Further Questions for Thinking about Technological Orientation

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**Abstract:** As early as the year 2004, a challenge has been issued for Filipinos to respond philosophically towards technology. Briefly, the challenge is to move out from the state of ambivalent orientation in technology. Such an orientation is a sorry state of tension between the views of technology as alienating humans and technology as advancing ourselves. Technology alienates humans, thereby creating dangerous technophobes. Technology uplifts and advances humans, thereby creating over-tolerant technophiles. In this paper, we offer two further issues or questions for consideration in thinking about orientation in or stance about technology. We do this in the light of the Zhuangzi's Primitivist attitude towards technology. The Primitivist is one of the five authorial voices identified in the Zhuangzi. The Zhuangzi is a Chinese philosophical classic named after Zhuang Zhou or Zhuangzi (399?-295? B.C.E.). Fundamentally, we suggest that the Primitivist attitude of resistance towards technology might be said to highlight the point that effects of technology to *xing* 性 (nature; human nature), thus to individual self, and the natural environment are important considerations in thinking about stance regarding technology. We hold that a reflection on technological orientation would on the whole benefit from a recognition and consideration of two more issues.

**Keywords:** The Zhuangzi, Zhuangist primitivism, philosophy of technology, technological orientation

A challenge to have a philosophical response towards technology among Filipinos has been issued as early as 2004.<sup>1</sup> It is the challenge to move out from the state of ambivalent orientation in technology. The state is one of the tensions between the views of technology as alienating and technology as advancing us humans. The challenge is to resolve the tension, given such considerations as: (i) technological interface, (ii) politics of artifacts, (iii) technological design, and (iv) ideology of technology. In this paper, we wish to offer further concerns or issues about an orientation in technology. We do this in the light of the insights from *Zhuangzi's* Primitivist attitude towards technology. The Primitivist is one of the five authorial voices in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子.<sup>2</sup> Fundamentally, we suggest that the Primitivist attitude might be said to highlight the point that effects of technology to *xing* 性 (nature; human nature), thus to individual self, and the natural environment are important considerations in thinking about one's stance regarding technology.

There is a challenge for people to move out from an ambivalent orientation to technology, which is a sorry state of tension between the views of technology *as alienating humans* and technology *as advancing ourselves*. It is not the challenge of taking the anti-technology view of Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber.<sup>3</sup> Kaczynski's view could be used to stimulate thinking about technology in our midst. This is the case, given a third 'technological orientation,' that of *ambivalence*. Technological ambivalence is the seeming ineluctable upshot condition due to undesirable consequences ensued by the orientations of technology *as alienation* and technology *as progress*.<sup>4</sup> In alienating humans, technology has created dangerous technophobes.<sup>5</sup> In uplifting and advancing us, technology has created over-tolerant technophiles.<sup>6</sup> Such an ambivalence is seen in the thinking composed both of

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<sup>1</sup> See Orlando Ali M. Mandane, Jr., "Towards a Filipino Orientation in Technology," in *Ad Veritatem*, 3 (2004), 427–444.

<sup>2</sup> The *Zhuangzi* is a Chinese classic named after Zhuangzi, or Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (399? - 295? B.C.E.). The classic's extant version is composed of 33 chapters. Although only the first seven chapters (called *neipian* 內篇 or 'inner chapters') of the text are said to have been written by Zhuangzi and are said to contain the earliest sections of the extant compilation, it is not to be denied that the classic is a compilation of texts written by many authors from different time periods. The other voices are: the historical Zhuangzi, Zhuangzi's later followers, Yangist, and Syncretist. See Harold Roth, "Zhuangzi," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/zhuangzi/>>.

<sup>3</sup> See Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), "Famous Cases and Criminals: The Unabomber," <<https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/unabomber>>.

<sup>4</sup> See Mandane, Jr., "Towards a Filipino Orientation in Technology," 438–439.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

themes of *Down with technology!* and *Hurrah for technology!*. One example is one's thinking that (i) developing atomic bombs is not right and (ii) that guns are necessary.<sup>7</sup> According to the example, the thinking manifests the theoretical tension between agreeing with technology and doing away with it because one who thinks atomic bomb development should not be done believes that such a technology ought to be stopped and one who believes that guns are a necessity believes that such a tool and its development should be continued. The problem appears to be how the tension might be resolved. This seems clear in the question: "amid our technological ambivalence what shall be the basis for clarifying our orientations?"<sup>8</sup> This question points to identification of issues that point to a basis.

The issues are as follows: (i) technological interface, (ii) politics of artifacts, (iii) technological design, and (iv) ideology of technology. The issue of technological interface is the consideration of the kinds of interaction humans have and would have with technology.<sup>9</sup> The point appears that with the diverse forms of engagement, those technologies needing 'rather full engagements' should be zeroed in on. That is the case, since 'more of us' (i.e., more time and attention) is required. The politics of artifacts issue is the question of whether one has considered the intent of the creation of a technology in terms of its effects on humans in general or a group of people in particular.<sup>10</sup> The idea seems that if a technology deserves our attention, it must be the case that it respects (human) rights or at least it caters to the needs of the many. The issue of technological design is the question of whether one has considered and respected the context of a technology.<sup>11</sup> There are technologies designed to meet only the needs or conditions of a particular place; if in the adoption of that technology its context is not considered, there will certainly be consequences (for the ecosystem). The idea then is to be aware of design, with the ultimate aim of careful and considered adoption. Finally, the issue of ideology of technology is the question of whether one has considered a system or systems of thinking and values that a technology brings along with it.<sup>12</sup> The point is, in one's consideration of having an *un-*ambivalent philosophical view about technology, to be watchful of and critical towards these systems.

The challenge is real and important because to have the orientations of dangerous (terrorist-like) technophobia and over-tolerant technophilia is

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

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

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

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

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

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 441.

not desirable. It seems possible to strike a balance between alienation and progress and yet not produce these very extreme views. The balance might be achieved by a conscientious consideration of the issues identified and maybe including two further issues offered in this paper in the light of insights from an ancient attitude towards technology or industrial society or civilization (culture).

The first part of the paper discusses the challenge to move out from the state of ambivalence. The second part discusses the Zhuangist Primitivist attitude towards technology and explores the ancient view and concludes that the view or attitude seemingly resembles the view of *technology as alienation*. And the third part of the paper discusses insights that seem to be offered by the ancient attitude. These insights are further questions or issues for thinking about a philosophical response towards technology.

### The Zhuangist Primitivist Attitude Towards Technology

Before discussing the attitude towards technology of the so-called 'primitivist' author(s) in the *Zhuangzi*, an important point concerning the label must be noted here. It is true that the label 'Primitivist' (writer) is by the sinologist and philosopher Angus C. Graham (1919-1991),<sup>13</sup> and that there is such a writer is a hypothesis. It is a hypothesis, however, that is not without a basis; Graham's labels are based on the work of Chinese scholars including Guan Feng 關鋒 (1918-2005).<sup>14</sup> There appears no need for such a label for sections in the *Zhuangzi* text which convey criticisms of, among others, the Confucian school. Accordingly, it might be the case that what can be said is only that *sections of the Zhuangzi appear to convey resistance towards technology*. However, just as Frank Saunders Jr., in his paper "Primitivism in the *Zhuangzi*: An Introduction,"<sup>15</sup> we adopt Graham's label here for the sake of convention. Given that the received *Zhuangzi's* thirty-three chapters are classified differently by other scholars such as Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢 and Christopher Rand,<sup>16</sup> Graham's identified strains are not canonical, but they

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<sup>13</sup> See A. C. Graham, *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001), 197–217.

<sup>14</sup> See Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1985), 216 and Steve Coutinho, "Zhuangzi," in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <<https://iep.utm.edu/zhuangzi-chuang-tzu-chinese-philosopher/>>.

<sup>15</sup> See Frank Saunders Jr., "Primitivism in the *Zhuangzi*: An Introduction," in *Philosophy Compass*, 15 (2020), e12700, <<https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12700>>. See specifically endnote no. 1, where Saunders states his adoption and his reasons for doing so.

<sup>16</sup> See Liu Xiaogan, *Classifying the Zhuangzi Chapters*, trans. William E. Savage (University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1994); Christopher Rand, "Chuang Tzu: Text and

are recognized in *Zhuangzi* scholarship and are helpful (like the other classifications) in making sense of the thinker Zhuangzi and the *Zhuangzi* text as a whole.

A. C. Graham is known for the view that the Primitivist author of the *Zhuangzi* holds the view that technology is to be rejected. In *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters*, his translation of the *neipian* and many sections of the classic, he relates a passage in chapter 12, “Tiandi” 天地 (“Heaven and Earth”), a passage which is seemingly strong about *Down with technology!*,<sup>17</sup> to the Primitivist writings in the classic.<sup>18</sup> The Primitivist is one of the five authorial voices in the classic. One of the voices is called ‘primitivist’, in that the text sections appear to convey *primitivism*, understood as the commitment to ideals from a time before what is called civilization. It is chapter 80 of the *Daodejing* 道德經 which is considered as the *locus classicus* of the view.<sup>19</sup> The chapter idealizes a state or condition before civilization, conveying a stance against historical change. This gives the idea that Primitivism is essentially an interpretation of history. Primitivist thinking resists any suggestion of modification of or addition to the described ideal (past) state. That Primitivist thinking in the *Daodejing* is an interpretation of historical change has been discussed by Roger Ames.<sup>20</sup> In *The Art of Rulership: A Study of Ancient Chinese Political Thought*, he presents the philosophies of history of Confucian, Daoist, and Legalist (*fajia*) traditions to determine the philosophical orientation of the text under examination in the research work. The text is the “Zhushuxun” 主術訓 chapter of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子. Ames’s study reveals that the *Huainanzi* represents Confucian, Daoist, Legalist (*fajia*) and syncretic philosophies of history and “Zhushuxun” represents a combination of Daoist and Confucian interpretations. It is the Daoist tradition that is viewed as hinting at the Primitivist view.

Ames discusses the philosophies of history of these traditions because to him there is good evidence that a philosopher’s interpretation of history conveys their questions and philosophical goals.<sup>21</sup> The goal of the Daoist-Primitivist thinker is anarchic and anti-progressivist in character.

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Substance,” in *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 11 (1983), 5–58, <<https://doi.org/10.1179/073776983805308330>>; see also Coutinho, “Zhuangzi,” (section 2).

<sup>17</sup> Graham uses these very words. See Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 185.

<sup>18</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See Randall Peerenboom, “Beyond Naturalism: A Reconstruction of Daoist Environmental Ethics,” in *Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought*, ed. by J. Baird Callicott and John McRae (New York: SUNY Press, [1991] 2014), 159.

<sup>20</sup> See Roger Ames, *The Art of Rulership: A Study of Ancient Chinese Political Thought* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

## 82 THE ZHUANGZIST PRIMITIVIST ATTITUDE

There is a view by A. C. Graham that early post-Qin dynasty Primitivism is linked to anarchism.<sup>22</sup> Primitivism as anarchic coincides with the view of Primitivism as reversion to a utopian past. Primitivism is antipathetic towards any addition to or modification of existing states of affairs, of the ideal state and age. Ames labels this historical stance as *regressive*. Consequently, it might be said that Primitivism's guiding principle is retention of the ideal state in antiquity. To him, chapter 80 of the *Daodejing* describes the Daoist utopia that is different from that of the Confucian tradition.<sup>23</sup> He identifies three notable features in its description. One, the state is small (in size and population), connoting weakness and vulnerability. (That this feature connotes these, according to him, could mean that the writer challenges Eastern Zhou thinking esteeming strength and power).<sup>24</sup> Two, it is a lifestyle that would make its people render modern technology (for convenience and military defense) useless that is conveyed, rather than raw primitivism. Three, the state is anarchic, in that it is non-authoritarian and that it directs the people to detachment from conventions or culture.<sup>25</sup> In this discussion, Primitivist thinking is anti-progressive. This position could be explained by the fact that Primitivism is equated just to the "paradise-lost" theme.<sup>26</sup> Derk Bodde (1909-2003), a sinologist, talks about Daoism as an expression of the theme. To him, the Daoists do not have a mythological explanation for the "fall" from the utopian era; he writes: "it is simply, for them, the inexorable concomitant of the rise of human civilization."<sup>27</sup> It is clear in Ames's work that historical change is to be resisted because it is intrusive towards the natural condition.

The "Tiandi" passage is a story about a certain Zigong's (子貢) realization concerning persons of *quande* 全德 (complete virtue), that in such persons' *xin* 心 (heart-mind) "results, profit, tricks to make things go,

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<sup>22</sup> See A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), 306. Qin dynasty inclusive dates are 221-206 B.C.E..

<sup>23</sup> See Ames, *Art of Rulership*, 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8. According to Roger Ames and David Hall, this interpretation is not exhaustive. They offer two other interpretations: militaristic and about virtues of living locally. See Roger Ames and David Hall, *Daodejing: A Philosophical Interpretation* (New York: Ballantine, 2003), 202-203.

<sup>26</sup> See Norman Girardot, "Chaotic 'Order' (*hun-tun*) and Benevolent 'Disorder' (*luan*) in the 'Chuang Tzu,'" in *Philosophy East and West*, 28 (1978), 299; Norman Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos (Huntun)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 69; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China (Volume 2: History of Scientific Thought)* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 99-115.

<sup>27</sup> Derk Bodde, "Myths of Ancient China," in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. by Samuel Noah Kramer (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 393-394.

cunning”<sup>28</sup> (*gong li ji qiao* 功利機巧) are nowhere found. That is realized by Zigong from responses of the gardener to whom, upon seeing that he (the gardener) might be better off using a shadoof rather than pitching water by getting it through climbing down a well, Zigong brought up the idea of such an implement. In that the gardener’s view towards the recommendation is derision due to his un-named teacher’s teaching that the existence of machines (*ji* 機) leads to having a spirit (*shen* 神) that is unsettled (which is a state that *dao* 道 does not support), Zigong realizes that the gardener is one who cares not at all about praise and blame of the world (天下之非譽) for these bring no diminishment nor gain (無益損焉) to a person of complete *de* (virtue); the gardener is one such person. The passage is about a criticism of technology because the gardener rejects the recommendation of using shadoofs. A shadoof is a contrivance or technology because Zigong’s premise of implementing the tool is for further gain or maximum gain. Zigong expresses that the shadoof “can water a hundred fields, demanding very little effort and producing excellent results.”<sup>29</sup> Since the gardener knows shadoofs, his not using it is a choice on his part. His choice is based on a concern for not disrupting simple life, since, in the gardener’s own words, disrupted “pure simplicity” (純白),<sup>30</sup> again, leads to having an unsettled spirit (*shen* 神). The rejection of the recommendation is related to Zhuangist Primitivism because of the view expressed by Kongzi in the passage, in the following words:

He is a follower and practitioner of the tradition of the House of Hun-t’un... He perceives the oneness of everything, does not know about duality in it; he orders it as inward, does not order it as outward. Someone who by illumination enters into simplicity, by Doing Nothing reverts to the unhewn, who identifies himself with his nature and protects his daemon, as roams among the vulgar, is he really so astonishing to you? In any case, when it comes to the tradition of the House of Hun-t’un, how would you and I be adequate to understand it?<sup>31</sup>

To A. C. Graham, according to this, the gardener is a follower of Hundun 渾沌. Emperor Hundun is the character in the final passage of

<sup>28</sup> Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 187.

<sup>29</sup> Zhuang Zi, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 134.

<sup>30</sup> “Pure simplicity” is James Legge’s translation. See James Legge, *The Texts of Taoism (Part 1)* (New York: Dover, [1891] 1962), 320.

<sup>31</sup> Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 209.

“Yingdiwang” 應帝王, chapter seven of the *Zhuangzi* and who died because Shu 儻 and Hu 忽 bored openings (seven in number, for seven days) on him. Shu and Hu did that because they believed their act to be a repayment of Hundun’s generosity (he treated them kindly) and because each human being has seven holes for seeing, hearing, eating, and breathing. The idea is that the tradition of the House of Hundun is believed by the gardener to be about *wuwei* (Doing Nothing), about simplicity, the unhewn, according to Kongzi. Graham understands Hundun as the emperor who “represents the primal blob out of which the myriad things have not yet begun to divide.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, Kongzi’s words are saying that the gardener is a practitioner of Primitivist thinking (in that Hundun represents a condition untainted by civilization).<sup>33</sup> The idea is that the gardener rejects Zigong’s suggestion because, as stated, *ji* 機 (machine) or technology makes the spirit un-fixed or unsettled (i.e. without rest),<sup>34</sup> a consequence of spoiled “pure simplicity.” That that is the case appears to account for Zigong’s realization; in the passage Zigong says that the gardener’s “purity” is “vast and unimpaired” ( 茫乎淳備哉).<sup>35</sup>

Graham points out that the Zhuangist Primitivist author’s criticisms are not principally on technology or *ji* 機 (machine): the “criticisms centre not on practically useful devices but on moralism, ritualism, logical disputation, arts and luxuries.”<sup>36</sup> That this is pointed out might imply that there is no clear view about or attitude towards technology in the Primitivist authorial voice or that it cannot be said that the author does have a significant stance on the matter. It may be contended, however, that the author has a clear attitude on the matter and is worth considering. There are two reasons for this. One, there are points in the chapters categorized by him (A. C. Graham) as ‘primitivist’ which convey clearly the idea that *ji* 機 (machine) or technology necessarily does not have a place in a pristine world. Two, the theme *Down with technology!* in the “Tiandi” passage on Zigong’s realization seems to appear

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>33</sup> In that the last point of Kongzi appears to regard the gardener as having achieved a feat he could not possibly achieve, the view that Kongzi is criticizing is only one possible view. (This is a point we owe to Wai Wai Chiu.) Some scholars have understood the first statement of Kongzi’s words as saying that the gardener is a “bogus practitioner” of Hundun, suggesting criticism. The translation “bogus practitioner” is Burton Watson’s (see Zhuang Zi, *Complete Works*, 136). A. C. Graham is of the view that the gardener employed the *shu* 術 (strategy) of Hundun, as stated. See Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 186.

<sup>34</sup> “Knowing no rest” is Burton Watson’s translation. See Zhuang Zi, *Complete Works*, 134.

<sup>35</sup> “Vast and complete is his purity” is Victor Mair’s translation. See Victor Mair, *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994), 112.

<sup>36</sup> Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 186.

in the Primitivist chapters, thereby suggesting a connection, which in turn implies that the *resistance towards ji* 機 (machine) or technology is an idea related to Primitivism. Each of these is discussed here.

### *No place for technology*

There is textual evidence for the idea that, in “Mati” 馬蹄 (Chapter 9, “Horses’ Hooves”), what is criticized is moralism, ritualism, and arts. In the chapter, Bo Le 伯樂, the potter and the carpenter are likened to the sages. The author’s point appears to mean that the sages are to be seen as bearers of some knowledge of the past, or of (ancient) culture. It is a suggestion of the primitivists to regard “at least some cultural ends and standards with suspicion.”<sup>37</sup> The ‘cultural ends and standards’ here coincide with knowledge of (ancient) culture. In “Mati”’s mention of Bo Le, the author is concerned not entirely with what Bo Le has done to the “true nature” of the horses.<sup>38</sup> The writer is concerned with the deaths, given that it is written, “the horses that died before he finished were more than half.”<sup>39</sup> The problem seems to be that not many would have died if it were not for Bo Le’s doctrines. Might it be suggested that Bo Le’s techniques kill horses’ *xing* 性? The view of the author about what the potter and the carpenter do to clay and wood is that it is not the nature of these materials to be subjected to what the artisans have in mind. The section ends with lumping Bo Le and these artisans together to say disappointedly that they have been well regarded by many generations. They were regarded as models. Given this, the final point is that what Bo Le and the artisans did is what those who manage the kingdom did. If the expert artisans have subjected the materials to what they have in mind to these *materials’* detriment, the rulers have subjected their states to what they believe is correct, resulting in their constituents’ destruction or their losing of their primitive simplicity.

This view that the author of “Mati” is concerned about the killing of *xing* and losing of primitive simplicity is corroborated by the view that it is social order that is the guiding concern in the passage. The view is by Frank Saunders Jr.,<sup>40</sup> who understands the primitivists to be criticizing the way (*dao*)

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<sup>37</sup> Frank Saunders Jr., “Primitivism in the *Zhuangzi*: An Introduction,” in *Philosophy Compass*, 15 (2020) e12700. <<https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12700>>.

<sup>38</sup> See Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 204.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> See Frank Saunders Jr., “Xunzi and the Primitivists on Natural Spontaneity (*xing* 性) and Coercion,” in *Asian Philosophy*, 27 (2017), 210–226, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09552367.2017.1348930>>; See also section 4 of Saunders, “Primitivism in the *Zhuangzi*.”

of the Confucian Xunzi 荀子 (c. 310-220 B.C.E.), pointing out that the primitivists held what would have been the time's common-sensical view. Xunzi's suggestion of violating (people's) *xing* does not square with the intuition that such violation would cause harm to *xing*. On Saunders' account, the use of Bo Le indicates concern for the harm inflicted upon by the imposition of ways for social order, one of which might be Xunzi's. In chapter 12 of the *Xunzi*, as indicated by Saunders, Bo Le is put side by side with *junzi* 君子 (gentleman; paradigmatic person): 'And so Bo Le could not be deceived concerning horses, nor can the gentleman be deceived concerning people. This is the Way of a King with Clarity/Illumination (*ming* 明).<sup>41</sup> To Saunders, the idea is that just as the gentleman knows the people, so does Bo Le know horses, and since the gentleman's knowledge of the people relates fundamentally to governing them, Bo Le's knowledge of horses relates fundamentally to governing horses. Accordingly, for Saunders, the use of Bo Le in the chapter appears to single out Xunzi, pointing out that Xunzi's way (*dao*) harms *xing*. Bo Le's doctrines for ordering are a failure because they harmed the animals. It is clear in the "Mati" that it is the doctrines of Bo Le, artisans and rulers which caused the destruction of *xing* and disintegration of 'purity.'

There appears to be an assumption that the sages, who are very likely to be Confucians, had direct connection with the rulers of the world who, like the artisans, had brought destruction to their subjects. The view is that the sages possess views about what is best for the people. The sages are portrayed to have the belief that *ren* 仁 (benevolence), *yi* 義 (righteousness), *yue* 樂 (music) and *li* 禮 (ritual or behavioral propriety) are extremely important. It seems also clear that the concepts are contrasted with what is natural and the unhewn. To the author, the sages' view is that it is necessary to discard Daoistic notions in order to put in Confucian ideals. To him, it is not necessary to put up these ideals. According to him, the sages bring with them notions that are not to be added to humanity's basic nature. They bring with them notions that would *make* humanity *useful* according to their cultural view – for libation vessels would not be made if the unhewn block is not disturbed or damaged.<sup>42</sup> These notions would damage humanity's basic, natural nature, just as the unhewn block is damaged by doctrines. These notions or concepts may be thought of as deriving from knowledge from (ancient) culture. The notions are properly included in 'cultural artifices'.<sup>43</sup> 'Cultural artifices' is a label used by Frank Saunders Jr. That the notions or concepts may be thought

<sup>41</sup> Saunders, "Xunzi and the Primitivists," 217.

<sup>42</sup> See Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 202.

<sup>43</sup> See Saunders, "Primitivism in the *Zhuangzi*."

of as coming from (ancient) culture is derived from the idea in *Lunyu* 論語 (the *Analects*) 3.14. On the face of it, the passage conveys the idea that Confucius revered Western Zhou culture and all succeeding decisions ought to be patterned after Zhou.<sup>44</sup> By saying that it is the error of the sages to have damaged the natural and unhewn, the author views these notions as, at the least, superfluous. There is no need for them.

The point in this chapter that there is no place for technology is clear in the contrast made between the Confucian concepts of *ren*, *yi*, *yue*, and *li* with what is natural and the unhewn. That the author views the notions as, at the least, superfluous, together with the derision of what the artisans offered, also conveys that there is no place for technology in the “uncarved simplicity” in the environment and in humans.<sup>45</sup>

In “Pianmu” 駢拇 (Chapter 8, “Webbed Toes”), that (1) *ren* (benevolence) and *yi* (righteousness) do not belong to the essentials of humanity (*renjing* 人情), and that (2) *ren* (benevolence) and *yi* (righteousness) injure nature (*xing* 性) and do not go with the fine man and, together with an allusion to *yue* (music) and *li* (ritual or behavioral propriety) as nothing but unreasonable punctiliousness, tacitly point to the idea that the Confucian sages are the subject of the author’s criticism. This is also supported by the author’s seeming awareness of the analogy between the artisans and the rulers or sages, if not an elaboration on the point. That the carpenter’s instruments’ purpose diminishes or is against one’s nature (*xing*) is stated in tandem with the point about *yue* (music) and *li* (ritual or behavioral propriety). These points seem to conclude that (Confucian) cultural artifices are unnecessary, just as a sixth finger or webbed toes are “superfluous to [one’s] powers.”<sup>46</sup>

The view that (Confucian) cultural (ancient) knowledge brought by the sages are to be rejected is clear in what Hagop Sarkissian calls the ‘darker side of Primitivism’.<sup>47</sup> The author of “Quque” 祛箠 (Chapter 10, “Rifling Trunks”) recommends exterminating the sages: the effect of which is the disappearance of great robbers. The recommendation is in light of the

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<sup>44</sup> An alternative translation, though, by Robert Eno, points out that Confucius’s final statement is the idea that it is Confucius’s view that following Zhou is not choosing “to accord with Zhou culture” but following Zhou in the sense that Zhou is taken as the guide to supersede Zhou itself. See Robert Eno, trans., *The Analects Confucius: An Online Teaching Translation* (2015), 11, <[https://chinatxt.sitehost.iu.edu/Analects\\_of\\_Confucius\\_\(Eno-2015\).pdf](https://chinatxt.sitehost.iu.edu/Analects_of_Confucius_(Eno-2015).pdf)>.

<sup>45</sup> “Uncarved simplicity” is Burton Watson’s translation of 素樸. See Zhuang Zi, *Complete Works*, 105.

<sup>46</sup> Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 201.

<sup>47</sup> See Hagop Sarkissian, “The Darker Side of Daoist Primitivism,” in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 37 (2010), 312–329, <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2010.01585.x>>.

author's view that the sages are merely packing up treasures for the great thief. The great thief is the giant thief put by the writer as one whose existence is imagined by common people as could not have been. The idea seems to be that sagely wisdom comes to nothing once a great thief comes along. It comes to nothing because "sagely laws" cover up the great robber's 'thieving self' — "without the Way of the sage Robber Chih would not walk."<sup>48</sup> That these sages refer to Confucian sages seems suggested by mention of the institution of *ren* (benevolence) and *yi* (righteousness). Extermination of the sages results in disappearance of great robbers because it is said that the emergence of great robbers is concomitant with the birth of a sage. According to the author, sages are thriving and they must die in order to stop these robbers. The rejection of (Confucian) cultural artifices is more pronounced in the author's view that the state of Qi is like someone who packed treasures for the great thief. It does this because the analogy appears to say that Qi should not have packed 'valuables'. The state, described as if the idealized state in chapter 80 of the *Daodejing*, 'packed' sagely wisdom by instituting "ancestral shrines and altars to the soil and the grain" or by organizing "provinces, districts, cities, villages, hamlets."<sup>49</sup> Graham's translation alludes to the point that what all this is doing is taking the (ancient) sages as models.<sup>50</sup> The author implies that Qi should not have done that because it is simply gathering a package for the great robber to pick up. Could it be said that he is saying that ancient sagely wisdom ought not to be acquired because it could just be used to cover up immorality? It is suggested here that that is the case.

In this chapter, that there is no place for technology is clear in the idea that *ren* and *yi* do not belong to the essentials of humanity (*renjing*). This may be thought as similar to the point in "Mati" that the Confucian notions are seen as superfluous. Accordingly, the idea also conveys that there is no place for technology in the "uncarved simplicity" in the environment and in humans.

### *The "Tiandi" passage and the Primitivist chapters*

The passage in "Tiandi" on Zigong's realization includes a section that appears to link the passage to the Primitivist chapters. This section is the gardener's words that purport to portray who the followers of Kongzi are according to the author of the passage:

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<sup>48</sup> Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 208.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>50</sup> See *Ibid.*

... you must be one of those who broaden their learning in order to ape the sages, heaping absurd nonsense on the crowd, plucking the strings and singing sad songs all by yourself in hopes of buying fame in the world! You would do best to forget your spirit and breath, break up your body and limbs - then you might be able to get somewhere. You don't even know how to look after your own body - how do you have any time to think about looking after the world[?]<sup>51</sup>

According to these words, Confucius's followers are stiff and are not self-aware (or unable to govern oneself, *shen zhi buneng zhi* 身之不能治). They are stiff or rigid because their concentration is "putting the world in order" (*zhi tianxia* 治天下) and yet is construed as about promoting themselves or having a name for themselves. They are not self-aware or unable to govern oneself because they are too focused on learning, moralizing, and on rituals. In that the gardener's words contain the criticism of the followers as too focused on learning, as "mak[ing] themselves so learned to get to be like the sages" (博學以擬聖), the passage appears to echo condemnation of *haozhi* 好知 (fondness of knowledge) in the Primitivist chapters.

*Haozhi* is a compound which is prominent in the Primitivist chapters, given that it appears once in "Mati" and four times in "Quqie". In "Mati," *haozhi* is put as the result of the sages' teaching of the Confucian ideals. It is in the "Quqie" where *haozhi* is condemned. In "Quqie," *haozhi* is an act which brought about utter confusion (in the world). *Zhi* appears to refer to knowledge relating to concoction of 'traps' (schemes) in language and disputation. These traps appear to be not dissimilar to *ji* 機 (machine) which the gardener in the "Tiandi" passage rejects. *Ji* 機, for example, is translated by A. C. Graham as "contrivance."<sup>52</sup> What is *haozhi* 好知 (fondness of knowledge) according to "Quqie"? It first appears in the statement: "This then is the fault of the ruler's lust for knowledge."<sup>53</sup> The point's context is one in which the people of the Primitivist utopian state have become fond of learning from "a worthy man".<sup>54</sup> It appears that the ruler of the state encouraged learning from a sage, resulting in the people's abandonment of their abode in favor of learning. Burton Watson regards the historical phenomenon of the rulers' need for 'scholars' as possibly clear

<sup>51</sup> Zhuang Zi, *Complete Works*, 135.

<sup>52</sup> See Graham, *Chuang Tzu*, 186.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>54</sup> Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 88; Zhuang Zi, *Complete Works*, 112.

exemplification of a ruler's *haozhi*;<sup>55</sup> the men of *zhi* 知 (knowledge) were deemed necessary to boost their state's 'charisma.' Accordingly, it appears it is Watson's belief that the people left their hometown as they went after the 'scholars', the worthy (賢 *xian*), who had not congregated in the people's state. It might be suggested that 'the worthy person' is a sage. In the Mohist tradition, "the worthy" are also well regarded given the doctrine of 'elevating the worthy' (*shangxian* 尚賢). It seems correct then that *haozhi* means fondness for *sagely* wisdom. If this is correct, then there indeed is a link between "Mati" and that passage in "Tiandi". The "Tiandi" passage criticism of the Confucians is that they "make themselves so learned to get to be like the sages" (博學以擬聖), which is what *haozhi* means according to "Mati."

The pair of characters "好知" appears in only one pre-Qin text, other than the *Zhuangzi*.<sup>56</sup> In the *Analects*, it is in 17.8. Its appearance in the *Zhuangzi* chapter "Zaiyou" 在宥 (Chapter 11) is probably unrelated because it is found not in the introductory part of the chapter classed as Primitivist by A. C. Graham. But in it, like in "Mati", 好知 appears as action that has been done. 好知 (*haozhi*) appears with 天下 (*tianxia*) before it. The characters appear as part of the writer's description of the decline of the world (天下衰矣). It says "all under Heaven" has come to "be fond of knowledge" (好知). It seems that the decline is described to set the scene of the entrance of the 'sages', the Confucians and the Mohists, who proposed solutions (their doctrines) to the socio-political tumult. This part of the chapter expresses the 'darker side' of Primitivism: extermination of the sages, as pointed out and discussed by Hagop Sarkissian.<sup>57</sup> Although this section is not the introductory essay of the chapter, which A. C. Graham claims to have been written also by the Primitivist writer, it is interesting that wiping out sagacity and its harmonizing effect in the empire appears in this passage.

In *Analects* 17.8, 好知 is presented to point out the vice that goes with 知. *Zhi* 知 (knowledge) is one of the six *yan* 言 (words; teachings), along with *ren* 仁 (benevolence), *xin* 信 (trustworthiness), *zhi* 直 (uprightness), *yong* 勇 (courage) and *gang* 剛 (resoluteness).<sup>58</sup> The vice that goes with 知 is *dang* 蕩 (unruliness), if fondness of it is not coupled with fondness of *xue* 學 (learning). The passage's primary message seems to be that *xue* (learning) is most important. One may have or pursue any of the "six teachings", yet if she does

<sup>55</sup> See Zhuang Zi, *Complete Works*, 112, note 12.

<sup>56</sup> The following is a link to the result of search performed on 23 February 2018 through the Chinese Text Project: <https://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%A5%BD%E7%9F%A5>.

<sup>57</sup> See Sarkissian, "Darker Side of Primitivism".

<sup>58</sup> See Edward Slingerland, *Confucius: The Essential Analects* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 49.

not pursue *xue* (learning) as well, all is in vain. So, 好知 is nothing without 好學. An important question here is what the meaning of 知 is, as is what the meaning of 學 in the passage is. 知 has been translated as “knowledge”, “wisdom”, “awareness” and “understanding.” In the *Mencius*, it is one of the four ‘sprouts of virtue’ (*siduan* 四端), although 智 (*zhi*) is used, which is interchangeable with 知. Scholars’ view about its meaning in the *Mencius* (as one of the sprouts) is that it is directly connected to the first two sprouts, *ren* 仁 (compassion; benevolence) and *yi* 義 (righteousness). The view is that 知 has to do with morality; it is likely to be sense or recognition of what is right action. Benjamin Schwartz says that in the context of *siduan*, “it seemed to be basically a knowledge tied to moral judgment.”<sup>59</sup> Bryan Van Norden says that as one of Mencius’s “four innate ethical dispositions,” “wisdom involves an understanding of and commitment to the other virtues, especially benevolence and righteousness.”<sup>60</sup> According to these words of Van Norden, not only is the virtue *awareness* of these virtues, but is also *sense with built-in preference given to them*. So, if the meaning of 知 is sense or awareness of morality, then, according to *Analects* 17.8, fondness of knowledge of morality (without fondness of *xue*) leads to “unruliness”. It seems that *xue* 學 (learning) (of) what is proper behavior (*li* 禮) is what regulates awareness of what is correct or right. In the *Xunzi*, it is *li* 禮 that is regarded as the aim and culmination of *xue* 學: “...learning comes to ritual and then stops, for this is called the ultimate point in pursuit of the Way and virtue.”<sup>61</sup> It seems 17.8’s message is that awareness (*zhi* 知) is not sufficient for propriety or proper order and there ought to be study.

If *zhi* means ‘moral sense’ and *haozhi* means fondness for ‘moral sense or awareness’, the meaning appears to coincide with the meaning in the Primitivist condemnation of it. *Haozhi* in “Qujie” is fondness for sagely wisdom and sagely wisdom is about *dao* 道, (the) way to live. It might then be concluded here that the *zhi* and *haozhi* condemned by the Primitivist is the *zhi* and *haozhi* in *Analects* 17.8. But this calls for further investigation. Here, the conclusion is that, in that the condemnation of *haozhi* in the Primitivist chapters is possibly connected with the “Tiandi” passage expressing resistance towards technology, the *Down with technology!* theme is rather remarkable in the Primitivist chapters.

<sup>59</sup> Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 287.

<sup>60</sup> Bryan Van Norden, “Mencius,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mencius/#2>>.

<sup>61</sup> Eric L. Hutton, *Xunzi: The Complete Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 5.

Given that there are points in the chapters categorized by A. C. Graham as primitivist, which clearly convey the idea that *ji* 機 (machine) or technology necessarily does not have a place in a pristine world, and that “Tiandi” passage’s resistance to technology seems to appear in the Primitivist chapters, it is our conclusion that the clear resistance to technology expressed in the “Tiandi” passage is also expressed in a number of Primitivist chapters. This resistance shows that the Primitivist author held a view that may be viewed as anti-technology. The Primitivist writer’s resistance is not unlike that orientation because it is technophobic or is about technology as alienation.

### Further Questions

The point that the Primitivist writer’s resistance is not unlike the anti-technology orientation (because such rejection or resistance resembles the technophobic or technology-as-alienation orientation) can be seen as raising more questions or issues for thinking about a philosophical response towards technology. In other words, in addition to identified issues that point to a basis for orientation in technology, the Primitivist writer’s attitude of resistance raises further issues for consideration. This is due to its peculiarity. The attitude is peculiar because of its seeming concerns, viz., concern for self and concern for the environment. We suggest that the issues raised by the attitude are ones relating to self-preservation and the environment.

Before discussing these issues, we would like to point out an important qualification. Given the “Tiandi” passage as a basis, the technology that the Zhuangist Primitivist has in mind here is one that has to do with not losing what is essential. In the “Tiandi” passage, as already pointed out, the gardener’s choice is based on the concern for not disrupting simple life, since disrupted “pure simplicity” leads to having an unsettled *shen* 神 (spirit), and since it appears that the gardener’s response answers Zigong’s reason for implementing the tool, that is, maximizing gain. Maximizing gain is diametrically opposed to “pure simplicity” or a simple life. It appears that the gardener despises greater gain or profit. Accordingly, to the gardener, technology is essential only to the point that it does not make one lose what is essential in living simply. It is in this light that the Zhuangist Primitivist’s resistance to technology should be seen.

In the ‘Tiandi’ passage, Zigong’s realization seems to clearly point out that the reason for the gardener’s rejection relates to his “purity”, which is “vast and unimpaired”. That suggests self-preservation or -protection. In “Mati”, one major concern is that the cultural artifices would damage humanity’s basic, natural nature. That the recommended norm, based on

*xing*, is not on how to avoid harming one's nature but on "how to live and flourish according to *xing*," as pointed out by Frank Saunders Jr., means that the chapter indeed has the idea of self-preservation.<sup>62</sup> *Xing* (性) is "nature," which is a translation that points out the uniqueness of each individual entity, thus the entity's 'self' or 'selfhood.' According to Christoph Harbsmeier, the translation does so because it "captures well the fact that every thing only has one *hsing* 'nature,' whereas we would say it has many properties."<sup>63</sup> In "Pianmu," there is the idea that a place for technology does not exist in the "uncarved simplicity" in the environment and in humans. Here, we find the point relating to the natural environment, which is treated like human self. That to the primitivists "[environments] contribute to flourishing by providing enough sustenance for people, and not damaging them through coercive manipulation or indoctrination"<sup>64</sup> implies that environment refers not only to the social environment or milieu but primarily to the natural environment. We get sustenance from the natural environment, from Mother Nature. Accordingly, to be added to the questions relating to technological interface, politics of artifacts, technological design, and ideology of technology are the questions: (i) of whether the technology in question obliterates the self or whether it promotes or preserves it, and (ii) of whether the technology in question obliterates the environment or whether it promotes or preserves the natural environment or world.

It may be said here that given the Zhuangist Primitivist twin concern for self and for (natural) environment, the Primitivist view of self is an "integral or integrated self." The view of integrated self is self as necessarily connected with its environment. This is also the Daoist view of the self as "contextualised self," as discussed by Karyn Lai.<sup>65</sup> An implication of such a view is that self and environment may not be separated. They truly are twin concerns.

Concern for self-preservation or -protection in consideration of technological orientation may be redundant, in that, after all, it is we humans who are primarily affected by technology. Perhaps, though, the idea is only that such a concern or issue ought to be highlighted. It ought to be highlighted, because it could be imagined that a technology may in the future be out of control and would end humanity. One such 'technology' is artificial

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<sup>62</sup> See Saunders, "Primitivism in the *Zhuangzi*," (section 4).

<sup>63</sup> Christoph Harbsmeier, *Language and Logic in Traditional China*, Vol. 7, Part 1 of *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 236.

<sup>64</sup> Saunders, "Xunzi and the Primitivists," 219.

<sup>65</sup> See Karyn Lai, *Learning from Chinese Philosophies: Ethics of Interdependent and Contextualised Self* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), Chapter 2.

intelligence (AI), as has been conjectured.<sup>66</sup> Concern for the environment in consideration of technological orientation may be not unlike the issue of technological design, in that the issue is about context. Consequences for the ecosystem are considered in thinking about technological design. The issue of environment coming from the Primitivist, though, is rather more like the concern that we have about destruction of Mother Nature due to anthropocentrism. It is not to be denied that Mother Nature has “uncarved simplicity,” and to the primitivists, environment refers not only to the social environment or milieu but also primarily to the natural environment. Subsequently, the issue of environment according to this brings to the fore the question of whether a certain technology does or does not destroy the environment. Primitivism advocates a simple living and having a simple, pure environment. The aim of the Primitivists is to have the natural order retained, and, to them, any technology or instrument (*ji*, machine) ought to be checked against whether such disrupts that order.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have proposed that in the consideration of which orientation in technology to hold, two further issues to consider are *self* or *self-preservation* and *natural environment*. These come from the Zhuangist Primitivist attitude towards technology. The Zhuangist Primitivist attitude is resistance towards technology. That rejection of a certain *ji* or technology in “Tiandi” is not unconnected with the *Zhuangzi* Primitivist texts means that the Primitivist writer likely held the attitude of resistance. In the first part of this paper, we discussed the challenge. In the second part, we elucidated the Zhuangist Primitivist attitude towards technology, exploring an ancient attitude and drawing a parallel between the attitude and view of technology as alienation. And in the final part, we discussed the insights or issues which seem offered by the Zhuangist Primitivist. It may be that a number of us have moved out from a condition of ambivalence since 2004. Be that as it may, it is rather undeniable that reflection on technological orientation would benefit from recognition and consideration of two more issues.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Rory Cellan-Jones, “Stephen Hawking warns artificial intelligence could end mankind,” in *BBC News* (2 December 2014), <<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-30290540>>.

<sup>67</sup> We thank Wai Wai Chiu and Peter Yih Jiun Wong for comments on a draft on the section on *Zhuangzi* Primitivism.

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## From “Being-with” to Public Realm: Heidegger and Arendt on Speech<sup>1</sup>

*Xian-zhe Hui*

**Abstract:** Aristotle famously defined the human being as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον (a living thing with logos). Heidegger and Arendt both questioned the interpretation of *animal rationale* (rational animal). Tracing back to ancient Greek thoughts, they both regarded the original meaning of λόγος as speech and illustrated the relationship between speech and human existence. Heidegger elucidated the disclosing nature of speech and distinguished between authentic and inauthentic forms of speech. Heidegger emphatically examined inauthentic everyday speech, while Arendt was more concerned with exploring an authentic form of public discourse. This paper explains the connection and distinction between Heidegger’s and Arendt’s views on speech. It argues that Arendt develops Heidegger’s notion of speech by expositing an authentic and active public speech.

**Keywords:** Arendt, Heidegger, being-with, idle talk

In Book 1, Chapter 2 of the *Politics*, Aristotle defined the essence of human beings as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, which means the human being is a living thing with λόγος (logos).<sup>2</sup> λόγος makes human beings different from plants and animals. The Latin translation of this term is “*animal rationale*.”

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<sup>2</sup> I cite Aristotle’s text ζῶον λόγον ἔχον from Heidegger’s work. See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. by Robert Metcalf and Mark Tanzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 32.

This translation has had a great impact on people's understanding of the essence of human beings throughout the ages. In chapter 34 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposes that the Latin translation *animal rationale* is problematic.<sup>3</sup> He argues that if people consider the human being as the *animal rationale* (the rational animal), "it covers over the phenomenal basis from which this definition of *Dasein* is taken."<sup>4</sup> Like Heidegger, Arendt has also pointed out that the Latin translation is misleading. As she puts it in *The Human Condition*: "The Latin translation of this term into *animal rationale* rests on no less fundamental a misunderstanding than the term 'social animal'."<sup>5</sup> When she interprets the concept of *λόγος* in Aristotle's philosophy, she mentions that the original meaning of *λόγος* has been distorted into reason and argument.<sup>6</sup> What is the genuine meaning of *λόγος*? The answer to this is closely related to their understanding of the fundamental determination of the human being.

In this essay, I attempt to compare Heidegger's and Arendt's interpretation of the concept of speech to uncover the difference and relations between the "being-with" and the public realm. I have divided this essay into three sections. The first section is to investigate Heidegger's analysis of the concept of *λόγος* to explain the relationship between speech and *being-with-one-another*. Next, I wish to clarify Arendt's interpretation of *λόγος*, which plays an important role in constructing her theory of the public realm. Finally, by comparing the interpretation of the concept of speech by Heidegger and Arendt, I argue that although Arendt agrees with Heidegger's views of the revealing character of speech and his explanation of idle talk, she criticizes that Heidegger does not pay attention to the question of the positive public discourse. Therefore, she expositis the authentic and active public speech in response. Besides, she analyzes the important role of authentic speech forms emphasized by Heidegger, such as silence and poetry, in the public sphere. In this sense, she develops Heidegger's speech theory.

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<sup>3</sup> In section 7 of the introduction of *Being and Time*, Heidegger examines the traditional interpretations of *λόγος*, including reason, judgment, concept, definition, basis, and relationship. He believes that these traditional interpretations cannot explain the primary meaning of *logos*. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time (A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation)*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, revised by Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 28–30.

<sup>4</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, 155.

<sup>5</sup> On this critique, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 27.

<sup>6</sup> She wrote, that "the current English translation distorts the meaning because it renders *logos* as 'reason' or 'argument'." See Arendt, *Human Condition*, 291.

## Speech and Being-with-One-Another

### *Heidegger's Interpretation of ζῶον λόγον ἔχον*

In *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Heidegger proposed that λόγος means speaking (*sprechen*) in Aristotelian philosophy.<sup>7</sup> Speech, as Heidegger pointed out, does not refer to uttering a sound but “speaking about something in a way that exhibits the about-which of speaking by showing that which is spoken about.”<sup>8</sup> The genuine function of λόγος, according to Heidegger, is the ἀποφαίνεσθαι (*apophainesthai*), that is, to bring a matter to sight by speaking about something.<sup>9</sup> According to Heidegger, in Aristotelian philosophy, the human being is a living thing with logos, which means “a living thing that has language.”<sup>10</sup> This is the fundamental determinant of the being as a human being.

We can examine Heidegger's interpretation of the concept of λόγος in Aristotelian philosophy from three aspects. First, Heidegger claims that ζῶον λόγον ἔχον represents the ancient Greeks' thinking about the uniqueness of human life. According to Heidegger, the ancient Greeks regarded human beings as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, indicating that the human being is the being of life (*Sein-in-einer-Welt*).<sup>11</sup> Heidegger further explains that the living mode of human beings is a mode of being-in-a-world.<sup>12</sup> In Heidegger's view, human beings are different from other beings because human beings have their unique way of living.

To be specific, human beings are concerned with their own existence, which is manifested in the fact that they can understand the world, ask questions about the world, and talk about the world. This is something other beings cannot do. This fact shows that the original meaning of ζῶον λόγον ἔχον is closely related to human existence and speech. Heidegger proposes that this quote from Aristotle's writings can be understood as: “Language is possessed, is spoken, in such a way that speaking belongs to the genuine drive of being of the human being. Living, for the human being, means speaking.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the unique living mode of human beings, according to Heidegger, is basically determined by speaking. This is because, through speech, human beings can disclose the concrete situation of themselves and

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<sup>7</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, ed. by Mark Michalski (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002), 18.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

what is spoken. In speaking of something, we not only express ourselves but also express what is said, bringing a matter to self-showing. For example, mountains, flowers, and insects can only show themselves in the world through the speech of human beings. Human beings are always revealing these things from different and specific angles in their speech.

Second, in chapter 2 of *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Heidegger points out that Aristotle not only defined human beings as "the being of life" but also gives priority to the political life of human beings. Heidegger notices that Aristotle's discussion of the human being as a living being with speech also appears in *Politics*. According to Heidegger, from the genuine life of human beings, Aristotle found a basic possibility of human life which is living in a polis. Aristotle's point of view is described by Heidegger as being-in-the-polis (*being-in-the-πόλις*).<sup>14</sup> Heidegger points out that in the eyes of the ancient Greeks, only a person who lives in the polis is a real human being. Heidegger further elaborates on Aristotle's idea and claims that the being who speaks with the world was such a being whose living mode is being-with-others (*Sein-mit-anderen*).<sup>15</sup>

In Heidegger's view, speech and phones are considered the characteristic of humans and animals respectively. Speech brings the human being into the world of sharing with others. Speaking to the world and being-with-one-another is the fundamental living mode of being human. Heidegger claims that a relationship between the household and polis could only be constructed through speech, i.e., through self-expression and dialogue with others. The household and polis, according to Heidegger, are "being-as-speaking-with-one-another through communicating, refuting, confronting."<sup>16</sup> For Heidegger, relationships in family and city-state can only be constructed on the basis of speech, that is, by self-expression and dialogue with others.

When people speak with each other, they share information with each other. Speaking has the characteristic of communication, which means one discusses something with others, then listeners will have a shared world with the speaker. Therefore, it is the speech that constitutes a particular being-with-other, i.e., being-in-the-polis.<sup>17</sup> In Heidegger's view, ζῶον λόγον ἔχον also contains the determination of the human being as a political being. Therefore, he discusses the speech in the assembly of citizens, the defense in the court, and the praise in the celebration.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe*, 46.

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 35.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

Third, when Heidegger interprets ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, he not only pays attention to the political life of human beings but also focuses on the everydayness of human life. By examining Aristotle's concepts of "encouragement," "admonishment," and "accusation," Heidegger points out that human beings are not only speakers but also listeners in specific situations in their life. People not only listen to their own words but also listen to those of other people when interacting with others. In everyday life, people hold different views on certain things and share their views with each other. Heidegger emphasizes that views are the basis and motivation for conversation and consultation.<sup>18</sup> Heidegger also examines the theoretical and practical consultation proposed by Aristotle.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, Heidegger points out that the uncritical use of speech is inauthentic and pernicious, which might lead to dangers, such as special control, in people's everyday life. For example, some people do not seek to disclose the truth of things, and just repeat the views of others. Then, there is the danger of them being controlled and dominated by others. This is the danger that speech may bring.

In *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, we learn about Heidegger's view of speech by examining his interpretation of the concept of λόγος in Aristotelian philosophy. The discussions in this early work also laid the foundation for the elucidating of speech in *Being and Time*.

### Being and Time: *Two faces of speech*

In section 7 of the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger reiterates some of the basic elements already developed in *Basic Concepts*, particularly the original meaning of λόγος as speech (*Rede*).<sup>20</sup> Heidegger emphasizes the explication of ἀποφαίνεσθαι (letting something to be seen) in Aristotle, which is letting something to be seen from being itself. According to Heidegger, through speech, people manifest what is being talked about and make this accessible to the other party.<sup>21</sup> In *Being and Time*, he carefully examines the different forms of speech, including listening, silence, and idle talk.

Heidegger regards speech as primarily constitutive of this disclosedness of being-in-the-world in the existential analytic of *Dasein*, as the attunement and understanding. In other words, speech constitutes and

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 168–190.

<sup>20</sup> There are two English words in translating this term *Rede*. Joan Stambaugh uses "speech," while John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson use "discourse." Both express the same meaning, so I adopt both of them in this essay. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962).

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time (A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation)*, 28–29.

discloses that *Dasein* is a being that has been thrown and submitted to the world, maintaining itself in a way of being-with-one-another. The speech of *Dasein* includes not only speaking but also listening and silence.

According to Heidegger, as a being-in-the-world with others, *Dasein* is open to others. *Dasein* not only speaks to others but also listens to them. *Dasein's* listening comes from its understanding, and only with the understanding of hearing can sound be heard. In addition, Heidegger points out that another possibility of speech is to keep silent. The person who is silent in conversation may also develop an understanding of the meaning of things. To talk about something extensively, for Heidegger, hinders the clarification of what has been understood. On the contrary, Heidegger believes that "keeping silence" also conveys the intention of the interlocutor and the meaning of things. Thus, Heidegger points out that people and others may be able to develop a more authentic understanding by keeping silent.

Heidegger further points out that in the everydayness of *Dasein*, speech has the possibility of becoming idle talk (*das Gerede*).<sup>22</sup> When *Dasein* is being there with others, it will be separated from its authenticity, immersed in *das Man* and publicness (*Offentlichkeit*).<sup>23</sup> In Heidegger's view, idle talk mainly refers to the way of talking in way of gossiping and passing the word along. There are two important characteristics of idle talk: groundless and closing off. Speech discloses what is talked about, while idle talk hinders the disclosedness of things by discouraging inquiries and disputation. As a result of idle talk, people lose the connection with what is talked about. To be more specific, when someone says something, the other accepts and repeats it without thinking or without going back to what is talked about. In this regard, Heidegger continues his discussion in *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. He points out that *Dasein* is ruled and controlled by the opinions of others when it relies on idle talk. Heidegger thinks that this is the inauthentic state in which *Dasein* is indulged in publicness.

In contrast to the inauthentic idle talk, Heidegger also discusses some authentic forms of speech. The authentic state of *Dasein*, such as "the call of conscience" and "being-toward-death," is related to the speech form of silence.<sup>24</sup> In section 34 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger also discusses another speech form: poetry. Heidegger believes that poetry is disclosed and clear speech, which is also the path for people to return to their authentic life. The speech forms of silence and poetry allow *Dasein* to transcend the publicness of *das Man* and return to an authentic state.

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<sup>22</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 222.

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

<sup>24</sup> See Heidegger, *Being and Time (A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation)*, chapters 34 and 55.

From Heidegger's perspective, poetic speech and keeping silent is very essential for *Dasein* to return to its authenticity, because it can make *Dasein* focus on itself, and no longer indulge in listening to *das Man*. This juxtaposition seems dangerous since it may lead to the simplistic presumption that the only alternative to idle talk is solitary meditation or poetic dwelling in Heidegger's theory. What is active communal speech like in an authentic "being-with?" Can solitary meditation or poetic dwelling emphasized by Heidegger help *Dasein* communicate with others and deal with public affairs? What is the relationship between solitary meditation or poetic dwelling and authentic communal speech? These questions seem to be unresolved by Heidegger. In my opinion, Heidegger does not clearly expost a convincing conception of "authentic" public discourse that includes controversy, dissent, and disagreement as much as listening and understanding.<sup>25</sup> This unresolved problem in Heidegger's theory, as I will show in the next section, is explored by Arendt.

### Speech and Public Realm

Arendt's interpretation of *lóγoc* is associated with her interest in Greek philosophy and her investigation of the living conditions of human beings. We can understand her views in *The Human Condition* from two aspects: on the one hand, Arendt reinterprets the concept of *lóγoc* and the definition of the human being in Aristotelian philosophy; on the other hand, inspired by Greek thought, Arendt also expounds her views on speech.

#### *Arendt's Interpretation of Zôon Logon Echon*

Like Heidegger, Arendt also points out that the Latin translation of *zôon logon echon* is *animal rationale*.<sup>26</sup> This translation, according to Arendt, is rooted in a fundamental misunderstanding. She interprets the basic meaning of this definition as: "a living being capable of speech."<sup>27</sup> To understand the meaning of this sentence, we must first return to Arendt's interpretation of the first definition of the human being in Aristotelian philosophy.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt points out that Aristotle's first definition of man (the human being) is, that man is a political animal (*zôon politikon*).<sup>28</sup> It is political life that shows the uniqueness of human life. The

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<sup>25</sup> On this unresolved problem, see also Qingjie James Wang, "Heidegger's Who's Analysis in *Being and Time* and the Communal Being," in *The Gift and the Common Good: An Intercultural Perspective*, ed. by Walter Schweidler and Joachim Klose (Academia Verlag, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> See Arendt, *Human Condition*, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Arendt's analysis can be seen in Chapter 2 of *Human Condition*. See *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

ancient Greeks divide human life into two categories: private life and political life. Private life mainly refers to the way of family life characterized by being based on blood kinship with the aim of meeting people's natural needs, such as food and fertility. People are united and engaged in labor for subsisting and prolonging their lives. Arendt points out that it is the principle of necessity that governs private or domestic life. This principle can be seen as a shared characteristic of the lives of both humans and animals.

By contrast, Arendt points out, according to Greek thought, political organizations are opposed to the natural union centered on the family and clan. Life in the polis represents political life outside of people's private lives. A polis is a space where people pursue freedom. For ancient Greeks, to be free, as Arendt elaborates, means to be no longer constrained by the necessity of life. Citizens conduct activities in the city-state and participate in politics. According to Arendt, Aristotle defines man as a political animal because political life highlights the difference between human and animal life.

Arendt points out that to fully understand the definition of man as a political animal, it is necessary to combine the second definition of man: as a speaking being (*zôon logon echon*).<sup>29</sup> Arendt explains that this second definition shows Aristotle's understanding of human beings and their political life. Speech is the foundation of what makes the human being a political being. Political activities are carried out in special modes of action and speech, not in the way of labor and production. According to Arendt, in ancient Greek thought, it was action (*praxis*) and speech (*lexis*) that constituted the political life of humans and gave rise to the sphere of human affairs.<sup>30</sup> Everything merely useful and necessary is excluded from political life.

According to Arendt, the ancient Greeks believed that action and speech allows people to move out of family life and enter political life. Speech, including arguing, persuading, and sharing, is the distinctive way to live in the polis. On the one hand, people maintain relationships with others and participate in the life of the polis through speech. On the other hand, speech can help people distinguish themselves from others and show their unique achievements in the life of the polis. Conversely, violence and force are both ways of life outside the polis that are characterized by silence or speechlessness.

Besides, Arendt points out that thinking is a secondary level to speech and action in the ancient Greeks' view. People can think about public affairs, such as right and wrong, good and evil. Nevertheless, it is the speech that conveys the results of people's thoughts to others. In this sense, real

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

political action takes place by way of speech. These interpretations of Aristotelian philosophy by Arendt contribute to her thinking about speech.

### *From Speech to Public Realm*

After analyzing the definition of human beings and their unique way of life in Aristotelian philosophy, Arendt also constructs her view on speech. Arendt first examines the basic conditions of human existence. She proposes that the basic condition of human existence is “plurality.”<sup>31</sup> When people deal with the world, according to Arendt, they cultivate the land and make products. These activities are no different from those of animals. The more important fact for human beings is that there are differences (distinctness) between people.<sup>32</sup> This distinctness is the main character of human plurality. Moreover, the uniqueness of human life is that people can disclose their distinctness in speech and action. In other words, people can show their differences by expressing their distinctions and communicating with others. In this sense, speech is inextricably related to the existence of human beings. This relationship can be further elaborated from the following two points.

First, Arendt points out that speech has the agent-revealing capacity, which means to disclose what was formerly obscured. She believes that speech reveals the fact that the human being lives as a unique being among his fellows. In her view, speech among people enables the appearance of the public sphere. By tracing back to ancient Greek thought, Arendt distinguished between the private and public spheres. The private sphere is related to the labor and private feelings of individuals, which are veiled and hidden.<sup>33</sup> Action and speech enable people to get out of the hidden private realm and enter into a space shared with others, which is the public realm. The public realm means the appearance of things. Anything that appears in the public realm can be seen and heard by all. Others see what I see and hear what I hear from different perspectives. The presence of others assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves. It is through speech that people themselves and others are revealed together, and a public space is created. Therefore, the public sphere can be seen as the result of human interaction and speech. Furthermore, speech reveals unique personal identities that allow people to appear in the public sphere. Everyone has different characteristics from others, such as performance, talent, and personality. Therefore, people see and talk about things from different perspectives. Speech discloses the unique and distinctive identity of a person.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

Second, Arendt discusses the danger of speech degenerating into "mere talk."<sup>34</sup> When speech is used by some people to deceive the enemy or used as demagogic propaganda, the existence of things and the actions of actors are obscured. Words fail to reveal the unique and distinctive identity of a person. At this point, speech becomes the so-called "mere talk." Arendt also explains mere talk in *Men in Dark Times*.<sup>35</sup> She points out that people enter a dark age when facts in the public sphere are overshadowed by high-profile rhetoric and empty words.

Here, Arendt offers a commentary on Heidegger's concept of idle talk. She believes that Heidegger's analysis of idle talk has extraordinary accuracy. Heidegger believes, according to Arendt, that the emergence of idle talk in the public sphere obscured the real thing and became the dominant force in people's daily life. Facing the dilemma of the dark ages, Heidegger's way of salvation, as Arendt points out, is to escape from the idle talk of the public and return to a state of loneliness. Nevertheless, Arendt offers a different outlet and insists on the important role of "illumination." Arendt argues that illumination does not depend on the guidance of a definite set of theories or concepts. The solution Arendt gives is to return to the public sphere and allow people to communicate with each other.

A key issue is involved here, namely, how to get rid of the erosion of mere talk in the public sphere. Arendt's analysis of this problem can be divided into two steps. The first step involves her explications of the relationship between mere talk and the human living condition. According to Arendt, the human living condition corresponding to mere talk is loneliness (*Verlassenheit*), that is, the state of losing the sense of human belonging. Specifically, there are two kinds of loneliness: living for others and being enemies of others.<sup>36</sup> When one trusts others too much and does not seek the truth of things, one will be manipulated by the "high-profile words" of others. Conversely, when people fear each other and do not trust each other, deceptive words are also rife in everyday life. In Arendt's view, loneliness and "absolute silence" cannot help people get out of the trouble of mere talk but may destroy people's ability to think and speak.

The second step is more crucial and concerns Arendt's inquiry into a public discourse that reveals the existence of things. What is a revealing public discourse that is different from mere talk? Based on Arendt's text, we can offer at least three responses to this question.

First, Arendt emphasizes the importance of "the thinking dialogue" or "the dialogue of solitude," that is, dialogue with oneself or a dialogue

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>35</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1983), 7.

<sup>36</sup> Arendt, *Human Condition*, 180.

between the “two-in-one.”<sup>37</sup> In Arendt’s view, people are always “two in one,” even when alone. When a person thinks, one is talking to another self. Arendt points out that Socrates can serve as a model for dialogue with oneself. She writes that:

Socrates, spending his life in examining himself and others, instructing them and himself in thinking, cannot but question all existing standards and measurements .... Furthermore, as he himself admits, his calling had led him into (*idiotuein alla me demosieuein*) a life of privacy in which he has shunned life with the people at large, which is public life ... all he could show for himself when it came to actual conduct was a voice speaking from within himself that would turn him back from something he intended to do but that never urged him to act.<sup>38</sup>

As seen in this excerpt, Socrates’s dialogue with himself is an activity that helps him reflect on the norms he accepts and his actions in his daily life. Based on her analysis of Socrates, Arendt points out that individuals can examine their speeches and actions in dialogue with themselves. In this process of dialogue with themselves, people can judge whether their opinion and actions contradict themselves. Arendt accepts Socrates’s claim that one cannot always be in a situation of disagreeing with oneself. Therefore, she also emphasizes that people agree with another self through having a dialogue between the two-in-one. Then, they can determine the criteria for their actions. This process lays the foundation for people to observe the world, participate in political affairs, and communicate with others.

Second, Arendt points out that a revealing public discourse is also concerned with mutual dialogue with others. Due to human plurality, everyone hears and sees the world from different angles. Speech in the public domain is not one voice or one point of view, but the mutual arguments and persuasions between different opinions. Arendt also uses Socrates as an example to illustrate speech and action in the public sphere.<sup>39</sup> In Arendt’s view, Socrates unified thought and speech. Socrates was willing to express his thoughts and talk to others. He encouraged others to express their opinions (*doxai*) positively and to reflect on the fallacies in their views. By

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<sup>37</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 20.

<sup>38</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 106–107.

<sup>39</sup> Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, 14–16.

accepting the responses and criticisms of others, one constantly improves one's understanding of things in the question and answer with others. Through mutual dialogues, people can make friends with each other and develop commonness in the political world. Arendt appreciates Socrates's way of communicating with others. In her view, speech in the public sphere is presented in a dialogical way. In this way, people can disclose their opinions and unique identities to others and participate in public affairs.

Third, Arendt points out that speaking in the way of "storytelling" can break people's silence and loneliness in the public sphere.<sup>40</sup> A story is a representation of what other people say and do. When participating in public affairs, people tell stories to describe historical figures and events and communicate with others. The story reveals the actions and deeds of a person, which influences things and people that are related to it. Arendt writes:

To the extent that the teller of factual truth is also a storyteller, he brings about that 'reconciliation with reality' which Hegel, the philosopher of the history *par excellence*, understood as the ultimate goal of all philosophical thought .... We may see, with Aristotle, in the poet's political function the operation of a catharsis, a cleansing or purging of all emotions that could prevent men from acting. The political function of the storyteller—historian or novelist—is to teach acceptance of things as they are.<sup>41</sup>

As seen in this paragraph, Arendt points out that storytellers, including poets, historians, and novelists, record and disclose factual truth about events and figures. Their stories not only make historical heroes and events appear in the public sphere but also stimulate listeners to think about them. Different from Heidegger, Arendt explores the political function of poetic speech.<sup>42</sup> Arendt argues that through the way of storytelling, people can better reveal the actions and roles of others in the public sphere. People shed light on each other's thoughts on the stories, sharing their understandings of public affairs in the open and free debate.

From the above discussion, we find that Arendt regards contemplative life as a pursuit in the private sphere away from public life,

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<sup>40</sup> Arendt, *Human Condition*, 181–188.

<sup>41</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, with an introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 257–258.

<sup>42</sup> Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, 123–126.

while speech and action in the public sphere are regarded as real human life. Arendt devoted herself to finding a revealing public discourse in her theory.

### From “Being-with” to Public Realm

From the analysis of the concept of *λόγος*, we can clearly see that both Heidegger and Arendt regard *λόγος* as speech and points out that speech has an irreplaceable effect on the existence of human beings. Arendt reflects and criticizes Heidegger’s theory of speech and “being-with” in her discussion. Some scholars, like April N. Flakne and Peg Birmingham, argue that the connection between the theories of Arendt and Heidegger should be emphasized.<sup>43</sup> The relationship between the speech theories of Heidegger and Arendt can be illustrated in two aspects: on the one hand, Arendt accepts Heidegger’s views on the relationship between speech and the existence of human beings. She also agrees with Heidegger’s viewpoint of different forms of speech and his criticism of idle talk and *das Man*. On the other hand, Arendt reflects on the unresolved question of public discourse in Heidegger’s theory. She analyzes the important role of authentic speech forms emphasized by Heidegger, including silence and poetry, in the public sphere. Furthermore, she exposita a genuine and active public speech. In this sense, she develops Heidegger’s speech theory.

Heidegger emphasizes the revealing character of speech. He points out that the truth of being lies in disclosedness, which means that something must be taken out of their concealment. Whether in *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* or in *Being and Time*, he regards speech as *Dasein*’s way of revealing things. In Heidegger’s view, speech discloses that the human being is a being that has its own life in conversation with others and that it is always with others. In *Basic Concepts*, Heidegger is concerned with the ethical and political situation of *Dasein*. He underlines the importance of different views of people in public life, pointing out that city-states were actually being-with-one-another in ways of communicating, refuting, and arguing. In *Being and Time*, however, the earlier analysis of the negotiation and rebuttal of different views within the city-state is absent. Heidegger pays more attention to the criticism of the inauthentic speech.

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<sup>43</sup> See April N. Flakne, “Beyond Banality and Fatality: Arendt, Heidegger and Jaspers on Political Speech,” in *New German Critique*, 86 (2002), 3–18, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3115199>>. Peg Birmingham, “Heidegger and Arendt: The Birth of Political Action and Speech,” in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. by François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (New York: SUNY Press, 2002); On this point, also see Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, “In Heidegger’s Shadow: Hannah Arendt’s Phenomenological Humanism,” in *The Review of Politics*, 46: 2 (1984), 183–211, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1407108>>.

Heidegger points out that the everydayness of *Dasein* is a state of indulging in *das Man* and publicness. The everydayness is the inauthentic state of *Dasein*. In Heidegger's view, the idle talk in everyday life obscures beings and distorts the truth of things. Idle talk allows *Dasein* to irresponsibly comment on the past and present and speculate on the future. To return to the authentic state of *Dasein*, it is necessary to go beyond publicness and *das Man*. Heidegger points to the possible dangers of being-with-one-another, that is, being dominated by publicness and *das Man*. Nevertheless, Heidegger does not provide an explicit description of an authentic public discourse, which makes many uncertainties hidden in his theory. The transition from *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* to *Being and Time* has caused many controversies over Heidegger's theory among scholars. Some scholars have accused him not only of his misleading interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy in *Being and Time* but also of the absence of politics in his theory.<sup>44</sup>

Arendt retains some insights from Heidegger's theory of speech and "being-with." First, Arendt adopts Heidegger's phenomenological perspective, examining the meaning of the concept of *λόγος*, i.e., speech, from an ontological perspective instead of an epistemological one. Arendt agrees with Heidegger's view that the subject-object dichotomy in traditional philosophy needs to be transcended and people should return to the existence of human beings to investigate the meaning of speech. Arendt neither defines human beings as something present to explain the properties one has in common with others nor does she focus on demonstrating the existence of the external world and the other in epistemology. These questions have been regarded by Heidegger as a pseudo-problem. She follows Heidegger's path and returns to the human experience to understand the meaning of speech. Consistent with Heidegger, Arendt also emphasizes the revealing feature of speech, that is, speech can make people appear in the public realm. Speaking reveals how people live in the world with others in their own unique personal identities.

Second, she accepts Heidegger's distinction between forms of speech and his views on idle talk. Heidegger distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic discourse and pays special attention to the form of inauthentic speech, i.e., idle talk. Arendt also attaches great importance to the encroachment of idle talk on the public realm. In Arendt's view, the facts of the public sphere are overshadowed by the double-talk of official representatives, irresponsible rhetoric, and many sermons. It is these different kinds of idle talk that keep "everything that exists in an opaque, meaningless

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Metcalf has a detailed statement on this debate. See Robert Metcalf, "Aristoteles und *Sein und Zeit*," in *Heidegger und Aristoteles*, ed by Alfred Denker (Freiburg: Alber, 2007).

thereness which spreads obfuscation and causes disgust.”<sup>45</sup> Arendt’s description of people’s daily life is no different from that of Heidegger.

Third, like Heidegger, Arendt also seeks to find a way to get out of the trouble of *das Man* and idle talk. Heidegger claims that the state of solitude and silence is essential for people to escape from being controlled by idle talk and *das Man*. Following Heidegger, Arendt stresses the importance of the dialogue of solitude or the silent conversation between two-in-one. She believes that getting away from public life and having a conversation with another self is also necessary for people to know themselves and reflect on their words and actions. The dialogue of solitude helps one to form one’s views, which lays the groundwork for one to participate in discussions in the public sphere. In this sense, Heidegger’s speech theory provides valuable insights to Arendt.

However, Arendt also points out the problems in Heidegger’s speech theory. Arendt believes that Heidegger’s discussion of *das Man* and the publicness is accurate. However, Heidegger fails to clearly articulate an authentic form of public discourse. For Arendt, Heidegger’s theory may lead to the forgetfulness of others as well as indifference and hostility to the public sphere. She points out that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology enclosed *Dasein* in self-practice without contact with the world and others. Public life is seen as the inauthentic state of *Dasein*, which leads to alienation from the real world and political life.<sup>46</sup> Habermas also underscored this criticism.<sup>47</sup> Although Arendt’s critique is not entirely accurate, she does point out an unresolved problem in Heidegger’s theory: the lack of a clear analysis of active public speech.

Based on her critique of Heidegger, Arendt continued to think about “being-with” and public speech. She does not merely emphasize the inauthentic use of speech in the public sphere. Instead, she examines an authentic and uncovered public discourse. Arendt believes that action and speech in the public sphere can be considered the unique living way of human beings. An authentic public discourse reveals the uniqueness of the actor and the affairs of the public sphere. It is a form of discourse resulting from individuals actively demonstrating their uniqueness, so it is prone to uncertainty and unpredictability. She argues that storytelling can disclose unique identities and factual truths about events and people in the public

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<sup>45</sup> Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Hannah Arendt, “What Is Existential Philosophy?,” in *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994), 180; Hannah Arendt, “Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought,” in *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994), 432–433.

<sup>47</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. by Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), 150.

sphere. She also examines different ways of storytelling, including poetry, novel, and play. Different from Heidegger, she explores the political function of poetic speech as a way of storytelling.<sup>48</sup> In her view, storytelling can help people share their understandings and communicate with each other about events and figures in the public sphere.

Meanwhile, Arendt argues that human plurality determines that speech in the public sphere takes the form of dialogue rather than a monologue. It is through open communication and debate of people that a consensus can be reached. Only in the communicative activity of speech can legitimate power arise. Habermas applauds Arendt's analysis of the interactive subjectivity that occurs in communicative action. Habermas points out that Arendt is committed to articulating the structures of non-distorted communication.<sup>49</sup> This point is emphasized again in Habermas's discourse ethics and deliberative conceptions of democratic life. Habermas believes that the human being is an animal living in the public sphere. This paradigm of a man living in the world determines people's daily self-understanding. It is the public space that makes the human being become the individual, which can reflect the social world. People rely on language to interact with others and exchange points in conversation to ensure that the unforced force of a better argument prevails.<sup>50</sup>

From what has been discussed, we can see the connection and distinction between Heidegger's and Arendt's speech theories. Arendt develops Heidegger's notion of speech by elucidating an authentic and active public speech. This attempt is closely related to her reflection on the tradition of Western political philosophy. The process of developing from Heidegger's theory of "being-with" to Arendt's theory of the public sphere is not only a process in which the political spirit of "being-with" gradually emerges but also a process in which the importance of dialogue and negotiation in the public sphere is constantly highlighted.

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<sup>48</sup> Arendt's viewpoints of the importance of poetry in the public sphere can be confirmed by the political impact of the poetry of some famous writers, such as the Filipino nationalist Jose Rizal and the American theologian Thomas Merton. On Arendt's views, see Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, 123–126. On the relationship between poetic speech and political engagement, see Jose Maria Sison, *The Guerrilla Is Like a Poet – Ang Gerilya Ay Tulad ng Makata* (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2013), 5–14; David Orr, "The Politics of Poetry," in *Poetry*, 192: 4 (2008), 409–418, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20608250>>.

<sup>49</sup> See Jürgen Habermas, "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Assessments of Leading Political Philosophers*, ed. by Garrath Williams (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>50</sup> For Habermas's view, see Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

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## “Second Moments” of Post-truth: On Tertiary Retention, Feminism, and Hegel

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**Abstract:** The essay tries to weave together three interlocking themes: feminism, Hegel, and tertiary retention, which pivot around the question posed by Bruno Latour in 2004: “Why has critique run out of steam?” In less than two decades since, the post-truth era magnifies Latour’s question, aggravating the already complex challenge science faces in advancing the global climate change agenda. In this vein, the paper takes the feminist position of Donna Haraway and her engagement with Latour. This particular engagement necessarily escalates the issue of the post-factual era. Finally, this engagement, as the paper builds around the lesson of feminism and the paradoxical legacy of Hegel, gathers around the important concept of tertiary retention (developed by Bernard Stiegler) regarding the creation of historical memory amid the epochal loss of attention through the global infrastructures of digitizing human knowledge, desire, and experience.

**Keywords:** epokhal redoubling, falsehood, post-truth, second moment

### Introduction: Truth and Speculation

In one of his early essays, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” published in 2004, Bruno Latour asks “What has become of the critical spirit?”<sup>1</sup> Latour worries that critique has missed its goal if not “aiming” at the wrong target. Truth becomes at stake against the background of public discourse that has inclined towards mistrust

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<sup>1</sup> Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” in *Critical Inquiry*, 30 (2004), 225–248, <<https://doi.org/10.1086/421123>>.

of statements claiming to be objective. Even statements of facts, such as scientific claims, are deemed mere articulations of "ideological biases."<sup>2</sup>

In 2016, more than a decade after Latour's essay came out, *Oxford Dictionaries* declared "post-truth" as the "word of the year" as the EU referendum and the US presidential elections (that Donald Trump won) loomed large on the geopolitical horizon, impacting world economies, and the global political climate.<sup>3</sup> *Oxford Dictionaries* cite two cultural contributions to this shape-shifting rhetorical terrain: 1) Ralph Keyes' *The Post-truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*, released on the same year Latour published his essay and 2) the American comedian Stephen Colbert popularizing the word "truthiness" to mean "the quality of seeming or being felt to be true, even if not necessarily true."<sup>4</sup> In Colbert's use of truth, a certain *redoubling* occurs. It no longer stands for truth in the objective sense. Truth attracts suspicion, doubles itself to yield doubt, mistrust, and disbelief. But it does not stop there. Truth becomes the legitimacy of subjective agency, partially echoing the Kierkegaardian indexing of truth to subjectivity,<sup>5</sup> but a redoubled subjectivity (which no longer captures the true spirit of Kierkegaard's philosophy).<sup>6</sup> In truthiness, subjectivity is not only the starting point of reflection but also its endpoint.<sup>7</sup> This stands in marked contrast to the dialectical solution of Hegel, who happens to be Kierkegaard's nemesis. Only something that amounts to an objective totality can preempt the agency's trajectory from approaching the threshold of truthiness. In this context, Hegel would rather that reflective contradictions are mediated by speculative logic.<sup>8</sup> But speculative philosophy has had its own share of criticisms too.

From dialectical mediation to deconstruction, to the post-deconstructive renewal of critical strategies, the speculative direction of

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>3</sup> See Oxford Languages, "Word of the Year 2016," <<https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016>>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Kierkegaard writes: "[T]hat subjectivity is truth is expressed objectively by this, that the truth proclaims itself to be a paradox." Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 50.

<sup>6</sup> From a Kierkegaardian point of view, truth has no endpoint in the epistemic sense. Truth remains paradoxical to the extent that it is always an object of faith, which is not necessarily the Christian faith. See *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel called this process the metaphysics of subjectivity. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ed. and trans. by Walter Cerf and H.S. Harris (New York: State University of New York, 1977), 188.

<sup>8</sup> In fact, for Hegel, due to its capacity to 'transcend' its 'one-sided intellectual character', "speculation becomes a divine service." G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. by H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (New York: State University of New York, Albany, 1977), 58.

textual interpretations prevalent in the humanities is perhaps one of the reasons why, in general, these disciplines are ill-prepared to pursue the path of revisions. Latour adds:

Is it really our duty to add fresh ruins to fields of ruins?  
Is it really the task of the humanities to add  
deconstruction to destruction? More iconoclasm to  
iconoclasm? What has become of the critical spirit? Has  
it run out of steam?<sup>9</sup>

In Latour's sociological prism, the speculative kernel of the humanities is responsible for why it has been "fighting enemies long gone, conquering territories that no longer exist."<sup>10</sup> In light of the necessity to yield strategic results, "revision" becomes a crucial trope in Latour's essay:

To remain in the metaphorical atmosphere of the time,  
military experts constantly revise their strategic  
doctrines, their contingency plans, the size, direction,  
and technology of their projectiles, their smart bombs,  
their missiles; I wonder why we, we alone, would be  
saved from those sorts of revisions.<sup>11</sup>

But aside from the masculine trajectory of militarism that Latour, unabashed by its semantic connotation, associated with the critical function of revision, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?" was criticized by progressive feminists for its lack of emphasis in the revision of the humanities on what should be the defining role of gender. Apparently, one reason why "critique has run out of steam" is the omission of this crucial intervention.

### **Challenging the Standpoint of Reflexivity**

Donna Haraway already detected in Latour's early STS (Science, Technology and Society Studies) position a biased articulation of male reflexivity, the so-called "modest witnessing" of man "characterized by high status and disciplined, ethical restraint."<sup>12</sup> No matter how objective science is, it is never gender-neutral. Haraway's popular imagery of the cyborg was meant to challenge precisely that: the humanistic framework upon which, in

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<sup>9</sup> Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?," 225.

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

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

<sup>12</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium. FemaleMan@\_Meets\_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 31.

general, modern thinking is based, which, in particular, devolves into the distinction between humans and machines, notwithstanding their intersecting zones of contact. The cyborg is not just designed to prove that humans and machines were intersecting but also puts to question the humanist (masculine) paradigm based on binary oppositions upon which this material semiosis is premised (in light of today's gender-biased AIs). But it is more than the human-machine distinction:

[B]inary oppositions entail an unjustified privileging of one aspect which is used to justify the actual repression of various non-privileged others, including animals, women, non-Westerners and so on. Criticising binary logic means that we have to re-think the political privilegings that arise from it.<sup>13</sup>

Haraway is particularly insightful in light of current feminist debates and attempts to mainstream feminist discourses, especially in technoscience that has increasingly shaped the material-semiotic landscape of recent century. However, some feminists have criticized Haraway for coming up short of a distinctive feminist method or feminist science to challenge the dominant masculine framework.<sup>14</sup> Counter-intuitively, Haraway and Sara Harding initiated this criticism of alternative feminist epistemologies, noting their patent *identitarian* trajectories toward the impulse to mimic "omnipotence" and "immortality,"<sup>15</sup> reminiscent of the masculine compulsion toward transcendence.<sup>16</sup> In this light, the argument of "situated knowledge" (which Haraway and Harding promoted) addresses the problematic of scientific objectivity in the manner of "unearthing the politics of positioning,"<sup>17</sup> but does not question the necessity of science. Rather, what is questionable is science's appeal to neutrality, and thus, universality.

In a Hegelian context, science is an enterprise of paradoxes. For Hegel, its subjective starting point must give way to sublation, the cancelation of subjectivity to arrive at "universal determination" from its "*determinate*

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<sup>13</sup> Gavin Rae, "The Philosophical Roots of Donna Haraway's Cyborg Imagery: Descartes and Heidegger through Latour, Derrida, and Agamben," in *Human Studies*, 37 (2014), 506 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-014-9327-z>>.

<sup>14</sup> See Anupam Yadav, "Epistemology Revisited: A Feminist Critique," in *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19: 6 (2018), 1-9, <<https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol19/iss6/24>>.

<sup>15</sup> Donna J. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives," in *Feminist Studies*, 14:3 (1988), 580, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>>.

<sup>16</sup> See Sandra Harding, "The Method Question," in *Feminism & Science*, 1 (1987), 19-35 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3810120>>.

<sup>17</sup> Yadav, "Epistemology Revisited," 376.

*existence* in a subject.”<sup>18</sup> Arguably, however, feminism is better positioned to pursue the path of revision (using Latour’s idiom) to expose the “invisible” politics of negating subjectivity (in a way, revision is played out as a negation of Hegel’s negation of the negation), such as in scientific discourses, which celebrates paradoxicality without the necessity of a dialectical closure.

We can see in this feminist position a full rendering of paradoxicality as a weapon of choice, combat, and coherence. The three Cs I mentioned here pertain, more generally, to the feminist situatedness that pursues the path of epistemic revision in terms of “[constructing] a usable, but not an innocent doctrine of objectivity.”<sup>19</sup> It is a paradoxical choice, echoing Haraway, which inevitably starts with a position of subjectivity and comes full circle as a nominated position of truth—one can say, in the correct manner of Kierkegaardian paradoxicality—within a *partially* circumscribed circle of epistemic competence.

This paradoxical positioning preempts a Hegelian sublation, refusing the resolution of conflicts in speculative totality whose dialectical intent is to sublimate the standpoint of subjectivity to make the truth-process objective.<sup>20</sup> Situatedness nominates partiality as the “condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims,”<sup>21</sup> revealing no less the actual power dynamics surrounding the “sociality of knowledge.”<sup>22</sup> Science is already biased in favor of male reflexivity in the sense that its quasi-Hegelianism is underscored by its claim to neutrality, even as it tactically effaces the male subjective standpoint (and in the process conceals the dominant framing of sociality that privileges it) in order to enforce its universal status.

The second C refers to the paradoxical terms of combat or resistance. It does not shy away from championing its bias, albeit a preference that does not aspire for transcendence. The objective is not to bury Hegel but to make him suffer interminably, in a manner of speaking. Hegel is not dead. One way to put it is that this undead phenomenon called “dialectic” strategically leaves us with an opportunity to pursue a nondialectical *elevation* (*vis-à-vis sublation*)

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<sup>18</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. by George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 78.

<sup>19</sup> Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 582.

<sup>20</sup> Stanley Rosen sums up this point, referring to how the subjectivity of the concept is sublated to become a real concept: “[A]s objective or real, it must regain subjectivity, that is, show itself as the identity within difference of internal and external or subject and object. It must show itself as the idea.” [Stanley Rosen, *The Idea of Hegel’s Science of Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 409]. Here, however, the recovery of subjectivity loses its immediate character and transforms into an abstract.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret Grebowicz and Helen Merrick, *Beyond Haraway: Adventures with Donna Haraway* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 64.

<sup>22</sup> Helen E. Longino, *Fate of Knowledge* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 77.

in the non-Hegelian tradition, for example, of Schelling, who was Hegel's contemporary.

The crux of the matter is that, in Hegel, resistance is practically non-interventional, which reflects what he calls the silent negativity already implicit in the life of the spirit.<sup>23</sup> Reality is always already in motion, even without the *intervention* of the Subject (Hegel's replacement for Spinoza's substance<sup>24</sup>), which otherwise would amount to a bias in terms of intervening in the course of things. Biases must not be allowed to elevate their standpoints onto the discretionary level of "what is" and its opposite complement, or the business of addressing the contradictions of reality, which can only be achieved by objective, thus non-subjective *logical* means, or rather *speculative* means.

Meanwhile, in place of sublation, there is also a process of intervention called *elevation*, referring to a positional commitment, which in essence "cannot be sublated."<sup>25</sup> Schelling writes: "True progress, which is equivalent to an elevation, only takes place when something is posited ... and becomes the ground of elevation and progression."<sup>26</sup> Elevation *interrupts* the dialectical slide into the third moment, the negation of the negation. Instead, it decides to "stay with the trouble"<sup>27</sup> *a la* Haraway, intrinsic to the *second* moment, the *celebration of partiality*, without the guarantee of closure, echoing the Schellingian notion of un-sublated biases.<sup>28</sup>

Lastly, the third C designates the coherence of partiality constitutive of its integrity as an elevating act, a politics of positioning in the contested verticality of social power that, unfortunately, is no match to the post-truth politics of subjective agencies reducing positionalities to a skewed notion of horizontal dimension. Incidentally, Deleuze and Guattari offer the same description: the becoming-horizontal of skies.<sup>29</sup> (I will discuss this duo later).

"Skies" here mean the vertical aspiration for transcendence, only that the skies have become immanent. This somewhat echoes the position of *flat*

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<sup>23</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 559.

<sup>24</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 21.

<sup>25</sup> F.W.J. von Schelling, *Ages of the World*, in *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World*, by Slavoj Žižek and F.W.J. von Schelling, trans. by Judith Norman (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 135. Quoted in Alistair Welchman and Judith Norman, "Creating the Past: Schelling's *Ages of the World*," in *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 4 (2010), 38, <<https://doi.org/10.1163/187226310X490034>>.

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

<sup>27</sup> See Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>29</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 97.

*ontology* (which, incidentally, Latour pioneered) in which nothing is *sui generis*; nothing is causally superior to another.<sup>30</sup> But, as in Nietzsche's criticism of the *equalization of agencies*, flat ontology produces its own reflexive monsters, speaking of its nihilistic tendencies.<sup>31</sup>

This is the same reflexivity that conveys the humanistic and conservative tendency of liberal humanism. Its conservatism lies in pursuing "non-partisan truths," a throwback of "classical objectivity and intellectual free play" where the "ideal of human truth," for instance, ought to "eclipse political commitments" and "ideological biases" in the service of understanding "the naked and [the] objective."<sup>32</sup> But here, genuine objectivity can only come to play if this liberal interpretation of things penetrates the realm of *matter*, the naked and the objective. Unfortunately, this penetration can also transform the interpretive field into the differentiability of epistemic positions, whereby matter becomes converted into a *potent* field where interpretive agents *create* their own values, otherwise, potencies. The whole interpretive landscape becomes dependent on who gets to have funding for laboratory experiments and access to information in order to "win" a value, a *potency*. As Latour, then an earlier proponent of flat ontology, argued, science "[creates] potencies" that necessarily "weaken all others."<sup>33</sup> This was once called the "science wars."<sup>34</sup>

And yet this kind of liberalism has an undeniable cost. Today, this cost redoubles in post-truth: truth is just truthiness, ideological, and partisan at large. Politics eclipses truth. Partisanship, not the *partial character* of knowledge, which constitutes the objectivity of science,<sup>35</sup> is the new objectivity.

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<sup>30</sup> Graham Harman, *Bruno Latour: Reassembling the Political* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 18.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>32</sup> See Philip Goldstein, "Humanism and the Politics of Truth," in *boundary 2*, 12/13 (1984), 235, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/302816>>.

<sup>33</sup> Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. by Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 233.

<sup>34</sup> Bruno Latour, "The Science Wars: A Dialogue," trans. by Ashraf Noor in *Common Knowledge*, 8: 1 (2002), 701-779, <<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-87-DIALOG-GB-COMMON-KNOWLEDGE.pdf>>.

<sup>35</sup> See Helen E. Longino, *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 212. It should be noted that Longino, Haraway, and Harding had contentious claims against one another on the aspect of feminist science or method, but also agreed on the general orientation of feminist situatedness (which we are broadening in this paper, but specific to the tertiary retention angle that we will discuss later). See John H. Zammito, *Nice Derangement of Epistemes: Post-positivism in the Study of Science from Quine to Latour* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 214-217.

However, in line with their recent scholarly commitments, Haraway and Latour (especially Latour before he passed away in 2022)<sup>36</sup> are far from embracing this skewed but typical conception of flat ontology. It should be noted that "Haraway's cyborg metaphor is built upon Latour's hybrid vision,"<sup>37</sup> which, despite its oblique connotation, is originally framed within a paradigmatic orientation favoring non-hierarchy and horizontal ethics. Non-hierarchy is the opposite of the fetishization of the master concept of scale, implying a verticality of transcendence in the partisan game of power.<sup>38</sup> Latour shifted his early position, leaning toward flat ontology, to what Graham Harman—by far the most astute expositor of Latour's intellectual legacy—describes as the "careful fabrication of fragile networks in the name of civil peace."<sup>39</sup> This indicates that Latour is already avoiding the monsters of flat ontology in the face of the worsening post-truth condition and the pressing issue of climate change.

For post-truth, statements/standpoints are always power-laden. Nonetheless, the dynamics of power in post-truth still lean on the side of *power as truth*, not power as the creative process of securing the continuity of the false.

### The Power of the False

One can look at post-truth in terms of the obscurantism of power to the extent that the distinction between *powers* becomes consistently blurred. On the one hand, there is a power that enables truth without falsehood (dogmatism); on the other hand, that which allows falsehood to enrich the search for truth (critical realism). In Deleuze's designation of the latter as the power of the false, derived from Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, science is invoked, in the last instance, as a "paradigmatic example."<sup>40</sup>

It pays to note, however, that science enters into the false only after it is rid of the ascetic ideal founded on the "[denial] of difference ... a part of a more general enterprise of denying life," which, for Nietzsche, reveals a

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<sup>36</sup> Since the early 2000s, Latour had abandoned his former view of scientific objectivity, or at least, its solid political connotation. See Jop De Vrieze, "Bruno Latour, A Veteran of the 'Science Wars', Has a New Mission," in *Science Insider* (10 October 2017), <<https://www.science.org/content/article/bruno-latour-veteran-science-wars-has-new-mission>>.

<sup>37</sup> Zammito, *Nice Derangement*, 214.

<sup>38</sup> See Sallie A. Marston, "The Social Construction of Scale," in *Progress in Human Geography*, 24: 2 (2000), 219–242, <<https://doi.org/10.1191/030913200674086272>>.

<sup>39</sup> Harman, *Bruno Latour: Reassembling the Political*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel W. Smith, "The Pure Form of Time and the Power of the False," in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 81 (2019), 48, <<https://doi.org/10.2143/TVF.81.1.3286543>>.

nihilistic compulsion, whereby the world “sinks into the undifferentiated.”<sup>41</sup> In this light, the asceticism of science lies in its pursuit of balance.

For Nietzsche, the power of the false is first an artistic impulse. It is alone capable of “competing” and “opposing” the ascetic ideal of which science has become its modern proponent after the eclipse of religion. It is the power of the false of the artistic *partiality for truth* that exposes reality as a mere *appearance* resulting from the superimposition of artificial balance on natural differentiation of things, against which Nietzsche proposed a threefold critique of 1) “logical identity,” 2) “mathematical equality,” and 3) “physical equilibrium.”<sup>42</sup> But reality as a mere appearance does not suggest that the real in the world is negated. Rather, reality is the outcome of a process of “selection, correction, redoubling, and affirmation.”<sup>43</sup> Still, aren’t these what science strictly performs on things, natural and man-made?

Daniel W. Smith sumps up this point as follows: 1) the nature of science is “an asymptotic progress toward an ideal, and that ideal is the ‘Form of the True,’ even if in fact science may never reach this ideal,” and 2) “[f]ar from progressing toward the ‘form of the true,’ science is itself the movement that embodies the powers of the false as a power of metamorphosis and becoming, a series of falsities (which does not mean ‘untruths’), a multiplicity of powers.”<sup>44</sup> Suffice it to say that there have been reactionary and conservative treatments of flat ontologizing of things recently, deriving their public appeal from a one-sided direction of horizontality, that is, the negation of objectivity (scientific objectivity still appeals to verticality as a justification of competence) wherever it is claimed.<sup>45</sup> Truth positionings have become seemingly anachronistic, and doing so has its cost: “Attempting to expose facts as results of power-laden processes of social construction [can play] into the hands of anti-scientific obscurantists.”<sup>46</sup>

This type of obscurantism is expressed in the form of questioning the actual, albeit, understated value of the false behind truth-making, not truth

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<sup>41</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 45.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, “Pure Form of Time,” 48–49.

<sup>45</sup> For a brief history of neoconservative movement, at least in the US (written by a neocon), see Michael Lind, “The Strange Path of ‘Neoconservatism,’” *The Globalist* (20 June 2003), <<https://www.theglobalist.com/the-strange-path-of-neoconservatism>>. For an interesting contemporary discussion on the so-called overlap of truth and post-truth, see Vittorio Bufacci, “Truth, Lies and Tweets: A Consensus Theory of Post-truth,” in *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 47: 3 (2020), 347–361, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453719896382>>.

<sup>46</sup> Matthias Flatscher and Seitz Sergej, “Latour, Foucault, and Post-Truth: The Role and Function of Critique in the Era of the Truth Crisis,” in *Le foucauldien*, 6: 1 (2020), 1. <<https://doi.org/10.14718/SoftPower.2019.6.2.8>>.

itself understood as that which emerges triumphant over the skeptical challenge of falsehood. In this context, falsehood is the midwifery of truth-making. This concept of truth by obscuring its correlation to falsity (what obtains in post-truth) is a far cry from Nietzsche's original, anti-dialectical rendition of the concept of the power of the false, that is, to "question truth ... undertaken from the viewpoint of the false."<sup>47</sup> Smith, once again, carefully unpacks this point regarding scientific knowledge:

[M]any of the propositions now taken to be true in science are most certainly false, and the propositions and hypotheses that will replace them in the future will also turn out to be false. In this view, the supposed 'progress' of science is in fact a movement from falsity to falsity.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, what is at stake in the post-factual era is not the integrity of truth but falsity itself. In Deleuze's Nietzscheanism, overlapping with Popper's thesis, "the true is secondary to the false" (recall that truth is simply an ideal form), "and that the false ... is a far more important concept in philosophy than the concept of truth."<sup>49</sup>

### The Postcritical Turn

Latour, Haraway, and (much earlier) Deleuze and Guattari criticized what we may designate here by the subjective commitments of human agency for their failure to break free of the notion of truth that relies on the *privileging* of the reflexive standpoint and, by extension, the ironic non-standpoint of neutrality, *a la* Hegel (at least in the sense we discussed Hegel concerning the cancellation of subjectivity). Breaking free of this privileging, in contrast, provides a starting point for the elevation of acts to what Latour calls the "agonistic field,"<sup>50</sup> whereby truth-structures and edifices can be unsettled to give way to *intensive modulation* in the manner of Deleuzian rhizomatics. These *de-privileging* maneuvers can render the dominant epistemic centers irrelevant by preempting a feedback loop to complete the self-centering of power.

Notwithstanding the criticism of male reflexivity, at least from the perspective of the cyborg vis-à-vis Latour, the concept of the agonistic field where scientific knowledge is gained not by some recourse to truth, but rather

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<sup>47</sup> Smith, "Pure Form of Time," 50.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>50</sup> See Zammito, *Nice Derangement*, 191.

by political contentions, seeking the “attention of the research community”<sup>51</sup> with prospects of funding, is music to the radical constructivist’s ears—a position not entirely disjunctive of Haraway’s early and later commitments. Truth, even scientific truth, is rhetorical in nature.<sup>52</sup> Science “never [bows] to reason, but to force.”<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, it does not mean truth is rhetorical at large. Science is still a circumscribed field of competency. But the concept of agonistic contestation strikes at the heart of the objectivity of science. In its public face, science appears almost immaculate, shorn of the inner workings of advancing its subjective commitments (in the sense that they are, in appearance, negated), which are martial in scope and purpose. The objective is to win: “The agonistic field...is all about winning and losing (credibility).”<sup>54</sup>

Interestingly, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, while there seems to be no longer the illusion of an external obstacle that the search for truth has to overcome metaphysically, which gives the impression that science has won its old-age contest with religion by successfully unlocking the secrets of reality with evidentiary functional results, the fact is “[e]xternal obstacles are now only technological, [but] internal rivalries remain.”<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, these rivalries could also be repurposed for other ends, which are complementary to winning battles (further aggravating Latour’s postcritical condition) as in the case of *simulation* in relation to philosophical criticisms. Deleuze and Guattari liken these criticisms to *sales promotion* amid the accelerating automation of thinking, converting thoughts into goods and commodities against the background of competing for marketability:

The simulacrum, the simulation of a packet of noodles, has become the true concept; and the one who packages the product, commodity, or work of art has become the philosopher, conceptual persona, or artist. How could philosophy, an old person, compete against young executives in a race for the universals of communication for determining the marketable form of the concept.<sup>56</sup>

In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari’s alternative to the postcritical exhaustion of concepts by simulation is to “go beyond [images],”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>52</sup> Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 577.

<sup>53</sup> Latour, *Pasteurization of France*, 233.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>55</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 97.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

hence, the caveat against too much speculation (restricted to image-consumption). But going beyond images must also "[crosscut] the chaotic variability" of things, actants, or entities to "give [reality its] consistency," which is to say, "[r]eason shows us its true face only when it 'thunders in its craters'."<sup>58</sup> This alternative implies the acting out of the "chaoid state" of concepts,<sup>59</sup> or, in the Foucauldian sense, the critical ontology of the self.<sup>60</sup>

Eventually, Haraway would abandon her early constructivist position; in place of agonism, she would champion the iterability of "contact zones" in terms of "solidarity and shared conversations in epistemology,"<sup>61</sup> which is premised simultaneously on the paradoxicality of situatedness. As Haraway argues, a "[partial] perspective can be held accountable for both its promising and destructive monsters."<sup>62</sup> This new concept is a unique form of reflexivity compared to the masculine. This time reflection does not invoke transcendence. It is rather stuck in its partial objectivity; neither aspiring to break free of the subjective kernel of science nor attain its closure, belying the universality of truth, including scientific truth, which, despite or because of its partiality, secures the practice of science.

### The Second Moment of Post-truth

From the standpoint of truthiness, history is a power continuum fueled by truth contests that overlook the vital force that inspires them, the power of the false that exposes at the same time the oblivious nature of history as truth. Truthiness forgets history is never complete. Only its undead reverberations flourish through the violent inversion of history from forgetting to remembrance (everything is recalled back to the motivations of power). But remembrance ignores the fact that this power is powerless to remember, vis-à-vis the proliferation of traces,<sup>63</sup> in the Derridean sense, which explains the contemporary adherence to the authority of "fictions and abstractions," without getting to "a plane" where one can proceed "from real being to real being and advance through the construction of concepts."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>60</sup> See Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

<sup>61</sup> Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 584.

<sup>62</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 190.

<sup>63</sup> The Derridean concept of trace signifies that 'something' always eludes genetic analysis. See Paola Marrati, *Genesis and Trace: Derrida Reading Husserl and Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

<sup>64</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 207.

In this section, I will try to address the question of the post-factual era (viewed from the perspective of historical progress) that does not seem to offer a way out in the guise of a “second moment,” which Bernard Stiegler assigns to the production of new knowledge, referring to the function of “tertiary retentions.”<sup>65</sup>

In the following, Stiegler sums up the overarching concept of “*epokhal* redoubling” under which the promise of the second moment can ideally operate: 1) “an *epokhē* in the philosophical sense... is an interruption of belief and knowledge ... that had hitherto constituted the previous era, which is also what, in historical terms, we call an ‘epoch’,” and 2) “the reconstitution of new knowledge, new forms of behaviour, new culture, new circuits of transindividuation—and then new social systems ... constituting a new society.”<sup>66</sup> Since the last two centuries, technological progress has laid down the epochal template for historical transformation, altering the face of the planet at the same time. Stiegler’s Heideggerian background with respect to the concept of *Gestell*, for instance, plays its part too well in this respect.<sup>67</sup>

But it was Nietzsche, at the turn of the preceding two centuries, who anticipated the corporeal implications of genealogical histories and how these histories, which are tied with the general economy of labor and human and natural resources, create new body assemblages that form into and constitute a new epoch. Foucault would describe the same thing as creating the body-self, “adopting the illusion of substantial unity.”<sup>68</sup> He writes of this Nietzschean diagnosis: “Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is ... situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and process of history’s destruction of the body.”<sup>69</sup> In Stiegler’s idiom, what amounts to the genealogical discovery of the contemporary effects of technics from the last two hundred years is the “generalized proletarianization”<sup>70</sup> of the bulk of the human species. This “inherently entropic”<sup>71</sup> process has led to today’s epochal experience of post-truth in the guise of “resignation, denial, cowardice, compromise, and complicity, and the anxieties that all this causes.”<sup>72</sup> To this extent, the realization of historical memory, which can only be attained through

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<sup>65</sup> Bernard Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures (2016–2019)*, trans. by Daniel Ross (London: Open Humanities Press, 2020).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>68</sup> Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 148.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 32, 263.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

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attention, is blocked.<sup>73</sup> Thus, post-truth is characterized by an epochal loss of attention already overwhelmed by data algorithms' hyper-intensive modulation of human experience.

The second moment is nowhere within grasp. As Stiegler argues, it is supposed to create the conditions for externalizing "that which it has internalized" as a critical component of historical memory and "individuating it by individuating itself."<sup>74</sup> Externalization enables the drives to be collectively shared as an object-investment, for instance, between mother and child forming the bond of the "psychic apparatus," a kind of "tertiary retention" through which each "shares the exteriorization of the drives."<sup>75</sup> In the case of mother and child, the exchange of drives "exceeds all calculation,"<sup>76</sup> which is love that ceases to be an oedipal fetish, as we are told by Freud, or starts to become an internal need, according to which, as society expands, education, which is the equivalent of the collective exteriorization of the social drive that stemmed from the mother-child exchange, becomes an essential component of human survival.

It is in this sense that exteriorization/exosomatization, as Stiegler defined it, is a crucial element of human evolution. The human body is composed of tissues, limbs, and organs that are not the products of biological evolution alone but also co-constitutive of the psychosomatic, artificial, and technical evolution of social organizations that began millions of years ago. Evolution could not have happened without starting with the crudest of tools, adaptive and mnemonic, necessary for survival, which is not without the multispecies transformation of organic life and material encounters in the background.<sup>77</sup> Recall here Latour's hybrid and Haraway's cyborg, in addition to Derrida's concept of grammatology.<sup>78</sup> These nonstandard perspectives on human evolution and progress resonate with Leroi-Gourhan's anthropological studies concerning the co-defining evolutionary routes responsible for creating three types of memory: 1) species memory, 2) ethnic

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>77</sup> Andre Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. by Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), 413, n. 14.

<sup>78</sup> Acknowledging his intellectual debt to Leroi-Gourhan, Derrida argues that human evolution is not the result of intentional consciousness, invoking the interplay of co-constitutive evolutionary factors whose origin can only leave traces, but which also enables the "possibility of putting it in reserve: it is at once and in the same movement constitutes and effaces so-called conscious subjectivity, its logos, and theological attributes." [Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 84.] Derrida also calls this double movement concerning the 'trace' the "double movement of retention and protention" (*ibid.*). See also Yuk Hui, *Archive of the Future: Remarks on the Concept of Tertiary Protention* (Gutenberg: Landsarkivet i Göteborg, 2018).

memory, and 3) artificial memory.<sup>79</sup> Stiegler would add *tertiary retention* to these mnemonic overlaps, which means the *enlivening of the second moment* of exteriorization capable of engendering new forms of society and culture.

Meanwhile, the postfactual era is threatening to overtake this critical exteriorization of historical memory. Building on Stiegler and Derrida, Yuk Hui calls this archival metaphysics, otherwise, the memory of the future, which is already here.<sup>80</sup> The archive/memory is supposed to be the tertiary retention willed by conscious or noetic agents but is now prearranged by data algorithms whose primary subjects are no less already proletarianized (as to their interior drives, sensibilities, object-investments, and desires). In this context, the present has lost its memory, which is the precondition for post-truth and fodder to a total algorithmic governmentality.

### Conclusion: Deferring the Third Moment

The externalization of the drives, we learned from Stiegler, serves a social purpose. Nonetheless, as he would engage Hegel in the conclusion of the third installment of his *Nanjing Lectures*, the sociality of the drives is not enough. It has to submit to a master code: the absolute Spirit. All forms of externality brought about by the socialization process—the exosomatization of the human species to the extent that humans could not flourish outside of organizations—must attend to objective memory, hence, the necessity of the master code (for tertiary retention). The master code, for Hegel, is “universal recognition,” defined as the “[direct] element of existence,” stemming from “knowing one’s purpose.”<sup>81</sup>

Accordingly, one acquires a *reality* upon being *recognized* by others who are also supposed to be active subjects. The *social* recognition of this active universality constitutes the temporal structure of objective memory. The recognition of active universality reflects the active universality of *otherness*, which, for Hegel, “is the ground or soil of Science or *knowledge in general*.”<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, Stiegler argues:

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<sup>79</sup> Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 413, n. 14.

<sup>80</sup> See Yuk Hui, *Archive of the Future*. From a Derridean (and Stieglerian) standpoint, an archive is a form of tertiary retention, a memory geared toward anticipating the future. Its metaphysical character is implied, involving two mutually contradictory terms forming a paradox: memory and future. With data algorithms, the future is already pre-willed, so to speak, by machines that reduce ‘wills’ to proletarianized wills, forced into willing ‘it’, the future. In a sense: willing is futuring; pre-willing is presencing, thus what is already in the present. The future becomes, therefore, an empty form of will.

<sup>81</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 388.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Hegel saw and showed that the development of mind and spirit, of what in German is called *Geist*, is a process of exteriorization of the mind, externalized in what he called 'objective spirit', based on objective memory ... But for Hegel, this 'moment' of externalization was only a moment, which could be overcome by the dialectic as the moment of *Aufhebung*, which Hegel understood as the moment of re-interiorization of the exteriority, dissolving this exteriority into what Hegel called 'absolute spirit'.<sup>83</sup>

It is arguable that Hegel failed to remain within the second moment of *epokhal* redoubling and gave up protecting the exteriority of the drives from synthetic appropriations by markets and economies (otherwise, synthetic exteriority), or, in Deleuzian lingo, "dogmatic images of thought."<sup>84</sup> The ambivalence of Hegelian legacy, as Marx had demonstrated, helped economize these images and drives into the logical series of exchanging their indeterminate and determinate values, their analytical mediations, and finally sublation into the Spirit, otherwise, a self-sufficient economy of the Idea in favor of a more abstract form of tertiary retention. In Hegelian terms, tertiary retention transforms into a kind of "complete otherness"<sup>85</sup> to the extent that the Subject, the "True Substance," can finally "reassert itself as the negation of all such otherness."<sup>86</sup> The subject masters the code, the negativity of the Spirit as the final third moment, becomes itself the *personality* of tertiary retention (with a civic duty to sustain the morality of retention). Meanwhile, this subject is no less the empirical (existing) philosopher who is always a male figure.

As I briefly draw my conclusion, I take it that the feminist position, at least, in the form it has taken throughout our discussions, is already the outcome of the masculine sublation of knowledge, or the binary thinking that precedes the subject positioning of the feminine but can refuse to extend the universal applicability of what Hegel called "negation of the negation." Here, the feminist assumes the position of non-philosophy, the nonreflexive that refuses to embrace the third moment, the universal We/Memory as tertiary retention. Nonetheless, in its refusal, the feminist position must also deny a sublation of Hegel, which, incidentally, many feminists enamored of Hegel's

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<sup>83</sup> Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 25.

<sup>84</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 103.

<sup>85</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 23.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 497.

*Antigone*, for instance, overlooked. It, therefore, pays to revisit Hegel's *Antigone* in this context.

In a nutshell, *Antigone* remained confined in the logical clutches of the dialectic. Her rejection of Creon's law is the ethical pursuit of heteronomy within an abstract universal, represented by the family and society, which is another designation for serializing the morphologies of the law established through the male authority, thus, unable to go beyond Hegel's self-serving sublation of patriarchy (of which *Antigone* is a tragic example).<sup>87</sup> But this may also be true to feminism in general (or at least, Western feminism) vis-à-vis the task of tertiary retention.

Needless to say, Hegel, a particularly resonant model of male reflexivity, is not dead. Hegel must continue to occupy a position in the tertiary retention of the West. The criticism of Hegel, and the paradigmatic serializations inspired by his dialectical model, consciously or unconsciously, *pace* Latour, must not run out of steam, not that we fear a final sublation, *which must be prevented*. The point is feminism must remain at the limit of the second moment, never wanting to step beyond, even short of imagining doing it in *Antigone's* case.

Grabbing the third moment is equivalent to being swept by the "future tide," the archival metaphysics. Perhaps, it will be its most significant contribution to tertiary retention, the historical memory of the future that must be consciously decided, which, as emphasized, is unfortunately already being written in the present, the "archivization of the now,"<sup>88</sup> bypassing the temporality of human freedom, and already further aggravated, in the sense that the awareness of the future is preempted, by the post-factual ideology of "everything-else-is-power." (This is what *Antigone* did, contesting Creon's law with the power of self-infliction. Other forms of resistance are less desirable: the positivism of identitarian ideologies, militant, and nationalist exclusivism, and the neoconservative wave of today's post-truth).

This is another crucial point. Post-truth blocks our vision of the alien organology of the future, the inhumanism of the perfection of algorithmic governmentality that has already shaped its own reality amid the present (which is not the consciously decided present).<sup>89</sup> Already this means we are unable to determine our future. (In the case of *Antigone*, this decision is rather re-interiorized into the law. Unfortunately, the law will always be masculine). We have given so much of the future of tertiary retention to an alien third

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>88</sup> Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 238.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Berns and Antoinette Rouvroy, "Algorithmic Governmentality and Prospects of Emancipation: Disparateness as a Precondition for Individuation through Relationships?," trans. by Elizabeth Libbrecht, in *Réseaux*, 177: 1 (2013), 163–196, <<https://doi.org/10.3917/res.177.0163>>.

moment (the Hegelian has secured this future, so to speak) by our indecision or wrong decision in the face of power, if not the willful ignorance of it (by the many).

All this at a time when this decline also casts a long shadow in the guise of the non-West (as a geopolitical figure) snatching the third moment. China is a significant example. (And if "criticism" now stands at the threshold of the decline of the West, must we also speak of the decline of Western feminism?). In hindsight, Haraway warned us that partial perspectives could produce destructive monsters compared to promising ones. This is not an indictment of the other. But nothing in reality guarantees that the dehumanized, sexed, racialized, or proletarianized other is completely beyond the "politics of positioning" and its destructive monsters, simply on account of their being victimized by machinations, gender, and colonial violence, racism, mass deception, etc.

Notwithstanding its desirability, emancipation is still a tricky venture. The other can potentially mimic immortality and omnipotence (resulting from the flawed reflexive model perfected by the male figure). Even the "other" position has its own monsters. As Stiegler argues, with which I wish to conclude this essay, "the realization of noetic dreams can always turn into a nightmare, and always assumes the possibility of madness."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 369, n. 307.

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## Smith's Ambiguous Descriptions: A Reply to Jose and Mabaquiao

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**Abstract:** In “Resolving the Gettier Problem in the Smith Case: The Donnellan Linguistic Approach,” Jose and Mabaquiao argue that Gettier’s Smith case does not work as a counterexample to the Justified True Belief (JTB) account of knowledge, since it does not satisfy the truth condition. Their claim hinges on what seems to be a gap between logic and natural language that is exemplified in the case, maintaining that the definite description in “the man who will get the job” is used by Smith referentially and not attributively. We respond to Jose and Mabaquiao in two ways. First, we demonstrate that the exclusive treatment of definite descriptions as having either referential or attributive use does not apply to all cases, especially if they are ambiguous, like in Case I. Using Kripke’s theory of references instead, we show that the proposition in question is still true semantically and not false. Second, we demonstrate that the same analysis does not work in Gettier’s second example and other Gettier-type cases even if we were to grant the validity of Donnellan’s theory, despite its problems. We do this to show that even if their analysis holds for the Smith case, it is not a viable solution to the Gettier problem.

**Keywords:** Donnellan, Kripke, Gettier problem, definite descriptions

In their article “Resolving the Gettier Problem in the Smith Case: The Donnellan Linguistic Approach,” Jose and Mabaquiao claim that Gettier has misused and exploited the classical rules of logic, inappropriately misapplying it to the ordinary discourse of natural language.<sup>1</sup> They argue that

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Jose and Napoleon Mabaquiao, Jr., “Resolving the Gettier Problem in the Smith Case: The Donnellan Linguistic Approach,” in *Kritike*, 12: 2 (December 2018), 116, <<https://doi.org/10.25138/12.2.a7>>.

Gettier's Smith case does not work as a counterexample to the Justified True Belief (JTB) definition of knowledge since it fails to satisfy the truth condition. Their analysis extends Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions,<sup>2</sup> which treats definite descriptions as strictly being either referential or attributive. They maintain that the definite description "the man who will get the job" is used by Smith referentially and not attributively, which implies that he particularly has Jones in mind and not anyone else, making the proposition false when Smith got the job.

We respond to their argument in two ways: (1) Following Kripke's two-level theory of semantic and speaker reference, we demonstrate that the mutual exclusivity inherent in Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions as either being *referential* or *attributive* does not apply to Gettier cases in which the descriptions are ambiguous. (2) We posit that even if the analysis works for Case I, the same analysis does not apply to Gettier's second case, other cases of Gettier problems, and a modified version of Case I itself. This shows that assuming the argument does hold for Case I, it does not solve the Gettier problem.

In the first section we discuss Jose and Mabaquiao's argument. In the second section, we present the problems in Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions and offer Kripke's theory of references as an alternative framework for linguistically analyzing Gettier-type cases. Finally, in the third section we show that even if Donnellan's framework is correct, it still fails to resolve other Gettier-type cases and a modified version of Case I.

### **Jose and Mabaquiao's Attempt to Resolve Case I of the Gettier Problem**

Jose and Mabaquiao first argue that the Gettier problem, specifically Case I, is problematic in itself because it exploits the principles of logic to argue for cases which do not happen in everyday life.<sup>3</sup> They further argue that situations such as the Gettier problem are not how epistemic situations work in daily life, meaning that these logical rules are not grounds for judging truth in everyday discourse. This was exemplified through the exploitation of logical rules such as *Deductive Closure*, *Principle of Existential Generalization*, and the *Principle of Disjunction Introduction*.<sup>4</sup> Using these principles ignore context, state of mind, and other extralocutionary factors which are important in making sense of Gettier problems and general epistemic situations. This

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<sup>2</sup> Keith Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Description," in *The Philosophical Review*, 75: 3 (July 1966), 281–304, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2183143>>.

<sup>3</sup> Jose and Mabaquiao, "Resolving the Gettier Problem in the Smith Case," 116–119.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

leads to epistemologists overlooking the distinction between the approaches of natural language logic in approaching truth.

From this, they narrate the linguistic approach to the Gettier problem, in particular, that of Yussif Yakubu which claims that the most promising linguistic approach to the Gettier problem is that of Kripke's distinction between semantic reference and speaker reference and Donnellan's distinction between the referential and attributive use of definite descriptions.<sup>5</sup> Derived from this, what is problematic with the Gettier challenge using Donnellan's framework is the specific proposition "the man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket." This is because Smith uses this referentially with Jones in mind, while Gettier uses this in the attributive sense, that is, whoever specifically fits the description as specified by the definite description. This misappropriation is where the objection of Jose and Mabaquiao proceeds.<sup>6</sup>

The argument then progresses to using Donnellan's framework against the Gettier challenge as this is more appropriate in discussing the problem as opposed to Kripke as his framework leads to ambiguity. They then summarize Donnellan's framework which we shall echo here for the sake of completeness. Donnellan argues that there are two primary functions of definite descriptions: (1) attributive use and (2) referential use. To employ definite descriptions in attributive use would be to state something about anything that fits the description; to employ definite descriptions with referential use is to state something about a specific subject (e.g., thing, person, entity, etc.) and only that specific subject. It follows that the attributive use of "the man who will get the job" would be to call out anyone—or any man in our case—that satisfies the condition "the man who will get the job"; its referential use would be to call out Jones and only Jones, nothing else applies.<sup>7</sup>

The authors then exhibit that in Smith's epistemic circumstance, he was thinking and referring to Jones and only Jones when he uttered "the man who will get the job" for the reason that he was justified in believing that Jones will get the job, not himself or anyone else. Hence, to classify "the man who will get the job" as a definite description in its attributive use, as what Gettier did, is problematic. They argue that in Case I, the definite description that Smith proclaims employs its referential use rather than its attributive use. To correct this is to employ referential use instead. Applying this changes the meaning of the utterance to "Jones got the job and has ten coins in his pocket." This is false as it is Smith who got the job and not Jones. According to the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 119–123.

authors this proves that Case I is not an instance of a true belief but a false one, meaning that this case no longer holds as a challenge to the definition of the JTB as knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

## Donnellan's Definite Descriptions and Kripke's References

### *Issues within Donnellan's Theory*

Jose and Mabaquiao use Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions as a framework in their attempt to prove that proposition (e), "*the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket*," in Case I is false.<sup>9</sup> However, Donnellan's theory itself does hold some issues of presenting a false dichotomy and mutual exclusivity. In Donnellan's theory, definite descriptions may either be referential or attributive, but they cannot be both at the same time. These issues become problematic especially when we try to linguistically analyze ambiguous propositions such as (e) where their meaning is conflated.

If we were to observe other theories of linguistic and propositional truth, such as that advanced by Saul Kripke, we see that they offer *two-level* theories of truth determination which do not make use of mutual exclusivity.<sup>10</sup> Theories of the determination of truth become two-level when they permit differences in truth value depending on the interpretation of a proposition. For example, a proposition may be true in this case, while it may also be interpreted as false. One-level theories, meanwhile, are absolute: a proposition must adhere to one truth value only, regardless of whether the focus is on context, interpretation, semantics, etc. Two-level theories of truth determination allow for the consideration of propositions that are rather ambiguous in terms of their meaning (i.e., what the proposition means is confusing and debatable). One-level theories fail to take this ambiguity into account. In this sense, Donnellan's theory of definite description is one-level because propositions (i.e., definite descriptions) may only either be referential or attributive where its truth value is contingent on.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, other theories of truth determination are not limited to definite descriptions, unlike Donnellan's theory, but are open to any part of a proposition.

Kripke suggests that two-level theories of truth values in language allow for the possibility of different meanings for uncertain cases.<sup>12</sup> We

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 122–124.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 119–123.

<sup>10</sup> See Saul Kripke, "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 2: 1 (1977), 255–276, <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4975.1977.tb00045.x>>.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 255–257.

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

contend that Case I belongs to such uncertain cases as proposition (e) is challenged. For example, in Case I, when Smith utters (e), there is still truth in what he said even if it was Smith himself—not Jones—who got the job because Smith, the man who got the job, did have ten coins in his pocket. Moreover, it is also false in the sense that it was not Jones who got the job. It becomes clear here that the meaning, or perhaps *meanings* of the proposition, is ambiguous. Two-level theories uphold the truth value of what was literally said without dismissing the truth value of what was intended or vice-versa.<sup>13</sup>

The possibility of two-level theories, and thus ambiguous cases, may be questionable. However, our intuition for truth claims may prove their veracity.<sup>14</sup> Take for example Case I: we intuitively become hesitant regarding its truth value, more so if linguistic analysis is applied. Two-level theories allow us to properly understand and comprehend propositions that are ambiguous in meaning where they can both be true and false simultaneously. This is evidently the case for Case I: what Smith literally said was true but what he intended to say was false.

To solve the issues of mutual exclusivity in Donnellan's theory, Kripke suggested that ambiguous propositions may be *both* referential and attributive at the same time.<sup>15</sup> Rather than being mutually exclusive, the two can be inclusive of one another. This is an improvement of Donnellan's theory as it allows for the framework to apply in other Gettier-type cases. So, if we were to analyze Case I using this modified version of Donnellan's theory, then (e) will be both true and false. We should note here that Jose and Mabaquiao suggest that Kripke's modification to Donnellan's theory does not apply to Gettier cases, including Case I. However, to support this they cited Yussif Yakubu who also did not provide any specific motivation as to why this is the case.<sup>16</sup> We argue then that there is a lack of reasonable grounds to exclude Gettier cases to Kripke's modification. From this, we suggest that Kripke is a better alternative to Donnellan for a linguistic analysis of the Gettier problem.

### *Kripke's Theory of References as an Alternative*

Instead of using Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions, Kripke's theory of references may prove as a successful alternative, especially because it is a two-level theory. Kripke posits that propositions have two references: (1) semantic reference and (2) speaker reference. Note that all propositions

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Neale, *Descriptions* (Cambridge: MIT Press Books, 1990), 91–93.

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

<sup>15</sup> Kripke, "Speaker Reference and Semantic Reference," 256.

<sup>16</sup> Yussif Yakubu, "A Truth Analysis of the Gettier Argument," in *Metaphilosophy*, 47: 3 (2016), 449–466, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26602371>>.

have these references, unlike Donnellan's theory where descriptions can only be either referential or attributive. Kripke's theory reflects how distinctions between propositions and their meanings may be non-exclusive and may permit ambiguity.<sup>17</sup>

Kripke's speaker reference refers to the *actual* or *referred* meaning of the proposition. In other words, the speaker reference is what the speaker intended to communicate. Meanwhile, the semantic reference refers to the *implied* meaning of the proposition. It is what was actually said or what the structure, form, and semantics of the proposition are. The distinction between speaker reference and semantic reference allows for interpretation and analysis based on context and whether it is the speaker or audience interpreting the proposition. The semantic reference is what the audience hears and what the proposition means to the audience, while the speaker reference is what the speaker means and what the proposition means to the speaker.

Applying Kripke's theory of references to Case I will solve Jose and Mabaquiao's issues with its truth value. In Case I, the speaker reference of (e) is "the man, which is Jones and only Jones, who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket." Its semantic reference, meanwhile, will be what the proposition is in its form: "the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket." It follows that the semantic reference of (e) is true because the man who did get the job, Smith, did have ten coins in his pocket. Meanwhile, its speaker reference is false because it was Smith who got the job, not Jones. This then begs the question of whether it is the speaker reference or the semantic reference that determines the proposition's truth value.

Note that Kripke's theory implies that all propositions have both a semantic reference and a speaker reference, which may have different truth values. This is what makes Kripke's theory a two-level theory of truth.<sup>18</sup> The truth value of the semantic reference (i.e., true) still holds without disregarding the truth value of the speaker reference (i.e., false). This makes sense if we consider the speaker-audience perspective. What Smith said might have been false in terms of what he intended to say but the proposition will still be true for the audience or anyone who heard Smith utter the proposition. With reference to its semantic reference, (e) is still true. Therefore, (e) is still a valid example of a justified true belief and still serves as a counterexample for the traditional account of knowledge. For the proposition to be false, both its speaker and semantic references must be false, which is not the case for (e).

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<sup>17</sup> Kripke, "Speaker Reference and Semantic Reference," 257–264.

<sup>18</sup> Neale, *Descriptions*, 91–93.

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Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions, in contrast to Kripke's theory, is a one-level theory. Proposition (e) will always be referentially used and thus will always be false, leaving no room for interpretation.<sup>19</sup> Kripke's theory of references and two-level theories in general are an improvement over Donnellan's theory and one-level theories because propositions are interpreted based on both the context in which it is said and the content of the proposition itself, both of which determine the truth value of the proposition. Again, with regard to the content of (e), which is its semantic reference, the proposition is still true. Its semantics, grammar, and structure are still true because the man who got the job, regardless of which man that may be, did have ten coins in his pocket. This is especially true for cases wherein the truth value of a proposition relies heavily on interpretation based on context and semantics simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> Donnellan's theory fails to put this semantic interpretation into account. Given that we have argued for the use of Kripke over Donnellan, we posit that the exclusion of Kripke for linguistic analysis is unjustified.

### *Why Use Kripke in Analyzing Gettier Cases*

Jose and Mabaquiao cite Mizhari's argument<sup>21</sup> to justify their use of Donnellan's theory. Mizhari's argument to dismiss Kripke's theory has some issues. Mizhari argues that using Kripke's theory of references poses a difficulty in choosing whether to use the speaker reference or the semantic reference.<sup>22</sup> Again, the choice need not be made. The point of Kripke's theory of references is that it is a two-level theory that permits ambiguity for truth values, especially for propositions with unclear meanings.<sup>23</sup> Jose and Mabaquiao seem to fail to take this into account in their use of Donnellan's theory.

Jose and Mabaquiao also contend that Kripke's theory of references is parallel to Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions.<sup>24</sup> They claim that Kripke's speaker reference is parallel to Donnellan's referential use, while the semantic reference is equivalent to the attributive use. They seem to imply that since the two theories are parallel, the weight of choosing one over the other is diminished. However, as our analysis of Case I using Kripke's theory

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<sup>19</sup> Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Description."

<sup>20</sup> Jennifer Hornsby, "Singular Terms in Contexts of Propositional Attitude," in *Mind*, 86: 341 (1977), 31–48, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2253582>>.

<sup>21</sup> Moti Mizhari, "Why Gettier Cases are Misleading," in *Logos and Episteme*, 7: 1 (2016), 31–44, <<https://doi.org/10.5840/logos-episteme20167111>>.

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

<sup>23</sup> Kripke, "Speaker Reference and Semantic Reference," 257–264.

<sup>24</sup> Jose and Mabaquiao, "Resolving the Gettier Problem in the Smith Case," 121–124.

shows, this is not necessarily true. Kripke's theory of references and Donnellan's theory of descriptions will not always necessarily be parallel with one another in all cases, even in the interpretation of other Gettier-type cases. We disagree with Jose and Mabaquiao's claim on the parallelism of the two theories as it undermines Kripke's formulation of his theory of references as a two-level theory, compared to Donnellan's one-level theory.

We advance using Kripke's theory of references as the appropriate framework for linguistically analyzing Case I and other Gettier cases, as opposed to Jose and Mabaquiao's choice for Donnellan's theory. As a two-level theory, using Kripke's theory of references allows for ambiguity in truth value for propositions with ambiguous and unclear meanings, where a semantic reference can be true while its equivalent speaker reference is false. This allows for interpretations that are contingent on content, context, and whether it is through the lens of the speaker or the audience that the interpretation is done.<sup>25</sup>

We have demonstrated that (1) Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions has some issues within it regarding mutual exclusivity and (2) Kripke's theory of references pose as a viable alternative that solves the issues within Donnellan's theory. This motivates our suggestion that Kripke's theory is more appropriate to use in analyzing Gettier cases. But even if we were to admit the use of Donnellan's theory as an appropriate framework for Gettier cases, we argue that the analysis still has some issues with regard to applying the theory to *other* Gettier cases.

### Resolving All Gettier Cases

Suppose we grant that the use of Donnellan's framework is warranted. Jose and Mabaquiao frame their linguistic analysis specifically to Gettier's Case I,<sup>26</sup> not extending the analysis to other Gettier cases. While this limited analysis certainly has merits, it seems relevant to demonstrate that the same analysis does not hold for Case II and other Gettier-type cases.

Donnellan's theory always requires a definite description. To analyze Case II using Donnellan's theory, we must first identify what the definite description is in the proposition.<sup>27</sup> This first step, however, is problematic because there are no definite descriptions present in the propositions concerned in Case II. From here we encounter problems in trying to identify whether the sentence is used attributively or referentially because there are no definite descriptions, only proper names. Therefore, Donnellan's theory

<sup>25</sup> Hornsby, "Singular Terms in Contexts of Propositional Attitude," 31–40.

<sup>26</sup> Jose and Mabaquiao, "Resolving the Gettier Problem in the Smith Case," 113.

<sup>27</sup> Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions," 281–290.

does not work or is an inappropriate framework to analyze Case II and other Gettier cases without definite descriptions.

The use of Donnellan's theory to disprove the veracity of Gettier propositions only works for *some* Gettier cases, not all. To demonstrate how it fails to work for other Gettier-type cases, we can try to apply the same analysis to a modified version of another Gettier case developed by Carl Ginet: the fake barn Gettier case.<sup>28</sup> Suppose that Henry was driving through a small town in Pennsylvania where there is an abundance of barns. The twist, however, is that there are both real barns and fake barns that look like real barns. Suppose that Henry passes by a strip of real and fake barns and—thinking that they are real barns based on mere observation—claims that “There is a real barn in this small town in Pennsylvania.” Unbeknownst to Henry, there is a real barn beside that fake barn he thought was a real barn.

From the perspective of Gettier, Smith has a justified true belief that a real barn exists but fails to know such a thing. Let us attempt to analyze the fake barn case using Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions. The subject of experience is Smith while the object is the barn. In the proposition “There is a real barn in this small town of Pennsylvania,” we first have to identify whether the “barn” is used referentially or attributively. However, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether Smith uses the proposition and experiences the case either referentially or attributively. The condition that Smith passes through a strip of real and fake barns adds to this difficulty. To ascribe either use indefinitely will rely merely on assumptions about the case and will simply result in an arbitrary designation. In this case, even in Gettier cases without proper names, the use of Donnellan still does work.

Another Gettier-type case to consider is the “sheep in the field” example by Alvin Goldman.<sup>29</sup> Imagine that Smith is in a field on the top of a small hill and sees a sheep in the middle of the field. He then forms the belief that there is a sheep in the field. Unbeknownst to Smith, what he actually saw was a dog, but also that there were other sheep roaming around the field. We can also substitute the sheep and a dog with their pluralities: a flock of sheep and a group of dogs. In this case, Smith has a justified true belief that a sheep or flocks of sheep exist in the field but he fails to have knowledge of such. Using the linguistic theory of Donnellan to analyze the case, it is much more difficult to ascribe whether what Smith refers to is referential or attributive. He may have formed the belief that a sheep or flocks of sheep exist in the field without specifically referring to the specific object that he saw. It does not contain the same intuitiveness in Case I where it is easy to ascribe that Smith

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<sup>28</sup> Alvin Goldman, “Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge,” in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 73: 20 (November 1976), 771–791, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2025679>>.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

was referring to Jones specifically. There is also no sufficient evidence that Smith forms his belief attributively and doing so is only an arbitrary move. Hence, Donnellan's framework still does not work in this case.

Consider another Gettier-type case. Imagine that Smith is called into his manager's office. Upon arriving, Smith notices that his manager, Vince, has a lot of books lying around in his office. From what he saw, Smith forms the belief that Vince has a collection of a lot of books. However, unbeknownst to Smith, the books lying around Vince's office are not his but are owned by the company. But Vince does have a good book collection which just happens to be at his home, not in his office. In this case, Smith has a justified true belief that Vince has a collection of books but does not know it. If we were to analyze this case using Donnellan's linguistic theory of definite descriptions, the same problems for the fake barn and sheep in the field cases apply. It would be difficult and merely arbitrary to ascribe either a referential use or an attributive use to the books that Smith is referring to. As such, the attributive use and the referential use may both be valid. Again, Donnellan's framework becomes problematic and does not resolve the problem in this case.

We can also try to modify Case I in a way that it is still a Gettier problem but in a sense that the modification highlights the problems in Donnellan's framework, making it fail to work. In the original case, Smith obtains information that Jones will get the job and that Jones has ten coins in his pocket. Using the rules of existential generalization, Smith forms the belief that the man who gets the job has ten coins in his pocket. We can modify this concluding belief of Smith. Another way to form the proposition using the rules of existential generalization is to have the belief that "Any man who has ten coins in his pocket will get the job." Changing the first article of the proposition "The" into "Any" is still a logical move of existential generalization. However, this modified proposition removes the intuitiveness of the original proposition to ascribe it as having a referential use rather than an attributive one. It becomes harder to ascribe a use—either referential or attributive—using Donnellan's theory to the modified proposition and ascribing a specific use may again just be based on an arbitrary basis. In this modification of Case I, Donnellan's theory becomes problematic.

We have demonstrated that Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions does not extend in all Gettier-type cases. As shown through our examples, either Donnellan's theory fails to work theoretically (e.g., in Case II where there are no definite descriptions), or exposes the possible arbitrariness of ascribing a proposition as referential or attributive (e.g., fake barn example and modified Case I). One possible way to reconcile this would be to prove the existence of a variant of degrees for the openness of propositions for linguistic analysis—that some propositions just call for more

linguistic analysis than other propositions. However, this is problematic because of the ambiguity of how propositions are subject to linguistic analysis. There is no such standard for the degree of the openness of propositions for linguistic analysis.

## Conclusion

Jose and Mabaquiao, using Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions, argue that Gettier's Case I is not a valid counterexample to the traditional account of knowledge because (e) is false and is hence not a case of a justified true belief. While this analysis certainly has merits, we have noted some concerns specifically in the use of Donnellan's theory and the application of the same analysis to other Gettier-type cases. We have demonstrated that the insistence of Donnellan's theory of definite descriptions on mutual exclusivity is problematic, and that Kripke's theory of references poses as a viable alternative framework. As a two-level theory, Kripke's theory allows for the ambiguity of truth values for propositions that are unclear in meaning, like that of Case I. Using Kripke's theory, (e) is still true with respect to its semantic reference and is still a case of a justified true belief. We have also demonstrated that Donnellan's theory does not extend to all Gettier-type cases, possibly implying that the Gettier problem may require more than a linguistic solution, precisely because the problem is not merely linguistic in nature.

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Book Review

## **Goldschmidt, Tyron, *Ontological Arguments*<sup>1</sup>**

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**Nahum Brown**

In 2018, Cambridge University Press launched an innovative new series called Cambridge Elements in the Philosophy of Religion. This series contains a collection of truly short (approximately 75-page) monographs on concentrated topics related to the philosophy of religion. Because the books are so concise, they make for great teaching material and can be mixed and matched to form the primary curriculum for a philosophy of religion course. Because the books are singularly focused, they also make contributions to advanced scholarship in their sub-field. This is an exciting series for scholars and students alike who wish to explore topics such as theism, pantheism, the role of prayer, theories of the afterlife, practical applications of religion, the relationship between faith and reason, etc.

An excellent piece from the Elements in Philosophy of Religion series is Tyron Goldschmidt's *Ontological Arguments*. Goldschmidt's book offers an introductory yet comprehensive study of the origins, importance, historical development, and contemporary relevance of ontological arguments. First put forward by St. Anselm in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the ontological argument is often considered to be the most paradoxical of all the proofs for the existence of God. In contrast to other arguments, such as the cosmological and design arguments, which rely on empirical evidence, the ontological argument is special in that it is, in Goldschmidt's words, an "armchair proof"<sup>2</sup> that attempts to demonstrate the existence of God from *a priori*, analytically necessary premises drawn solely from the definition of God. The author's primary conclusion is that although ontological arguments are not entirely convincing, it is nevertheless difficult to articulate what exactly is wrong with them. The inferential relationship between the premises and the conclusion of an ontological argument is so unusual and perplexing as to produce

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 77pp.

<sup>2</sup> Tyron Goldschmidt, *Ontological Arguments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

significant historical and contemporary debates, even though we are often not persuaded by the conclusion of the argument.

One of the main innovations from Goldschmidt is his claim that there are actually many ontological arguments. Rather than one initial ontological argument from St. Anselm that has gone through slight revisions in the history of Western philosophy, Goldschmidt presents four separate ontological arguments from St. Anselm, Descartes, Plantinga, and Lowe (and also briefly outlines at the end of the book even more ontological arguments from A. D. Smith, Leibniz, Gödel, Gareth Mathews, and Lynne Rudder Backer.) Goldschmidt systematically treats each of these ontological arguments, first by restating the argument in premise-format, then by entertaining objections, while sometimes offering rebuttals to the objections, and finally by examining what works and does not work in each argument. To give an indication of how thorough Goldschmidt's argumentation analysis is, I will briefly explicate his treatment of St. Anselm in chapter 2 of the book.

Goldschmidt restates St. Anselm's initial version of the ontological argument by replacing the awkward phrase "that-than-which-no-greater-can-be-conceived" with the abbreviation "GOD":

1. "GOD" is understood. (Premise)
2. If "GOD" is understood, GOD exists in the understanding. (Premise)
3. Even if GOD exists only in the understanding, it can be conceived to exist in reality. (Premise)
4. GOD is greater if it exists in reality than if it exists only in the understanding. (Premise)
5. It is impossible to conceive of something greater than GOD. (Premise)
6. If GOD exists in the understanding, then GOD exists only in the understanding or in the understanding and in reality. (Premise)
7. Therefore, GOD exists in the understanding. (From 1 and 2)
8. Therefore, GOD exists only in the understanding or in the understanding and in reality. (From 6 and 7)
9. Therefore, GOD can be conceived to exist in reality. (From 3 and 7)

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10. Therefore, if GOD exists only in the understanding, then it is possible to conceive of something greater than GOD. (From 4 and 9)
11. Therefore, GOD does not exist only in the understanding. (From 5 and 10)
12. Therefore—drum roll!—GOD exists in reality. (From 8 and 10)<sup>3</sup>

Goldschmidt compares his own articulation of St. Anselm's argument with the version put forward by Graham Oppy in the introduction to his 2018 edited volume *Ontological Arguments* and then uses this comparison to unpack the premises of the argument.<sup>4</sup> At the heart of Goldschmidt's analysis is a detailed examination of the potential weaknesses of each premise. As a proposed objection to premises 1 and 2, Goldschmidt discusses St. Anselm's contemporary and critic, Gaunilo of Marmoutiers, who rejects the claim that GOD can be understood at all (10-11), thereby invoking a negative theological critical attitude. After presenting St. Anselm's response to Gaunilo,<sup>5</sup> Goldschmidt turns to what will become a major topic throughout the rest of his book, the question of the status of the term "existence."<sup>6</sup> What does it mean to distinguish existence in the understanding from existence in reality? Here, as a critical response to premise 3, Goldschmidt frames the distinction about existence in terms of Alexius Meinong's (1853–1920) groundbreaking analytic work on the difference between existence and subsistence, a distinction which is crucial for debates about the ontological status of imagined and non-existent objects, and which is conceptually essential for St. Anselm's distinction between GOD in the understanding and GOD in the real. Goldschmidt then turns to criticisms of premise 4—the attack from nihilism, which rejects intrinsic greatness—and then entertains the "parody objection," Gaunilo's "greatest island objection." This leads Goldschmidt to explore further defenses and rebuttals, from St. Anselm's initial response to Gaunilo in the *Proslogion*<sup>7</sup> to Plantinga's response.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the chapter, readers are left with a truly comprehensive exposition of St. Anselm's ontological argument, as well as a panorama of positive and negative voices, and most of the possible weak spots one could come up with, as well as a premonition of the consequences and ramifications that the argument will muster over the course of the next thousand years.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–16.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–17.

Goldschmidt's book continues along in a similar fashion, systematically exploring Descartes's ontological argument in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* (chapter 3), Plantinga's modal ontological argument (chapter 4), and Lowe's ontological argument from "modesty" (chapter 5). Descartes revived St. Anselm's work by presenting a new ontological argument built around the definition of God as a perfect being. This led to a series of further consequences and objections in the modern period, most notably from Hume, who claims via the problem of induction that there is no way to demonstrate arguments *a priori*, since proof always requires experience and experience is always inductive.<sup>9</sup> Kant's well-known objection to ontological arguments—that being cannot be a predicate—acts as a further response to Descartes's version of the argument.<sup>10</sup>

According to Goldschmidt, the next big innovation comes about in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Plantinga's modal ontological argument. Plantinga distinguishes between necessary and contingent existence and puts forward a controversial premise from possibility: "there is some possible world where maximal greatness is instantiated."<sup>11</sup> As he does throughout the book, Goldschmidt's discussion of counterarguments and rebuttals is comprehensive and effective. In the subsequent chapter, Lowe's ontological argument from modesty emerges as one of the main responses to Plantinga. By reframing the ontological argument in terms of a distinction between abstract and concrete existence instead of necessity and contingency, Lowe's theory has the advantage of avoiding the controversial possibility premise. By the end of chapter 5, the reader is left with a portrait not only of the many insights and challenges Plantinga's and Lowe's modal arguments face, but also of some of the most interesting debates in contemporary analytic metaphysics today.

One of the virtues of Goldschmidt's book is that the author accounts in such a skillful way for many different historical and contemporary voices within the tiny space of 75-pages. Nevertheless, some readers might feel that there are other voices that Goldschmidt should have included in his overview of the debate. For example, Goldschmidt's handling of ontological arguments post Kant is almost entirely analytic, as is his premise-format method throughout the book. Some readers might feel that a more balanced treatment of the topic would have included figures like Hegel and Heidegger, who have also, arguably, made major contributions to the subject. Along similar grounds, critics might also object that Goldschmidt's analysis is sometimes too narrowly focused on inferences and counterarguments, without setting

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–30.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–34.

<sup>11</sup> 37.

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each particular ontological argument within the context of the philosophers' broader aims. For example, Goldschmidt treats Descartes's ontological argument as if it were divorced from the greater trajectory of the *Meditations*. It would have been effective if Goldschmidt had briefly engaged the larger goals of the *Meditations* by showing how Descartes makes use of the ontological argument—i.e., to demonstrate how the argument in the *Meditations* progresses from the indubitable existence of mind to the substance of body. These are nevertheless small objections to Goldschmidt's work, which in my opinion do not detract from the overall success of his book.

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Book Review

**Hans-Georg Moeller  
and Paul J. D'Ambrosio,  
*You and Your Profile:  
Identity After Authenticity*<sup>1</sup>**

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**Roland Theuas DS. Pada**

The story of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's prohibition on photographs presents an interesting paradox of narcissism. Until 1969, Derrida prohibited photographs of himself from spreading to the public. His reasons, as he states in the eponymous documentary *Derrida*,<sup>2</sup> were not limited to political or theoretical principles, he was also afflicted by the narcissistic horror of letting people see his image in a photograph. Derrida's pre-1969 prohibition on photographs presents a paradox of caring not just simply for his self-image, but also for how his image is presented in his absence or possible interdiction of his image. While Derrida did not live long enough to witness the ubiquitous proliferation of self-promotion and image curation offered by the internet today, we likewise face a similar curation paradox of our images in the general circulation of ourselves as *identities*. As academics, we painstakingly curate our profile and publication statistics such as rankings and *h-index* scores like over-eager stockbrokers waiting for the prices of our assets to increase. Moreover, our respective institutions are pushing their faculty to produce more publications to increase their worldwide ranking. This is not an isolated case for academics since we are systemically evoked not only to play our various roles in society but to also *present* ourselves as *playing* our part. From being a relative, a father, a mother, a sibling, a citizen, or a person who identifies with a certain political ideology, we are constantly curating what we think ought to be *seen* regarding our identities.

Moeller and D'Ambrosio's *You and Your Profile* presents an insightful analysis of the conditions of *Proficiency* that shaped the way we care about

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<sup>1</sup> New York: Columbia University Press, 2021, 300pp.

<sup>2</sup> Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman, *Derrida*, Jane Doe Films, 2002, Zeitgeist Films, 85 minutes.

*being seen* using contemporary and anecdotal examples ranging from the maintenance of a “super host” status in Airbnb, the *Black Mirror* episode “Nose Dive,” Climate Gate, Jussie Smollet, Taylor Swift, Donald Trump, American Idol, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, and many more. Moeller and D’Ambrosio utilize Niklas Luhmann’s systems theory, specifically, the use of second-order observations. Moeller and D’Ambrosio offers a non-normative reading of current events and anecdotes giving their readers a glimpse of how second-order observations take place not only contemporary ubiquity of the internet but also before the age of social media. This book was a salient expansion of Moeller’s essay “On second-order observation and genuine pretending,”<sup>3</sup> where Moeller explains that second-order observations are a strictly descriptive and diagnostic tool used to identify societal discontents.<sup>4</sup> These discontents ought to be seen, not as a pathological phenomenon, but rather as a “constitutive element of emerging social structures.”<sup>5</sup> Moeller and D’Ambrosio’s *You and Your Profile* injects the concept of “prolificity,”<sup>6</sup> as a description of how identity is built on perceptions of how one is *seen*. In other words, prolificity is the condition of curating an image that is dependent on what the public expects to see and at the same time how one wants to be *seen*.

*You and your profile* revolves around this paradox of identity as Moeller and D’Ambrosio investigate the role of Sincerity and authenticity in prolificity. Sincerity, as Moeller and D’Ambrosio explain, requires the commitment of identity towards a role,<sup>7</sup> while authenticity is the constant recognition and validation of identities by others.<sup>8</sup> Moeller and D’Ambrosio note that historically, identity was usually rooted in the roles assigned by “sincerity regimes,” a mother is expected to behave as a mother insofar as it is the societal expectation attributed to a mother. Roles provided a definite expectation for identities and while it provided a guide to identities on which roles they should play, it also presented an oversimplification of an identity. Surely a mother or a father is an identity that can be associated with anyone,

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<sup>3</sup> See Hans-Georg, Moeller, “On second-order observation and genuine pretending: Coming to terms with society,” in *Thesis Eleven*, 143, no. 1 (2017), 28–43, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513617740968>>. See also Hans-Georg Moeller and Paul D’Ambrosio, “Sincerity, authenticity and prolificity: Notes on the problem, a vocabulary and a history of identity,” in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 45, no. 5 (2018), 1–22, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453718799801>>.

<sup>4</sup> Hans-Georg Moeller and Paul J. D’Ambrosio, *You and Your Profile: Identity After Authenticity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Moeller And D’ambrosio credit this neologism to David Stark. Moeller and D’Ambrosio, *You and Your Profile*, 263.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

however, one's identity is not entirely limited to being simply a mother or a father.

In the chapter on sincerity, Moeller and D'Ambrosio discuss the implication of Zuckerberg's declaration that having two identities is a lack of integrity.<sup>9</sup> Moeller and D'Ambrosio demonstrate the impossibility of this imperative insofar as roles are manifold, intersecting, and not necessarily compartmentalized as far as identities are concerned. A teenager might play the role of a model student in school, but at the same time, be one of the "cool kids" who drinks and smokes with his friends. The complexity of roles is further demonstrated by Moeller and D'Ambrosio when they mention Zuckerberg's persona from a private person to a bold and ruthless entrepreneur.<sup>10</sup>

The shift from sincerity regimes to authenticity was marked by modernity's social mobility.<sup>11</sup> Modernity marked the regime of choices, multiplicity, and flexibility. Identity in modernity presented the necessity of validation and recognition. One is true to his or her identity by how one is *seen* by others. Hence, an activist protesting capitalism while using his or her iPhone to post on Instagram has questionable authenticity in as much as a God-fearing Filipino Catholic husband is insincere when he is discovered with multiple illegitimate families and paramours.

Proflicity for Moeller and D'Ambrosio is the condition that supersedes both the regime of sincerity and authenticity. Proflicity is the heightened awareness of the paradox of sincerity and authenticity. While Moeller and D'Ambrosio acknowledge that proflicity has always been there,<sup>12</sup> the relationship it has with the regimes of authenticity and sincerity has become more amplified in the age of social media. Proflicity is the neologism that best depicts our need to grapple with the paradox of authenticity and sincerity. We know that we must genuinely appear sincere in the roles that we take, while at the same time, taking note of the multiplicity of roles that we must play, and we must do it while under the scrutiny of the general public. Moeller and D'Ambrosio mention the YouTube channels featuring the *Boho Beautiful*<sup>13</sup> brand burnout as a condition of maintaining their profiles. An apt example on my end presents the issue of Youtuber *8-bit Guy* and the backlash he faced when the general public discovered his private life. *8-bit Guy*, David Murray, is a hobbyist interested in retrocomputing and old technologies. Murray had a following in the retrocomputing scene, particularly in old computers and Apple products. The general public

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

assumed that Murray had certain political persuasions that are in line with his retrocomputing hobby. This, however, was proven otherwise when he performed an incorrect disassembly procedure of a rare IBM 7496 that he loaned.<sup>14</sup> Viewers and followers quickly investigated Murray's other activities and were shocked to find that he was also a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment supporter.<sup>15</sup> While the Vice article mentions that Murray never really attempted to hide his political beliefs and affiliation, Murray mentions in the interview that "If I could go back I just wouldn't have done the video at all"<sup>16</sup>

This paradox of sincerity and authenticity is further undergirded by the condition of surveillance and transparency. Our condition of proficity is constantly under surveillance by technologies that place us under public scrutiny. The demand for transparency follows as a condition of becoming a subject of the public gaze. While Murray or the *8-bit Guy* was sincere in his identity as a retrocomputing enthusiast and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment supporter, his social validation for his authenticity did not match the general public's expectation of his identity. Such is the condition of proficity, that we not only need to keep up with the demands for sincerity, but we also must keep up with the feedback loop as a validation of our social identity.

The second to the last chapter of Moeller and D'Ambrosio discusses the issue of sanity in the landscape of proficity. The chapter begins with the mention of Zhuang Zi's story of Hundun and the generosity of the emperors of Hu and Shu. Having treated the Hu and Shu with kindness and generosity, Hun Tun, because of his lack of orifices, was bequeathed by Hu and Shu seven holes, a hole each day, for seven days. Moeller and D'Ambrosio note that this story is an allegorical warning of how we should subject ourselves to the "regimes of identity formation."<sup>17</sup> Moeller and D'Ambrosio further add:

If the modern Hundun were rewritten today to fit the conditions of proficity, it would need modification. Today, no one is expected to simply accept a given identity profile. Profiles need to be actively curated. They require care and creativity. You need to be invested in them. A Hundun of today would need to "do it yourself": go to the hardware store, get a drill, and start boring.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Samantha Cole, "Youtuber Milkshake Ducked After Incorrectly Disassembling Vintage Computer," *Vice*, October 2, 2020, <<https://www.vice.com/en/article/889zga/8-bit-guy-ibm-7496-executive-workstation-computer-reset>>. (Accessed on February 3, 2023).

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

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

<sup>17</sup> Moeller and D'Ambrosio, *You and Your Profile*, 230.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

If I may add, it is not simply a matter of *DIY'ing* the holes, one must consult the holy oracles of YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram algorithms while consulting sages of Reddit for the correct number of holes. This vision of proflicity evokes a mesh-like monstrosity of an identity. Yet in the hustle and bustle of our entanglement in the age of social media, one wonders if this has always been our existing condition in society. Moeller and D'Ambrosio offer a contemplative solution, as opposed to a radical one-size-fits-all solution. Genuine pretending, as Moeller and D'Ambrosio state, is a "mode of human existence that gives rise to the formation of identity and society."<sup>19</sup> Sanity is achieved when we recognize that identity is "fluid, temporary, and contingent."<sup>20</sup> Under this condition, proflicity is not ought to be understood as a social pathology of some sort, rather, it is a social structure that we need to understand and contend with. Rather than committing ourselves to its imposing gaze or shunning it as a social malady, we should learn how to utilise it like the wind on a sailboat. It might be blowing in a certain direction, but the boat moves from it in its intended course.

At this juncture in the book, I find Moeller and D'Ambrosio's ambiguity to be not only profound but also productive. They have avoided (whether intentionally or unintentionally) providing a prescriptive resolution of the condition of proflicity while at the same time, illuminating an actionable stance that readers can make of their own volition. I am reminded of a similar conclusion from Jaron Lanier's *Ten Arguments For Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*.<sup>21</sup> While the title Lanier prescribes the deletion of your social media account, it does not necessarily conclude with the wholesale abandonment of social media, rather it challenges the reader to experiment and be a *cat*.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Moeller and D'Ambrosio's ambiguous example of genuine pretending in the case of the *naked scribe*<sup>23</sup> offers a better critique of current social structures in the age of social media platforms as opposed to crying foul against neoliberalism.

Readers engaged in the discourse of analyzing social media behaviors using sociological and philosophical concepts will find *You and your profile* a lucid and sober account refreshing in a time where revolutionary and radical thinking has dominated the academic and intellectual landscape. Perhaps this lucidity and sober analysis are what makes *You and your profile* both revolutionary and radical. I leave this ambiguity to future readers to decide.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>21</sup> See Jaron Lanier, *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>23</sup> Moeller And D'Ambrosio, *You and Your Profile*, 240.

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