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THIS ISSUE

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One book review and seven thought-provoking papers constitute this issue: two articles each from analytic philosophy and existential phenomenology, and one each from aesthetics, Greek philosophy, and process philosophy.

In "Plato and Aristotle: Their views on *mimesis* and its relevance to the arts," Lok Chong Hoe describes the positions of Plato and Aristotle as antithecal. While Plato took imitation as a redundant reproduction of physical objects which adds nothing to real knowledge and which can even be a deceptive reproduction, Aristotle considers imitation as an independent entity representing a human action with its own rules of unity. Lok, then, goes on to differentiate claims made in works of art from those made in the social sciences, and tries "to support certain interpretations of artistic unity and coherence through a textual analysis of the *Poetics.*"

Rolando Gripaldo analytically discusses the notion of the public good in the paper "The concept of the public good: A view from a Filipino philosopher." This paper was presented last 28 December 2006 at the philosophical conference of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association (Washington, D. C.). Following the *Later* Wittgenstein, Gripaldo argues that philosophy as an activity has both analytic (making concepts clear) and synthetic (using those concepts for a unified reconstruction of philosophy) components. While temporarily setting aside the second component, Gripaldo contends that the *public good* is public in the sense that the beneficiaries are the people. The concept should be understood from the politico-ethical sense which connotes service orientation and it subsumes the politico-economic sense which connotes profit orientation.

In "A critique of the analytic trend in African philosophy," Amaechi Udefi distinguishes between the ethnophilosophical (traditionalist) school and the universalist (analytic) school. In the Philippines, we call the former the *cultural approach* to philosophy while the latter is the essentialist position of variants of the early analytic school, together with the *Early* Wittgenstein. Udefi argues in favor of the ethnophilosophical group as "more attractive" as it reflects the African cultural milieu.

The love relationship between Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir is phenomenologically interpreted in "Love: A phenomenological analysis of the self-other relation in Sartre and Beauvoir." Noelle Leslie de la Cruz tries to evaluate the positions of Sartre, who remarks that love between two subjectivities is doomed to fail, and Beauvoir, who hints at

the reality of a nonpossessive reciprocal relation. De la Cruz concludes with the view favoring equal reciprocity in love.

Eddie R. Babor argues in "Heidegger's concept of Dasein's authentic existence as a being-in-the-world in the context of fear, dread, and concern," that in order for one's self to attain authenticity, it is necessary for that self to own, possess, or accept one's existence as a project. To do so requires one to come to terms with the facts that he or she is thrown to the world (fear), that he or she will have to face death squarely (dread), and that he or she exists in relation to others (concern).

In "The daimon in the *Euthydemus*," Carl Levenson discusses at length the role of the "daimon" in Socrates' life. The daimon in the *Euthydemus* is a "power that sets limits," but who is willing to "associate itself with a mysticim of the limitless." This kind of association has ramifications in Plato's other dialogues and in the notion of the Good.

Santiago Sia provides us with a contextual interpretation of the concept of causality within the metaphysics of Charles Hartshorne in "Creative synthesis: A process interpretation of causality." The paper attempts to develop a philosophy of action in a causal metaphysics grounded in contemporary physics where effects are viewed as statistical averages. Important issues are also addressed, particularly determinism and indeterminism, activity and receptivity, and novelty and givenness.

Finally, Leni Garcia's book review deals with how our mind works with tribalism. It discusses the tribal conflict between the Tutsis, who are a minority, and the Hutus, who are the majority. And yet the minority governed the majority. In a riot that ensued, over a million Tutsis were massacred by the Hutus in Rwanda. David Berredy's book, *Us and them: Understanding your tribal mind,* explains that we categorize people as of different kinds, but basically, the *they* and the *us*, that is, the bad guys and the good guys. Garcia evaluates this type of categorization and suggests we should be more critical or reflective in our thinking.

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PLATO AND ARISTOTLE: THEIR VIEWS ON *MIMESIS* AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE ARTS

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Plato and Aristotle both consider the arts to be forms of mimesis *(often translated as "imitation"), but their meanings of* mimesis *do not entirely overlap. Plato employs the term* mimesis *with several meanings, which include reproducing the speeches, tones, and gestures of another person; the making of accurate copies or likeness of real objects; impersonating another person; and representing men in action. But his emphasis was on* mimesis *as the production of accurate copies of real objects (painters and sculptors, he believes, fill this role), and the reproduction of speeches and gestures of another person (which was precisely the role of Ion who was the rhapsode for Homer), and this has led him to conclude that artists are making redundant reproductions that contribute nothing to knowledge. Worse, these artists sometimes even mislead or deceive their spectators. He claims that painters deceive foolish men and children into believing that what they painted were real objects, and poets deceive by making false claims about the gods and heroes from legend (i.e., these characters never really did what these poets claimed they had done). Hence, artists have no place in Plato's ideal republic; and they must be expelled if they choose to stay. Although agreeing with Plato's definition of* mimesis, *Aristotle defended the arts by emphasizing* artistic mimesis *as the representation of human action. As representations of human action, art goes beyond the production of accurate copies of the original because it has its own rules of unification and integration of parts, which enables the spectators to view artworks as coherent and intelligible wholes. Unlike the historian, the poet or dramatist describes events to satisfy the conditions of artistic unity, and it is never his intention to claim that the events he describes really took place (hence he cannot be accused of deceiving the audience). Plato never reached this conclusion that artworks are actually not mere*

copies but are entities existing in their own right, with their own rules of internal structuring that enable them to be presented as unified wholes, *which means they can be intelligible to the audience without reference to originals existing in the real world. And this is because Plato did not emphasize art as representations of human action, and he chose instead to see them as mere copies or reproductions of originals existing in this world. My chief contributions would be, firstly, to show how Aristotle's notion of* mimesis *distinguishes claims made in works of art (such as those which are found in or implied by the plot of a literary work) from similar assertions made in the social sciences; and secondly, to support certain interpretations of (what Aristotle means by) artistic unity and coherence through my employment of textual analysis of the* Poetics.

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle's definition of *mimesis* (often translated as "imitation") is very closely tied to his discussion of art, especially tragedy and epic drama. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in order to have any meaningful discussion of Aristotle's notion of imitation, one must refer to his arguments in the *Poetics*. I will also focus on certain remarks made by commentators (on the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis*), for my discussion will never be complete without analyzing their interpretation and arguments. But Aristotle's notion of *mimesis* was largely influenced by the way Plato employed the concept (of *mimesis*). And this means that one can only properly discuss Aristotle's concept of imitation by first looking at Plato's idea of *mimesis*. In fact, one also needs to thoroughly compare Aristotle's notion of *mimesis* with that which was introduced earlier by Plato.

PLATO'S NOTION OF *MIMESIS*

I shall not mention all the different ways by which Plato uses the term *mimesis*, but only those that are relevant to our understanding of how it is being employed in Aristotle's *Poetics*. In Plato's scheme, the term *mimesis* could mean:

1. Reproducing the speeches, tones, and gestures of another person;
2. Making an accurate copy or likeness of the real thing;
3. Impersonating somebody; and
4. Representing men in action.

Now these different senses of *mimesis* (as used by Plato) are not exclusive of one another. For instance, to impersonate someone may also involve reproducing the speeches or gestures of that person (although

doing the latter need not necessarily mean doing the former—e.g., we do not consider the rhapsode as one who is trying to impersonate the poet or we do not say that Ion is trying to pass himself off as Homer, even though he may reproduce the speeches and gestures of the epic poet).

I shall begin with (1), i.e., *mimesis* as the reproduction of someone else's speeches, gestures, and actions. Plato focuses on this sense of *mimesis* in *Ion*, who is the rhapsode for Homer. In his performance, Ion (the rhapsode) is said to imitate the speeches and gestures of Homer (the poet)—while the poet himself only imitates what the gods say and do. In other words the rhapsode simply recreates (or accurately reproduces) what the poet has produced—but the poet himself recreates (or accurately reproduces) what the gods say and do. The poets are only inspired by the gods (and know not what they are doing), and the rhapsodes are in turn inspired by the poets. And *mimicry* is certainly involved in this process of reproducing or recreating the original.

Mimesis as the making of accurate copies or likenesses of the real thing is most evident in the case of painting. Plato tells us that the painter "is the imitator of the thing which those others produce," such as a chair, a table, a couch, etc. (*Republic* X, 597e). But a good painter will also copy such things accurately—so that what he has painted looks like the original, and is capable of deceiving children and foolish adults when seen from a distance. In other words, these people would even think they are actually seeing the real thing itself (*Republic* X, 598 b-c).

But *mimesis* as the making of accurate copies is not confined to painting. It must apply to poetry also. Plato accuses poets such as Homer and Hesiod, of telling false stories, because they describe inaccurately (or they produce a poor likeness of) the characters of heroes and gods who are featured in their poems. He (*Republic* II, 377e) says:

> When anyone images badly in speech the true nature of gods and heroes, [he is] like a painter whose portraits bear no resemblance to his models.

Poetry is analogous to painting in that it must produce a likeness or accurate copy of that which it imitates. But poets such as Homer and Hesiod have even failed to produce a likeness of the gods and heroes whom they have chosen to imitate (i.e., they do not even provide accurate accounts of the characters of those gods and heroes whom they have chosen to imitate). But Plato's attack on poetry goes further than this: he also accuses the poet of impersonating his dramatic personages. And in doing this the poet intentionally deceives his audience into thinking that it is Achilles or Agamemnon who is speaking, and not the poet himself. This point is clearly emphasized by Plato when he (*Republic* III, 393 a-b) says:

> ... the poet himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking. But what follows he delivers as if he were himself Chryses and tries as

far as may be to make us feel that not Homer is the speaker, but the priest, an old man. And in this manner he has carried on nearly all the rest of his narration about affairs in Ilium, all that happened in Ithaca, and the entire *Odyssey*.

But how does the poet impersonate his dramatic characters? According to Plato (*Republic* III, 393 c) , he does so by adopting the posture or speech of his personages (by "likening oneself to another in speech or bodily bearing an imitation of him to whom one likens oneself"). *Mimesis* or imitation involves impersonating someone else (i.e., the dramatic characters in the poet's story)—and *impersonation* is a deliberate attempt at deceiving the audience into thinking that it is not Homer, but Agamemnon or Chryses, who is speaking or acting in this or that way. However, if the poet does not impersonate his characters but chooses instead to only narrate the story, then he is not imitating (i.e., he is not engaged in *mimesis*). This is made clear when Plato (*Republic* III, c-d) says: ". . . if the poet should conceal himself nowhere, then his entire poetising and narration would have been accomplished without imitation . . . [if the poet] had gone on speaking not as if made or being Chryses but still as Homer, you are aware that it would not be imitation but narration, pure and simple."

Plato employs another notion of *mimesis*; one which he does not emphasize in his writings. According to him (*Republic* X, 603 c), the poet can also *represent* human beings in action:

  Mimetic poetry, we say, imitates human beings acting under
  compulsion or voluntarily, and as a result of their actions
  supposing themselves to have fared well or ill and in all this
  feeling either grief or joy.

But how does poetry represent men in action? Plato (*Phaedrus*, 268 c-d) tells us that it is not enough to simply produce set dramatic speeches, or even passages containing such dramatic speeches. For these are only the parts of a play: and they must be arranged in such a way that they stand in proper relation to each other and to the whole, before we have a complete poem. It is by arranging speeches of the various personages in this way that poetry represents the actions of men. But we will consider this further when we discuss Aristotle's notion of *mimesis*.

While Plato uses *mimesis* in these different ways, his emphasis is actually on impersonation, and the making of accurate copies (or likeness) of the real thing. For by emphasizing impersonation, Plato can accuse the poets of deliberately deceiving others; and so offer a good reason for their expulsion from his ideal republic. And by emphasizing *mimesis* as the making of accurate copies of things in this world, Plato can accuse artists of making copies of copies, since, for him, particulars in this world are only imitations of Forms existing in the real world. The poet's products are twice removed from the eternal Forms towards which understanding and knowledge are to be directed (see *Republic* X, 596 e -597e).

ARISTOTLE'S NOTION OF *MIMESIS*

Aristotle also employs *mimesis* with the four senses mentioned above; but his emphasis is not on reproduction, impersonation, or the making of accurate copies. Rather, his focus is on *mimesis* as the representation of the actions of men.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle (4:1448b 5-8) also uses *mimesis* to refer to the reproduction of the speeches, tones, and gestures of others. Indeed, he considers it to be the simplest sense of *mimesis*:

> Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of the advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitativecreature in the world, and learns at first by imitation.

Here, imitation clearly refers to reproduction of the gestures, movements, or sounds made by others. And it is important for such reproductions to be accurate, if the one who imitates is to learn through his imitation of others. For instance, in learning to utter a word or sound, or in learning to throw a boomerang in the correct way, it may be important for the imitator to reproduce as accurately as possible each step or act executed by the other person (otherwise, the child would utter the wrong sound, or the boomerang would fail to fly in the desired manner). This means that for Plato, as well as for Aristotle, *imitation* could mean the making of accurate reproductions of the original.

In Aristotle's scheme, *mimesis* also means the making of a likeness or accurate copy of the original. Towards the end of ch. 15 of the *Poetics* he tells us that a good portrait painter will produce the distinctive characteristics of his model. Now, a painting that brings out the peculiar features of its model surely has some degree of likeness to the original. Commenting on this, Lucas (1968, 264-65) says:

> Here we have, at first sight, a breakthrough to a new order of ideas; the artist produces not a copy but an idealization of his original, and as a creator of new beauty he is surely entitled to the philosopher's esteem. In fact it amounts to less than this. By leaving out a wart from a portrait of a beautiful face the artist makes it more beautiful; or a number of existing beauties might be combined into a more beautiful whole, as Zeuxis was said to have amalgamated the five maidens of Croton for his Helen.

Lucas points out that for Aristotle, a good portrait-painter does not only make a likeness or accurate copy of his model. He goes on to produce an idealized version of his sitter. In other words, he also makes his sitter handsomer or more beautiful than he really is. Lucas also tells us that the artist is able to do this by removing certain features (such as warts or scars

or redundant moles), or by bringing together various features of several persons. But Lucas has not pointed out that by making this claim, Aristotle actually strengthens Plato's charge that the artist is engaged in deception; he not only fails to make an accurate copy but goes on to deceive the audience into believing that the sitter is handsomer than he really is. While denying that the artist only makes redundant copies, Aristotle actually strengthens Plato's main reason for removing artists and poets from the ideal republic.

But we must return to Aristotle's assertion that the artist not merely aims at making an accurate copy, but an idealized copy, of his original. We may add here that producing an idealized presentation of the original involves the process of imagination [I am hereby applying the view of Scruton on Aristotle's notion of *mimesis,* which involves the production of idealized versions of the original]. And imagination in this context (see Scruton 1974, 84-120) is:

> (i) Unasserted thought (i.e. entertaining a proposition without putting in up for evaluation of truth or falsehood).
>
> (ii) And the unasserted thought is considered to be particularly appropriate or fitting to its subject. For example, if I entertain (unasserted) the thought that my boss is an elephant I somehow also believe it to be particularly appropriate to think of him as such. Perhaps his personality, or his appearance, makes it particularly appropriate to think of him as an elephant. And it is important for unasserted thought to be appropriate to its subject; otherwise it would merely be thought that is fanciful or whimsical (rather than imagination).

The painter entertains (without assertion) the thought that his sitter is more beautiful or handsomer than he actually is—and he produces his portrait according to this "idealized image" that he has of his model. In doing so, he will also consider it to be particularly appropriate to see his model as handsomer or more beautiful (unless he has some special reason for doing so—e.g., he has been commissioned to make his model look more beautiful than he really is or he wishes to flatter his sitter, etc.). And the painter is also inviting us to see his sitter as one who is handsomer than he actually is.

It will be remembered that Plato accuses the poets of deception by impersonating the characters in their stories. Like Plato, Aristotle also uses *mimesis* to refer to impersonation of personages in poetry. He employs *mimesis* in this way when discussing epic poetry (see *Poetics*, ch. 24: 1460a 7-10):

> The poet should say very little *in propia persona*, as he is no imitator when doing that. Whereas the other poets are perpetually coming forward in person, and say but little, and that only here and there, as imitators, Homer after a brief preface brings forthwith a man, a woman, or other character . . .

Like Plato in the *Republic* (III, 393 c-d), Aristotle denies imitation to the epic poet when he is narrating (or speaking in his own person)—and claims that he is an imitator only when he speaks or acts as one of his characters. But this clearly contradicts his own remarks in ch. 3 of the *Poetics*, where he discusses manners of imitation employed in poetry. For there he distinguishes between epic poets who imitate by speaking at times in narration and at times in assumed character (e.g., Homer), and epic poets who imitate by speaking *wholly* in narration. (I will provide a more detailed discussion of this later, when I discuss the way in which Aristotle differentiates the different arts). Although in ch. 3 pure narration (employed by some epic poets) is accepted as a manner of imitation, in ch. 24 the poet is said to be not engaging in imitation (or *mimesis*) when he is narrating. There is clear inconsistency between what is asserted in ch. 3 and the view that is expressed in ch. 24 (of the *Poetics*). But Halliwell (1987, 171) provides an acceptable explanation of this inconsistency. He tells us that this assertion in ch. 24 is not integrated with the rest of Aristotle's theory of poetry. And this happens because when discussing epic poetry, Aristotle focuses mainly on Homer—and Homer tends to act the roles of his characters rather than narrate. He goes on to say: "Homer shows . . . that epic can and should approach to a predominantly dramatic mode of *mimesis.*" And this explains why Aristotle was prepared in ch. 24 to even exclude narration from *mimesis.*

Unlike Plato, Aristotle stresses *mimesis* as the representation of action and life by a properly constructed plot (rather than *mimesis* as impersonation, or as the making of accurate copies). But even here Aristotle is very much influenced by the remarks of Plato. I have pointed out earlier that in *Phaedrus*, Plato (268 c-d) claims that the tragic poet does not represent human action by simply composing unconnected dramatic speeches or passages—as these parts must be arranged in such a way that they stand in proper relation to one another, as well as to the whole. Now it is not unreasonable to say that certain views expressed in ch. 7 of the *Poetics*, where Aristotle (1450b 35) speaks of the need for orderly arrangement of the incidents in the tragic plot, are influenced by these remarks in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

But Aristotle (*Poetics*, 1450b 24-26) demands an even tighter unity than Plato—for he says that the parts must also be arranged in such a way that there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. And this means that the work must develop towards a certain conclusion or climax (which is the end), so that each and every part contributes to this development or building up towards that climax. As each part must play a different but necessary role in building towards this single climax or culmination, it cannot be removed without affecting our comprehension of the play (see *Poetics*, 1450b 24-1451a 35). Now this point of requiring the tragic plot to have a beginning, a middle, and an end implies that Aristotle is actually insisting on a more tightly unified whole than Plato (1968, 107).

Aristotle (unlike Plato) is able to argue from this need for poetic unity to the capacity of poetry to reveal certain universal truths (see *Poetics*,

1451b 5-10). For Aristotle, *poetic unity* means that each event must be the likely or inevitable outcome of the one preceding it; and it must likely or inevitably lead to the event following it – so that each link in the dramatic sequence is firmly and closely connected to whatever precedes or follows it (see *Poetics*, 1450b 24-36). Poetic unity also requires that whatever is said or done by an agent must be the likely or inevitable outcome of his character-trait or fixed disposition (see *Poetics* 15, 1454a 33-37). This makes each event or action intelligible to us, without our having to look outside the play to explain why it occurred the way it did. In this way, certain universal regularities are revealed by the play. For example, it would reveal what a certain kind of person is likely to do, given a certain set of circumstances. Plato, who also mentions the need for unity in poetry, never reaches this conclusion. This is because he does not prescribe the kind of tight connection between parts (described in the *Poetics* as necessary or probable connection between incidents, and between character-traits and action), which Aristotle wants a tragic play to have. Anyway, it does not suit Plato's purpose to allow poetry to express universal truths.

This is a significant difference between Plato and Aristotle. Plato (see *Republic* II, 377e) believes that art imitates only particular things (and this also applies to poetry, for poetry must give accurate descriptions of the characters of particular heroes and gods). But for Aristotle, poetry is not concerned with particulars but with universal statements. According to Aristotle (*Poetics*, 1451b 29-30), what distinguishes the historian from the poet is that the former describes, as accurately as he can, those particular things or events which have actually happened (I suppose today we would have called that *descriptive history*, or mere reporting). While the latter (i.e., the poet) gives us his view of what sort of things are likely to be done by certain sorts of people. But one may point out that poets are not the only ones who deal with such universal truths—sociologists, social psychologists, and other social scientists—may also be interested in making claims of a similar kind. How, then, do we differentiate poetry from the social sciences? The social scientist, on the one had, like the historian, will check his claims with external evidence—and use such external evidence to support his hypotheses. The poet, on the other hand, does not employ external evidence to support his universal statements. And this is why Aristotle stresses the need for conviction—the poet must be able to introduce his universal statements in a plausible way without the advantage of external evidence to support his views. The difference between social science and poetry is that the former supports its hypotheses by carrying out empirical investigations, whereas the latter (poetry) only gives a concrete view of human nature in a convincing fashion. And poetry convinces by arranging the events in such a way that each following incident is the likely or inevitable outcome of a preceding one, by ensuring that each action is the inevitable or likely result of its agent's moral character, by deployment and manipulation of images, and so on. In other words, poetry convinces through internal structuring and organization of events in its plot, so that we need not check with external facts before we

accept the views expressed in the work. And that constitutes the essence of Aristotle's notion of *mimesis* (as differentiated from works that depend on external factual evidence for their support).

We may say something more about the mode in which the poet presents his or her insights (i.e., truths as he or she sees them) and their difference from claims to truth which are also made in other kinds of discourse, such as the social sciences.

The poet's insights may be revealed through what Olsen (1985, 62) calls *reports*; i.e., descriptions made in a literary work of particular events, situations, characters and places. Olsen points out that reports in literary works are not to be understood as informative (i.e.. as statements which are to be judged as true or false). This is confirmed by the fact that discussion about the truth or falsity of such reports do not feature in literary criticism. In other words, there is no special part in literary criticism for deciding the accuracy or otherwise of such reports (as, for example, there is a special part which deals with stylistic features)—and the literary critic has no special skills for determining the truth or falsity of such reports.

If reports are not to be understood as informative, then what role should we assign to them in poetry? I believe these reports play a vital part in revealing the insights of the author. Homer's *Iliad* reveal (among other things) that friendship imposes the strongest obligations on a person. And this view is brought out by a series of events in the poem—Achilles refusing to fight, Patroclus trying to save Achilles' honour by fighting in his armour and getting himself killed by doing so, Achilles avenging his friend's death by fighting and defeating the most famous Trojan warrior, Hector. One may say also that Shakespeare's *King Lear* reveals (among other things) that to act from pride and lack of foresight is to bring suffering and disaster upon oneself. And this is revealed through Shakespeare's reports: Lear's abdication, his rejection of Cordelia for refusing to publicly praise him, and the surrender of his kingdom to his two elder daughters who then take turns to remove his trappings of kingship and to reduce him to an insane old man raving at the elements.

The poet uses reports not only for conveying his insights, but also for presenting certain images to the audience. Consider Clytemnestra's description (see Aeschylus 1938, 321-37), which she gives from her imagination, of the sack of Troy:

> Think you—this very morn—the Greeks in Troy,
> And loud therein their voice of utter wail!
> Within one cup pour vinegar and oil,
> And look! Unbent, unreconciled, they war.
> So in the twofold issue of strife
> Mingle the victor's shout, the captive's moan,
> For all the conquered whom the sword has spared,
> Cling weeping—some unto a brother slain,
> Some childlike to a nursing father's form,
> And wailed the loved and lost, the while their neck,

Bows down already 'neath the captive's chain,
And lo! The victors, now the fight is done,
Goaded by restless hunger, far and wide
Range all disordered thro' the town, to snatch
Such victual and such rest as chance may give
Within the captive halls that once were Troy.

I believe it is not wrong to say that we have been presented here with what T. S. Eliot (1975, 77) calls "a sequence of images" regarding the capture and sack of Troy. I agree with Eliot here that the reader of a poem should not question the resonableness of each successive image that comes to his mind, but should wait to see whether a unified effect is produced (which will, in given cases, bring about conviction). Literary works are surely valued (among other things) for this capacity to manipulate and present images to its readers.

Words used for describing certain objects or events in the poem can also signify some situation or state of affairs (which the poet wants to convey in his works). In order to explain this I refer to *The Persians* by Aeschylus (3-46), where the word "gold" appears many times in the chorus of the Elders: the seats of the Council Hall are described as "rich and gold-abounding," the armed host as "blazing with gold," the royal chiefs are said to "shine in burnished gold," and so on. Ferguson (1972, 42) points out that "the gold throughout the play symbolizes the society that depends on wealth", and it is the wealth "that leads to *hybris*, which leads to disaster." He also says that while to the Elders gold represents the glory of the host, "to the Greeks it would savour of pride and effeminacy, for you cannot forge fighting weapons with gold." Aeschylus has used 'gold' as a kind of metaphor for the extravagance and wealth of the Persian empire which must lead eventually to its ruin. This means that reports can also be employed to signify some state of affairs which the poet does not directly describe in his work.

The reports in a poem are not to be understood as informative, but as the means employed by the poet for presenting images, signifying certain states of affairs, and conveying his insights. I shall now say more of these insights, and how they differ from claims to truth which are also made in areas like the social sciences.

Olsen (1985, 66-67) refers to these insights of the literary artists as "reflections." He describes *reflections* as statements concerning the significance of particular events, places, situations and characters mentioned in the reports— in other words, they are the meaning of the literary work. The issue is if we construe a piece of discourse as a literary work, could we at the same time consider reflections which are derived from it as statements making truth-claims about the world? Olsen (1985, 58) provides what I consider to be a reasonable answer to this question. First, it should be noted that certain remarks made by Olsen seem to suggest that there is no place for true or false claims in literature (e.g., he says: "It will be argued below that literary discourse cannot be interpreted as being

intended to inform, and that judgments about the truth and falsity of literary works are therefore inappropriate and, indeed, meaningless"). But in his subsequent discussion, it becomes clear that he is holding a rather different view—i.e., the truths which literature may affirm (or the truth of reflections derived from a literary work) are not supported by reasons, arguments, evidence, etc. This view is expressed by Olsen when he (1985, 71) says:

> It is highly unlikely that any reader would agree with all the reflections, derived or direct … if they are construed as general statements. Nevertheless, his objections to these reflections in literary criticism does not take the form of argument to show that they are wrong. For how, indeed, would one go about showing that the world has joy, love, light, certitude, peace, etc., and that Arnold therefore is wrong? [In "Dover Beach," Matthew Arnold offers his own reflections on scenes described in his poem by claiming that the world has really neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace.] A critic is usually content to object that a reflection is simply not true without substantiating his claim with an argument which would show how the reflection was false. It is not even clear what would count as supporting reasons for challenging poetic reflections.

Olsen (1985, 71-72) then goes on to say that literary critics are simply not equipped with the means necessary for determining the truth of reflections derived from literary works. And neither is there a part of literary criticism which deals with the factual correctness of reflections (in the same way that there is a part which deals with narrative technique, or stylistic features, etc.).

Olsen (1985, 74-75) also says that even if the truth of reflections could be determined, this need not affect our aesthetic evaluation of the literary work from which such reflections are derived. We need not downgrade a literary work simply because its reflections are judged to be untrue. It is possible for reflections derived from a literary work to be rejected by certain critics who nonetheless still see it as a great work of art (an example of such a work is *Tom Jones*). There are works in which critics strongly disagree on their meanings (such as *Hamlet*) , but there is no parallel controversy over their quality as literary works. So long as a literary work exhibits certain qualities like unity, coherence, complexity, and so on, it will still be accepted as a successful work even if there is strong disagreement on its meaning.

I pointed out earlier that Aristotle considers poetry to be capable of revealing certain universal truths (e.g., what such-and-such a kind of person is likely to do in such-and-such circumstances). And this is also Aristotle's attempt to defend poets against Plato's charge that they are making redundant copies of particulars, as poetry can provide us with knowledge on certain universal truths about human affairs. Now, a social scientist (such as a psychologist) may also deal with such universal truths, and he

needs to support his claims with external evidence. But it is simply not relevant to look for external evidence to support universal statements derived from poetry—Olsen's arguments have convincingly established this point. We simply accept or reject the universal statements revealed by a poem, without offering any argument to show why they are true, or not true.

Since Aristotle considers poetry as dealing with universal statements and not with particulars, he can encourage tragic poets to depart from tradition by inventing their own names and events—rather than adhering strictly to historic names and historical events which are taken from Greek mythology. As the poet's aim is to present certain universal truths about human affairs (e.g. he may present his view of what certain kinds of people are likely to do under certain circumstances, or how friendship actually imposes the strongest duties on a man (Petroclus fighting on Achilles' behalf against Hector, Troy's greatest warrior, in Homer's *Iliad*), or how war offers opportunities for glory but also death and doom to both sides (Achilles defeating Hector but dying later in the hands of the Trojans), or how acting from pride and complete lack of foresight must bring disaster and misery upon the agent as well as those who are close to him (Shakespeare's *King Lear*), etc., he can achieve this purpose equally well by employing invented names and events. Such poetic insights can be revealed without employing or adhering strictly to historic names and historical events. Aristotle is however aware that historic or known names are still being employed by certain tragic poets during his time. But such historic names and historical events are only employed in order to achieve conviction—i.e., the audience will consider things which are described in the play as possible; for if they were not possible they would not have happened (most Greeks at that time believed stories from mythology to have actually happened. See *Poetics* 9, 1451b 15-18). Nevertheless, as Aristotle points out (*Poetics*, 1451b 15-16), the poet can still achieve such conviction by employing names and events which are purely his own inventions (as in the case with Agathon's *Antheus*). It is, therefore, not necessary at all for the tragic poet to employ known names, and they may do just as well if they employ names which they have invented.

Plato, it should be noted, never reaches this conclusion that the poets may and should invent their own names and events. This is because he believes that what poetry imitates are particular gods and heroes—and poets such as Homer and Hesiod have even produced inaccurate descriptions of the characters of those heroes and gods whom they have chosen to imitate (a point which has been described earlier in this article).

Aristotle also goes beyond Plato by pointing out that a complete whole (with parts arranged in an orderly fashion; and with a beginning, a middle, and an end) requires appropriate size or magnitude (see *Poetics* 7, 1450b 24-29). For if the poem is too long then we will not be able to remember the relevant parts which leads towards the end or climax. And if it is too short, there will not be enough room for the poem to unfold in a convincing fashion towards the end or climax. In other words, there will not be a

proper middle. The need for proper magnitude is an Aristotelian contribution—Plato has not, in any of his works, hinted on this requirement for appropriate length.

From what is said so far, Aristotle uses *mimesis* with the following senses:

(i) As *reproduction* of speeches, utterances, and gestures of others.

(ii) As *making a likeness* of the original. Even though he tells us that, in good portrait-painting, the artist *also* makes the model handsomer than he actually is. And the artist also goes on to produce an "idealized image" of the model.

(iii) As *impersonation* of the characters in a poem.

(iv) And as the *representation* of human action by a well-structured plot (i.e., a plot which is whole, with a beginning, a middle, and an end; and which has its incidents arranged according to probability or necessity; and which is of appropriate length or magnitude). And this is the notion of *mimesis* which Aristotle emphasizes in the *Poetics*.

NECESSARY OR PROBABLE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN POETIC *MIMESIS*

It should be clear by now that one of Aristotle's most significant contributions to the concept of *mimesis* is that it is not only the mere making of accurate copies of things existing in this world. *Mimesis* as representation of human action involves the creation of a new thing with its own internal laws that unify its parts into a coherent whole (or an intelligible whole). By introducing the idea of *mimesis* as representation of human action by a well-structured whole, Aristotle takes the idea of *mimesis* much further than Plato ever does. The question that now arises is: how does the artist (or playwright) create a well-structured or unified whole? In the case of drama or poetry, Aristotle's reply is that *the events in the play must be structured according to the laws of probability or necessity* (see *Poetics* 7, especially 1451a 27, 1451a 30, 1451b 1-18). In other words, each event in the play must be connected to the following one in terms of probability or necessity. But before discussing this Aristotelian requirement in detail, I need to explain a related requirement specified in the *Poetics*. And this is Aristotle's requirement that poetry (including tragedy) must describe what is possible, or what could have happened (and not what is impossible or could never have happened). In order to explain precisely what this requirement involves, I want to begin with a particular statement which Aristotle makes in ch. 9 of the *Poetics* (1451a 36-37):

... the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e., what is possible as being probable or necessary.

There are two different requirements here. Firstly, an incident or event in a play must be "possible" (or it must describe a thing that "might happen"). Secondly, the incidents in the play must then be connected according to probability or necessity. I will now deal with the first requirement. According to Aristotle, it is not the poet's role to describe actual events, or historical events (i.e. "the thing that has happened"). As I stated earlier when discussing the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis*, the poet can invent his own events. But they must be presented as "a kind of thing that might happen," which is here equated with what is possible. But it is still unclear what Aristotle means by "what is possible," or how the poet could describe what is possible in terms of probability or necessity (the second requirement). I shall first explain his meaning of *what is possible*, and I want to begin by referring to the following account of Butcher (1957, 165-67):

> The incidents of every tragedy worthy of the name are improbable if measured by the likelihood of their everyday occurrence—improbable in the same degree in which characters capable of great deeds and great passions are rare. The rule of "probability," as also of "necessity," refers rather to the internal structure of a poem; it is the inner law which secures the cohesion of the parts.
>
> The "probable" is not determined by a numerical average of instances; it is not a condensed expression of what meets us in the common course of things . . . The rule of experience cannot be the law that governs art. The higher creations of poetry move in another plane. The incidents of the drama and the epic are not those of ordinary life: the persons who here play their parts are not average men and women. The "probable" law of their conduct cannot be deduced from commonplace experience, or brought under a statistical average. The thoughts and deeds, the will and the emotions of a Prometheus or a Clytemnestra, a Hamlet or an Othello, are not an epitomised rendering of the ways of meaner mortals.

According to Butcher (1957, 168-69), the characters of tragedy are capable of great deeds and great passions, and such characters are rare—i.e., they are people whom we are most unlikely to encounter or meet with in real life. The incidents of every tragedy represent the actions of such characters. Therefore, the incidents of every tragedy are equally unlikely (or improbable) in terms of real life. And so Aristotle is not referring here to incidents that are probable in real life. The tragic poet simply cannot fall back on human experience and real life in order to work out what such a character will say or do in a given situation. But Butcher also says that, according to Aristotle, the tragic poet may fall back on accepted legends and myths. Both names and incidents could be taken from traditional legends. Furthermore, the Greek spectators of Aristotle's time generally

believed that these events from legend were true, or did really take place. And this should make events taken from legend appear credible: for Aristotle points out that things that have happened (or, we may add, which are believed to have happened) are obviously possible and, therefore, also believable—for, if they were not possible, they would not have occurred.

I believe Butcher's account here of Aristotle's view is partly inaccurate. He is right in saying that *probability* or *necessity* refers to the causal connections between the incidents which ensure internal unity in a tragic poem. But he is not giving an accurate account of Aristotle's position when he asserts that events in good tragedy will be "improbable if measured by the likelihood of their everyday occurrence," so that "the rule of experience cannot be the law that governs art." I shall now discuss why this part of Butcher's account is simply inaccurate.

According to Aristotle, it is the poet's function to describe "what is possible as probable or necessary." I believe this means that the poet must describe what is epistemically possible in terms of probability or necessity. I shall first explain that which is epistemically possible, before proceeding to discuss how it can be presented in terms of probability or necessity.

That which is *epistemically possible* is that which is not ruled out by what is known at present. In other words, it is not inconsistent with our present knowledge—e.g., the existence of intelligent beings on another planet in our universe is epistemically possible, for it is not inconsistent with anything that we know at present (see Khamara 1986, 18). What is epistemically possible is also logically possible, but not vice versa (e.g., it is logically but not epistemically possible for men to grow wings and fly without the aid of machines). Indeed, what we know at present excludes much of what is logically possible.

The tragic poet must fall back on what is known from human experience and inquiry if he is to describe what is epistemically possible. This is because it is only by appeal to what we know from experience that we can determine and decide on what is epistemically possible (and what is epistemically possible is the subject matter of art). Butcher is, therefore, wrong to insist that "the rule of experience cannot be the law that governs art."

However, I have so far assumed that Aristotle is referring to that which is epistemically possible when he says that it is the business of the poet to describe "what is possible." But what, it may be asked, is the justification of my assumption? I believe there are two reasons that can be given in support of my interpretation. Firstly, textual evidence from the *Poetics* itself supports my interpretation. When Aristotle cautions the poet against describing impossibilities, the examples he employs to bring out his point are clearly epistemic impossibilities. Consider what he says in ch. 25 of the *Poetics* (1460b 15 -32):

> There is . . . within the limits of poetry itself a possibility of
> two kinds of error, the one directly, the other only accidentally
> connected to art. If the poet meant to describe the thing

correctly, and failed through lack of power of expression, his art itself is at fault. But if it was through his having meant to describe it in some incorrect way (e.g., to make the horse in movement have both right legs thrown forward) that technical error (one in a matter of, say, medicine or some other special science), or impossibilities of whatever kind they may be, have got into his description, his error in that case is not in the essentials of poetic art. These, therefore, must be the premises of the Solutions in answer to the criticisms involved in the Problems.

As to criticisms relating to the poet's art itself, any impossibilities there may be in his descriptions of things are faults. But from another point of view they are justifiable, if they serve the end of poetry itself—if (to assume what we have said of that end) they make the effect of either that very portion of the work or some other portion more astounding. The Pursuit of Hector is an instance in point. If, however, the poetic end might have been as well or better attained without sacrifice of technical correctness in such matters, the impossibility is not to be justified, since the description should be, if it can, entirely free from error. One may ask, too, whether the error is a matter directly or only accidentally connected with poetic art; since it is a lesser error in an artist not to know, for instance, that the hind has no horns, than to produce an unrecognisable picture of one.

In the above passage, Aristotle's purpose is to distinguish between two kinds of faults; one of which is central to poetic art, while the other is actually a mistake in some other art (e.g., a poet who describes a horse in movement with "both right legs thrown forward" reveals a lack of knowledge about horses, but not about poetic art).

I only wish to point out that Aristotle describes the lesser fault (which results from lack of knowledge not in poetic art, but in some other field) as impossibilities. His examples here of such impossibilities are to describe a female deer with horns; to describe a horse in movement with "both right legs thrown forward"; and the scene of the pursuit of Hector, where Achilles signals the other Greeks not to pursue Hector. Now it is clearly logically possible for a hind to have horns, or a horse to gallop in the way as described, or for the Greeks to refrain from chasing Hector in battle. That they are described here as "impossibilities" must mean that Aristotle is speaking about epistemic impossibilities.

Aristotle also makes the general claim that technical correctness should not be sacrificed unless it serves a poetic end—and by this he means that impossibilities like the ones we have just described should not be introduced into a poem unless they serve to make some part of the poem astounding or amazing. A poet who commits a technical error by describing a female deer with horns, or a horse in movement with both

right legs thrown forward, is also describing something which is ruled out by what is already known (in Aristotle's time) in the field of zoology. So Aristotle is referring to epistemic impossibilities in the above passage which I have quoted from the *Poetics*.

Consider another passage from ch. 24 of the *Poetics* (1460a 26-1460b 1):

A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility. The story should never be made up of improbable incidents; there should be nothing of the sort in it. If, however, such incidents are unavoidable, they should be outside the piece, like the hero's ignorance in "Oedipus" of the circumstances of Laius' death; not within it, like the report of the Pythian games in "Electra," or the man's having come to Mysia from Tegea without uttering a word on the way, in "The Mysians." So that it is ridiculous to say that one's Plot would have been spoilt without them, since it is fundamentally wrong to make up such Plots. If the poet has taken such a Plot, however, and one sees that he might have put it in a more probable form, he is guilty of absurdity as well as a fault of art.

Several examples of impossibilities are given in this passage and they are all cases which contradict our knowledge of things or states of affairs (i.e., they are clearly epistemic impossibilities). Hence, the poet has to (unless it serves the purpose of art) describe only epistemic possibilities. And one certainly needs to refer to past human experience to know what is epistemically possible or impossible. Hence Butcher's assertion that (according to Aristotle) "what is possible" in tragedy has no relation to what is possible in real life or in human experience is simply inaccurate. Unless it serves the purposes of art, Aristotle would prefer each event in the tragic play to be epistemically possible (and not epistemically impossible).

Now I have so far supported my claim (that Aristotle has epistemic possibilities in mind when he says that poetry describes "what is possible") by referring to examples of epistemic impossibilities mentioned in the *Poetics*. Another reason which supports my claim is that Aristotle employs *impossible* and *improbable* in an interchangeable way. For example, in ch. 24 of the *Poetics* (1460a 12-16) he describes the scene of the pursuit of Hector as an improbability, while in ch. 25 (1460b 23-27) he refers to the same event as an impossibility. Again in ch. 24 (1460a 26-35), after claiming that a "likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility," he moves immediately to describing examples of improbabilities (which he says should be avoided as far as feasible). So in the *Poetics* impossibilities and improbabilities are not sharply defined or distinguished from one another, and they can overlap. This means that Aristotle is not referring here to what is logically impossible (for that which is improbable is not logically impossible). Rather, he has epistemic impossibilities in

mind when he speaks of impossibilities which are described in certain poems—and we need to refer to what we know from experience or from real life to work out epistemic impossibilities.

Aristotle (*Poetics* 9, 1451b 15-26) believes that it is not necessary for a tragic poet to describe events from legend or history, and that he can invent his own events, provided that such events are epistemically possible. But it is not enough for tragic poetry to describe what is epistemically possible. Events that are epistemically possible must also be made convincing—and this means relating them according to probability or necessity. According to Aristotle (*Poetics* 8, 1451a 23-35):

> In writing an *Odyssey*, he [i.e., Homer] did not make the poem cover all that ever befell his hero—it befell him, for instance, to get wounded on Parnassus and also feign madness at the time of the call to arms, but the two incidents had no necessary or probable connection with one another—instead of doing that he took as the subject of the *Odyssey*, as also of the *Iliad*, an action with a unity of the kind we are describing. The truth is that, just as in the other imitative arts one imitation is always of one thing, so in poetry the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. For that which makes no perceptible difference by its presence or absence is no real part of the whole.

This requirement for "necessary or probable connection" between the incidents is again being stressed when Aristotle (*Poetics* 9, 1451a 32-35) says:

> Of simple plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call a Plot episodic when there is neither probability nor necessity in the sequence of the episodes.

Aristotle is here emphasizing the need for organic unity in the form of "necessary or probable connection" between the incidents of the play. But this requirement applies not only to the relation between incidents; for what an agent says or does must also be the necessary or probable outcome of his character. According to Aristotle (*Poetics* 15, 1454a 33-37):

> The right thing, however, is in the Characters just as in the incidents of the play to endeavour always after the necessary or probable; so that whatever such-and-such a personage says or does such-and-such a thing, it shall be the necessary or probable outcome of his character; and whenever this incident follows on that, it shall be either the necessary or the probable consequence of it.

But what does it mean for the deeds of an agent to be the "necessary or probable outcome" of his character? And what does it mean to speak of "necessary and probable connection" between the incidents?

Halliwell (1987, 99-100) provides what I consider to be a reasonable answer to these questions. According to him, *probability* refers to that which has a high likelihood of occurring (or that which Aristotle considers to "happen or hold 'for the most part'"). While *necessity* refers to that which is completely certain or inevitable (that which we expect to happen all the time, without exception). I wish to support Halliwell's interpretation of "probability" by referring to a statement in the *Poetics* (7, 1450b 29) where Aristotle says: "[A]n end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessary or usual consequent . . . " Aristotle is here explaining what constitutes an *end* in tragedy, after asserting that its plot must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. But I only want to stress here that what Aristotle later refers to as "probable connection" (see *Poetics* 8, 1451a 27) he mentions here (i.e., in 1450b 29) as the "usual consequent." There will be "probable connection," then, if the consequent is something that usually or commonly follows from the preceding event. In other words, it is that which will very likely follow from the preceding event.

There are examples from *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* which may be employed to illustrate this requirement for necessary connection between character and conduct. In fact Halliwell (1987, 107) has himself referred to *Oedipus Rex* to explain this requirement:

> Take, for example, the case of Sophocle's Oedipus, when confronted with someone (the Corinthian herdsman) who has the key to his identity. Despite the attempt of Jocasta to dissuade him from proceeding, the likelihood that a man of Oedipus's character in such a position will press on to full discovery of the truth, is so strong that Aristotle might have considered it virtual "necessity"—something we should expect universally in such a context.

I also wish to refer to Sophocle's *Antigone* to illustrate this requirement for the necessary connection between character and conduct. Given the character which Antigone is portrayed to have, i.e., as a person of extreme piety who would never compromise on what she believes to be the right thing to do, it becomes inevitable that she would choose to disobey Creon's order forbidding the burial of her dead brother, Polynices. Watling (1974, 13), in his commentary on the play, says that Antigone is a woman "for whom political expediency takes second place, by a long way, to compassion and piety"—and that she will stubbornly hold on to her position without any willingness to consider "the merits" of the opposite principle held by Creon. Since she is portrayed in Sophocles's work as having such a character, she must necessarily (or inevitably) challenge Creon's order forbidding her to bury her own dead brother. Her rejection of Creon's order is what we expect her to do in the situation without exception.

There can also be a connection between character traits and action. Bradby (1977, 120) points out that Lady Macbeth (in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) seems to be "hard, cruel, without scruples, without a conscience, and without sentiment"—she is the directing will in Duncan's murder, she plans the details, smears blood on the grooms and accuses them of killing their master, supervises their execution, and makes good any omissions. But she is not as headstrong as she appears to be. For she needs to appeal to the powers of darkness to stifle all her feelings of pity and remorse. According to Bradby (1977, 121):

> People who are naturally and wholeheartedly cruel do not have to spur themselves on to deeds of cruelty. When we exhort ourselves to be brave, it is because we know we are liable to fear. Lady Macbeth is accessible to feelings of pity and remorse. She knows it, and she is afraid of being overwhelmed by them. By an effort of will she represses, but cannot eliminate, them, and they take their revenge in her subconscious self.

Although Lady Macbeth has a strong desire to be the Queen of Scotland at all cost, it is not inevitable that she eventually carries out her scheme. From the way Bradly describes her character, there is always a chance that she could have been overwhelmed by feelings of pity for Duncan, which might have made her abandon her plan to murder him and place the blame on his two grooms.

In order to illustrate how a following event may be the likely outcome of a preceding one, I will refer to *Oedipus Rex*. Since the gods will not relieve Thebes of its plague until the guilty person is cast out, and since Oedipus Rex has (early in the play) passed a decree forbidding any person from sheltering the offender, one can say that the incident in which Oedipus finally discovers himself to be the killer of Laius (i.e. the scene in which he questions the shepherd) must very likely lead to his expulsion from the city. There is probable connection between the discovery and Oedipus's exile from Thebes. In this way, there is causal connection that binds the incidents together, as each following event is the likely or inevitable outcome of an earlier incident.

Aristotle points out in ch. 8 of the *Poetics* (1451a 16-21) that a poet should not simply describe in chronological order all the events of a person's career, without regard for whether or not they are connected to one another in terms of cause and effect (e.g., to describe in chronological order all the things that happened in the life of Odysseus without regard for whether or not they are related to one another). The poet should instead select or describe incidents which can be related in terms of cause and effect, i.e., each following incident should be the likely or inevitable outcome of the preceding one. An incident which cannot be related to other incidents in the plot is merely superfluous, and its inclusion will affect organic unity. This means that the play must be a tightly-knit whole in which the removal of any one event in the series must affect our understanding of some event

which follows it. This means that for Aristotle, poetry describes what is epistemically possible in terms of probability and necessity. And this is the principle that ensures the creation of a tightly-knit and unified whole.

CONCLUSION

Plato's two main objections to art are firstly, it simply produces redundant copies that do not add to human knowledge; to know how apples look like, would it not be better to look at a real apple than at a painting of apples? Secondly, artists deceive their spectators; a painting of an apple may deceive children and foolish men into thinking that they are seeing the real thing. Poets deceive by giving false descriptions of the gods and heroes from legend. Aristotle defends the arts by arguing that the products of artistic activity are not mere reproductions of the original. The artist does more, much more, than simply reproduce the original. He creates entities that can exist in their own right, with unified structures integrated according to their own internal laws of unification and coherence (e.g., a tragic or epic poem would sequence its events according to the principle of necessity or probability); and they can be understood without checking with what happened in reality (or in history). In fact, Aristotle even advised playwrights to go beyond stories from legend (which were believed by the Greeks at that time to be true events which have occurred in the past), and invent their own events and characters. In this manner, tragedies and other plays would no longer be imitations in the traditional sense; perhaps all that they "imitate" from the real world are events that are epistemically possible (the characters and the manner in which events are sequenced would all be contributions from the playwright alone). Hence, by emphasizing art as the representation of human action, Aristotle has to a certain degree shifted Plato's notion of artistic *mimesis*. By sequencing events according to the law of probability or necessity, the tragic play (or dramas in general) can still act as a source of information (and this is in direct disagreement with Plato, who considers art to be totally redundant copies that can never function as sources of information). It can tell us what a particular kind of person or character would probably or necessarily do under certain circumstances; or how certain kinds of events must necessarily or probably lead to certain outcomes. Artworks, such as tragic and epic dramas, are therefore not redundant and worthless copies.

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ERRATA

The author of the articles "Maoist criticisms, Confucian ethics, and maid abuse: An investigation" (January 2006) and "Aristotelian concept of *katharsis*" (May 2006) is **Lok** Chong Hoe, not **Loc** Chong Hoe.

THE CONCEPT OF THE PUBLIC GOOD: A VIEW FROM A FILIPINO PHILOSOPHER[1]

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The author argues that the concept of the public good carries largely the politico-ethical sense which subsumes the politico-economic sense. The public good is public in the sense that the beneficiaries are the general public. The government or state pursues it with a service orientation while private corporations pursue it with a profit orientation. The author also discusses mixed public goods which are pursued by private organizations with a service motivation. Government corporations are basically motivated by service though having profit is not precluded. Finally, the author talks about public bads such as corruption, pollution, and crimes.

INTRODUCTION

I have always viewed philosophy as an activity consisting of two aspects: (1) clarifying the meaning of concepts and (2) using these concepts to construct or reconstruct an integrative view of a philosophical subject or a synthetic solution to a philosophical problem. Philosophy as an activity is not simply limited to the analytic clarification of notions, which in itself is empty unless the activity of clarification is put into more productive use by solving (or dissolving) a philosophical issue or by a synthetic integration of those concepts into a philosophical whole. In short, we undertake the first aspect because of its extrinsic good (application) and we undertake the second aspect because of the intrinsic good (clearness of meaning) of the first. Genuine philosophizing is therefore both analytic and synthetic, or in an Aristotelian fashion, both epistemic and phronetic—contrary to some views which consigns the epistemic aspect to the natural sciences and only the phronetic aspect to philosophy.[2]

This paper originally wants to pursue the two aspects of a philosophical activity. However, for lack of time, I will limit the present paper to the first aspect. I will attempt to make clear the concept of the public good. I will leave the second aspect to another paper in the future,

that is, which of the many public goods should be construed at present as *the* public good for a Third World country like the Philippines.

THE PUBLIC GOOD FROM THE POLITICO-ETHICAL SENSE

National People and the Public Good

Preliminarily, I will constrict the definition of the "public good" to *communal* or *national* public goods, or goods aspired to—or believed/assumed to be aspired to from the perspective of the state—by the communal or national public. This type of goods may probably become *global* public goods,[3] but I wish to limit myself to communal or national public goods, which are to be understood in the politico-ethical sense. Hence, it becomes apparent that by *public good,* in this section of the discussion, I do not necessarily mean something to be understood from the politico-economic sense.

A *public good* is that which benefits by its use the communal or national public, that is to say, the greatest number of the local or national population. This can be perceived in two levels. The first level comes from the people themselves: they perceive the public good to be beneficial to most if not to all of them. This utilitarian consideration is important in that, on the one hand, it serves as the ethical standard by which the public—through a civil society[4]—unify themselves in consideration of their individual and social benefits. As individuals, they may of course think in terms of their own selfish benefits from a public good but there is also a recognition that unless they work together for their common welfare, then the public good aspired for may not materialize. And they as individuals may suffer as beneficiaries from its nonrealization. In this regard, the elements of unity (bonding together individual interests) and subsidiarity (working together for the *common good*) are significant aspects of a national *public good* from the communal or national people's point of view. The second level comes from the local or national government, which believes or assumes with a utilitarian perspective that a particular project or service is desired by the populace as necessary for their *common welfare*. As such the local or national government views it as a public good. Examples of these assumed necessary public services or public goods are national defense, education, public health, public ports/airports and highways, social services, postal services, and the like.[5]

Communal People and the Public Good

I will presume that the communities, or the communal people, will likewise perceive a national public good as a communal public good. I think that in general this is the case. There are, however, difficulties sometimes in that—on occasions—a community or group of communities may believe that their communal public good does not jibe—in fact, may be in conflict with—the national public good.

A massive dam that will irrigate vast tracts of land and provide thousands of megawatts of electricity that would be connected to the national grid would undoubtedly be a national public good and the national people would aspire to have the government build it by expressly or tacitly supporting the project. However, the communal people of the place where the dam would be constructed may oppose it as it would mean the loss of their ancestral lands, the abandonment of their traditional means of livelihood, and the confrontation with relocation problems in a new environment as their communities would be submerged in water. Sometimes the construction of the dam is abandoned or not pursued despite its being a national public good because the cost of the rebellion or resistance of the communities would make it economically nonviable or politically unexpedient.

I believe such a communal resistance is rare, and where the communal public good and the national public good are coincident, then the project would be pushed through. It would seem in the example above that the national public would have to wait for the tribal communities to be touched by modernization to such an extent that they would be amenable to sacrifice their tribal traditions and values for the greatest good of the greatest number. Or, alternatively, the local or national government will have to find—if at all possible—other sources of energy and of irrigating lands. I believe this is still an unresolved philosophical issue and philosophers may offer a satisfactory solution as to which is of national significance: to preserve a communal heritage as part of the national heritage or to sacrifice it for the general good in the pursuit of modernization and globalization.

Government and the Public Good

We must clearly distinguish between the national public good as pursued by the national public on their own initiative, with little or without the help of the local or national government, and the national public good as pursued by the local or national government with the support of the national public. Both are desired generally by all in the sense that its realization will redound to the general public's common good in terms of national pride, aesthetic appreciation, national well-being, national moral uplift, economic uplift, or all of the above. The first, however, is pursued by civil societies with minimal support or without the support of local and national governments while the second is pursued by the local and/or national government because its cost of implementation is so great civil societies cannot afford to pursue it on their own.

The alleviation of poverty or eradication of slums in a country is a public good in that it satisfies one or more of the general considerations we set above: namely, that it at least satisfies national well-being, national moral uplift, economic uplift, and national pride. The fight against poverty is a pillar in the political platform of many national governments and funds are generally channeled through the governments' social welfare ministries or departments. But usually the funds are not enough. A civil society may

come in and work out its own slum eradication program through voluntary contributions and massive mobilization of the society-at-large in terms of the voluntary participation of students, workers, professionals, the wealthy, and the schools (colleges and universities), among others.[6]

THE PUBLIC GOOD FROM THE POLITICO-ECONOMIC SENSE

Microeconomy

Political economy, or economics in short, deals with both the microeconomy of industrial and commercial firms and with the macroeconomy of the nation. The economic concept of the public good pertains to the benefit (profit) that may accrue an individual or a firm in pursuing a project that will offset possible losses or adverse effects and that will likewise benefit the general public, including possible external or free public riders. The basic assumption is that the *Homo economicus* is a selfish individual who would pursue an economic project either individually or in group if he/she or they will benefit from it. A lamppost may be costly but if the light it provides will make one's store very visible to the passersby and the customers, and in the process raises one's profits and offsets the cost of electricity, then the lamppost will be built. But at the same time, the noncustomers who would be passing by and the neighbors (or, in general, the free public riders) will benefit from the light, and in that sense the lamppost (or streetlight) is a public good. Notice that the noncustomers or free riders directly use—in a sense—the streetlight.

There are two criteria for considering something as a public good, economically speaking: nonrivalry and nonexcludability. A potable stream is a public good in that if one drinks from it, the stream will not be diminished or exhausted (nonrival) while at the same time no one is excluded from drinking from it. One who fills his/her container with water from the stream and brings that container to his/her house will consider that container of water as a private good. If he/she drinks from it, its content will diminish and he/she can exclude others from drinking from it.

There are a lot of arguments now which say that the economic idea of the public good is ideal in that in practical reality there are no such things in view of the development of technology, the passage of laws or exclusionary regulations that would tend to convert what appears to be a public good to a private good, and other considerations (see, e.g., Samuelson 1955 and Vaknin 2004).

For example, the potable stream we talked about above might in due time be apportioned to certain owners of titled private lands and the whole stream may now be owned by many landowners. As a result, not everyone is free to drink from any portion of the stream without permission from the owner of that portion. The free use of clean air can, in practice, be limited by pollution (carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, etc.) or by the special use of oxygen (an element of air) in, for example, hospitals. Hence, some

economists argue only for *ideal* or *pure public goods* to which external reality approximates.

It is interesting to note that goods can be rivalrous and excludable (private goods), rivalrous and nonexcludable (common pool resources), nonrivalrous and excludable (club goods), and nonrivalrous and nonexcludable (public goods). Examples of the first are houses, cars, clothes, and the like. Examples of the second are hunting games and fishing grounds, among others. Deep-sea fishing is difficult to police such that the world's fish stocks while viewed as "finite and diminishing," appears as a nonexcludable resource. An example of the third is cable television in that it is a public good delivered as a private good. It is excludable because its use is limited to a household but nonrivalrous because no matter how many households will own a cable television, it is not diminished. Finally, among the common examples of public goods are defense and law enforcement, public works, clean air, information goods, and suchlike ("Public good," *Wikipedia,* 2006).

Between rivalry and nonexcludability, it is the latter that is usually affected by technological progress and the status of traditional public goods are modified to club goods, private goods, or common resource goods. For example, in cable television certain programs (boxing or movies) can be seen on a pay-per-view basis. Thus, "encryption allows broadcasters to sell individual access to their programming." The other side of technological progress is that it "can create new public goods." Streetlights, for instance—a relatively recent good—is both nonrivalrous and nonexcludable (see "Public good," *Wikipedia*, 2006).[7]

Macroeconomy

We usually make a distinction between service and profit orientations. Generally, industrial and business firms are profit-oriented while governmental agencies are service-oriented. Government-owned or -controlled corporations are basically service-oriented although they are encouraged to be self-liquidating and even accrue profits. In many instances, especially in Third World countries, when a government makes an accounting of all its corporations (owned or controlled), the total is in the red, that is, there are more losses than gains. And so the government puts in more subsidies. In some instances, when the subsidies increase rather than decrease, the losing corporation is privatized. The government may substantially lose here, but it is only once, and it is generally perceived to be in the interest of the public (i.e., a public good in both politico-ethical and economic senses). The yearly subsidies on that corporation can be channeled to more productive projects while the same service can be provided by the newly privatized corporation.

It might puzzle us why a newly privatized corporation can generally make a losing government corporation profitable. There are many reasons for this, and at least two can be forwarded outright: one, the government corporation has a bloated bureaucracy while the private one trims it down to

a manageable size to cut on overhead costs and, two, government contracts for subprojects within the corporation are laden with corruption and the costs are high while the private one gets the lowest price for a subproject to maximize its profits. In one discussion at the Catholic University of America on corruption, for example, a bank representative said that in Latin America the corruption cap on a government project is at least 20 percent which goes to certain government individuals.[8] Certainly, corruption—which is one of the public bads[9]—should be eradicated in government.

It is this service orientation that prods the government to provide services through an unprofitable enterprise because such an enterprise is considered by government as a public good. It is generally demanded by the people, especially in the provinces or suburbs. A postal service, for example, is important in far-flung areas where private mailing services cannot reach. Moreover, government postal services are cheaper and affordable to everyone, especially the poor, while private mail services are not, and are usually patronized by the rich and the middle class.

It seems that, in general, what is considered as a public good by the national public, and recognized as such by the government (local and national), is the one in the politico-ethical sense. It is basically service orientation. Profits, although encouraged, is a secondary consideration. There is no question that some government-owned or -controlled corporations are profitable. For as long as the corporation is substantially profitable, the government will continue to hold on to it. It will be to the public good—in at least the politico-ethical sense—to add to the coffers of the national government whatever benefits (profit remittance or contributions or prestige) there can be. Where a government corporation is a liability and, if there are private takers, then the government usually privatizes it, for it considers it a public good to channel the subsidies on that losing corporation to more productive government projects.

In contrast, it appears that generally what is considered a public good in the economic sense is mostly the concern of the private sector of the economy. Some of the private public goods are taken cared of by microeconomic firms, which can be of limited circulation (within the village, city, or province) or can be of national circulation. The private sector can actively contribute to the realization of these public goods not only in their own interests but also, externally, in the interests of the public sector.

Where the private sector is not ready to shoulder the cost of making a public good readily available, and where the government considers it necessary for the general public, then the government allocates funds for realizing that public good either immediately or in the near future even if it would be a losing proposition.

PRIVATE PUBLIC GOODS AND PUBLIC PUBLIC GOODS

Earlier, we made a distinction between a private good and a public good from the politico-economic sense. To refresh our memory, a public

good ideally is nonrival and nonexcludable while a private good is rival and excludable. We also made a distinction from the politico-ethical sense between a public good desired by the national public and a public good recognized or assumed as such by the government. Theoretically, at least, we raise these questions: (1) Are *public* public goods nonrival and nonexcludable? (2) Are *private* public goods in the interest of the national public and recognized by the government as such?

Public **Public Goods**

I can only adumbrate my arguments in this subtopic which should require a very extensive treatment. Some *public* public goods are considered by the government as basic or essential and necessary: national security and defense, education, postal service, health service, trade and industry, and the like and certain ministries or departments are created to address and manage these public goods. The general public recognizes these as public goods as well in that they as riders benefit from them. Of course, they are not entirely independent free riders, for they somehow help pay for these governmental public goods through paying their taxes directly or indirectly. So are also the members of the private economic sector: they recognize these as public goods, and in many cases they supplement these *public* public goods with their *private* public goods as in establishing private schools, private hospitals, private security services, and so on.

From the above consideration, it would seem that *theoretically* public public goods are nonrival and nonexcludable in that the participation of one does not in principle diminish—for example, education as a public good—or exclude others from participating in it.[1] At the same time, these public goods are in the interest not only of the individual public but the nation as a whole as well.

There are public public goods, which the private sector does not generally want to participate because it is too costly and it would rather be a free rider itself as in the construction of national highways and bridges (although recently in the Philippines private toll highways or skyways are beginning to exist).

We have already mentioned the nonrealization of a public public good, which both the national public and the government recognize as such because of the resistance of the communities (communal publics) adversely affected by it (such as the construction of a dam).

Private **Public Goods**

Private public goods are goods which the private sector sets up either by itself or in participation with the government (local or national) since the private sector sees their realization as profitable, and the general public benefits from them as well either as customers or as free riders.

In practice, what seems to be *theoretically* a public good (in the sense of nonrival and nonexcludable) becomes in many cases—as we have

already said above—ephemeral. It is even argued that a public good is practically nonexistent one way or the other. A private good can be enjoyed by others whereas a public good can be restricted. Moreover, any participation of one private company in a line of business necessarily diminishes the chances of profitability of others in that same line. When viewed as overcrowded, the local or national government issues a regulation limiting the number of companies that can engage in such a business, which is a form of exclusion.

Here is a quote from Hoppe (1989, 28-29):

> While at least at first glance it seems that some of the state-provided goods and services might indeed qualify as public goods, it certainly is not obvious how many of the goods and services that are actually produced by states could come under the heading of public goods. Railroads, postal services, telephone, streets, and the like seem to be goods whose usage can be restricted to the persons who actually finance them, and hence appear to be private goods. . . . Just as a lot of state-provided goods appear to be private goods, so many privately produced goods seem to fit in the category of a public good. Clearly my neighbors will profit from my well-kept rose garden—they could enjoy the sight of it without even helping me garden. The same is true of all kinds of improvements that I could make on my property as well. Even those people who do not throw money in his hat can profit from a street musician's performance. Those fellow passengers on the bus who did not help me buy it profit from my deodorant. And everyone who ever meets me would profit from my efforts, undertaken without their financial support, to turn myself into a lovable person.

Without going deeper into an analysis of this quotation, which shows how the economic criteria of nonrivalry and nonexcludability can put us into an intellectual quagmire, perhaps—for the purposes of this paper—we keep the essential distinction between service orientation and profit orientation as the distinctive marks between the goods or services provided by the state (government) and by the private sector.

Mixed Public Goods

Mixed public goods are undertaken by some private organizations or civil societies for the common good of the communal or national public. These are basically service-oriented. The public goods pursued are mixed in the sense that the undertakers are private groups and yet they seek not profits (unlike private firms) but service (like the government). Once these private groups make profit the primary consideration, then they become private corporations or cooperatives.

Public Bads

Public bads are negative goods which the general public scorns, and in many cases, are avoided or not tolerated by both the private and public sectors. Some of these are corruption, pollution, crimes, and the like. In the early stages of economic development, these public bads existed and were generally tolerated or taken for granted by the national public, the private sector, and the local/national government. However, when the national public begins to feel that its personal security or health is threatened, then it starts to clamor for laws and regulations curbing or eradicating these public bads.

The national situation regarding this matter is actually complicated. We recently read reports of companies closed because of pollution (of the atmosphere or river or sea), of governments prescribing regulations of newly-built factories to have a pollution control system, of laws restricting the use of certain machineries or gadgets that largely contribute to pollution, and so on. We also hear of cases where laws or ordinances are passed to curb criminality or to check on corruption practices of both the private and public sectors.

CONCLUSION

As regards the notion of the public good, I agree with the view that this notion is largely ideal or pure. It is a prescriptive standard by which we try to approximate in practice since we notice that in practice there is no public good that is purely nonrival and nonexcludable. It would seem reasonable to reclarify and redefine the concept of the public good, not in its ideal (economic) sense but in its practical (ethical) sense. However, I want to qualify immediately that the ethical sense I am referring to here is limited to activities of a rational private sector and a rational public sector (government or its agencies). On the one hand, the rationality of the private sector is determined by its *profit orientation*. It would be irrational for such a sector to pursue a losing project or build an enterprise in a business area that is overcrowded. On the other hand, the rationality of the public sector is determined by its *service orientation*. It seems that where the private and public sectors are irrational, no public good, but perhaps a public bad, is essentially served.

Now, let me go to the concluding observations.

First, the public good is "public" in the sense that the beneficiary is the general public, that is, the local or the national public either directly or indirectly (as a free rider).

Second, it is pursued by the private (economic) sector for the sake of profit and in view of its profit orientation. It assumes the individual person as a *Homo economicus*, that is, a selfish individual who desires to satisfy his or her personal needs or wants. And a private company or corporation is a *Homo economicus* writ large.

Third, the public good is pursued by the local or national government for the sake of the general public and in view of its social-service

orientation. It assumes the individual person as a *Homo politicus* (in the Aristotelian sense), that is, a socio-political individual who desires to satisfy not only his or her personal needs or wants but also those of others since he or she recognizes the need for the others in order to survive. And the government (or state) is a *Homo politicus* writ large.

Fourth, the private sector pursues a public good through its own initiative when it believes the public good is affordable and profitable even if there will be external riders to it. Otherwise, it will allow the government to pursue a public good and it will simply make itself a rider to it. In other cases, the private sector participates with the government in the pursuit of a public good for as long as its profit orientation is satisfied.

Fifth, the government pursues a public good through its own initiative when it believes that that public good can be had with financial reasonability for the welfare of the general public. By "financial reasonability," I mean to say that the government can afford it outright or can obtain a loan which it can pay over a period of time without unduly jeopardizing the other basic services of the people, or it can let the people pay the tolls (as in highways) or pay a tax whenever a person makes use of the services (as in an airport tax). There is no doubt that some of these pursuits may be convertible politically into election votes, but this is a consequence rather than the goal of government. Where the government is irrational, the public good it pursues (for election purposes, e.g., rather than for the welfare of the public) is only apparent since its real cost to the general public in the long run will be such as to cause the general public to eventually suffer (usually in terms of curtailment of its other basic services since funds allotted or intended for these services are used for other purposes).

Sixth, private organizations or civil societies pursue a public good through their own initiative when they recognize that the government cannot do it for them, but they believe—by collective effort with little or even without the help of government—they can do the project for the sake of communal, organizational, or national welfare. It is also conceivable that a private business firm may pursue a public good in a purely nonprofit altruistic gesture, that is, a public service, as in constructing a bridge for an isolated communal village, without any direct or indirect financial returns. It is in this sense that the pursued public good is practically viewed as *mixed*.

Seventh, any benefit that a private or public person may enjoy or experience—as a free rider—from a private, public, or mixed good is an externality.[10] The riding public that enjoys the pleasant smell of one's private use of a deodorant, for example, is an externality since it does not emanate from a direct use by the public of the deodorant. A passersby who walks on a lighted street directly use—in one sense—the streetlight which, in that respect, is a public good.[11]

Finally, the politico-ethical dimension of the notion of the public good is preferable since it subsumes the politico-economic dimension in both the ideal and practical senses of the term. That is to say, the practical sense—in its contingent reality—subsumes the ideal sense as a prescriptive

standard. The whole direction of this paper is epistemic in nature as it tries to *know* the sense by which the notion of the public good can be consistently viewed and understood. The practical application of this sense (assumed to have already been made clear), or the phronetic aspect, will come later.

NOTES

1. Paper presented during the Eastern Division Conference of the American Philosophical Association, Washington, D.C., 28 December 2006. Read for Gripaldo by John Abbarno, president of Conference of Philosophical Societies.

2. See, for example, Karl Jaspers (Copleston 1965) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1996, 312-24).

3. Johnson (1994-2005) also calls the *public good* as the "collective good." Samuelson (1954), the first to refer to this term calls it as the "collective consumption good." "Global public goods" are those desired by most, if not all, people of the world (the world public) and generally recognized and desired likewise as such by world leaders. World peace, for instance, is one of these global goods. Knowledge or information is another example ("Public good," *Wikipedia*, 2006; Yee, n.d.).

4. A "civil society" may be defined as a group of people forming an association to satisfy certain needs with or without the help of the government. It is basically characterized by unity (bonding together to achieve strength and oneness of purpose) and subsidiarity (working together for the common good). It is essentially a society that lies between the family and the state. See McLean (2001 and 2005, 89-107).

5. The terms "public good," "common good," and "general welfare" have different nuances but they share the common characteristic by which the general public would benefit from the *good* or *desired object* referred to.

6. In the Philippines, we have the *Gawad Kalinga* (literally, "helping those in need") movement. It aims at eradicating Filipino slums by building 700,000 houses in 7,000 communities in 7 years (up to 2010), or the 777 Movement. So far, through voluntary contributions in terms of work and funds, it has built houses for more than 875 communities. Each *Gawad Kalinga* village consists of 50 to 100 families. It is hoped that the reconstruction of villages will accelerate in the last remaining 4 years (see *Gawad Kalinga* pictures below). Members of a GK village are immersed in value-formation trainings.

7. No doubt, there are many *grave* issues connected with the economic sense of the public good such as the free rider problem, the incentives problem, issues on the underprovision of the public good, the subsidy issue, etc. But this paper is not addressed to the purely economic aspect of the public good where profit is of utmost consideration.

8. This information came up during the discussion of Sandro de Franciscis on "Ethics and public administration" at Life Cycle Institute,

Catholic University of America, on 11 October 2006. The discussion was jointly sponsored by the Center for the Study of Culture and Values and the Department of Politics, Catholic University of America.

9. The concept of the *public bad,* which is also viewed in terms of nonrivalry and nonexcludability, is just as important as that of the *public good.*

10. Some writers connect positive externality to nonrivalrous consumption (see Cowen 2002; Vaknin , n.d.; Musgrave 1969; and Samuelson 1954, 1955). For comments on the 1954 Samuelson paper, see Pickhardt (2006).

11. We might make a distinction between a customer, a free-using rider, and a free-nonusing rider: (1) a customer is one who uses the private good or service and directly pays for it or indirectly pays through other means (e.g., one makes use of the streetlight built by the storeowner and indirectly pays its electricity by buying something from the store), (2) a free-using rider is one who uses the good/service but does not pay for it (one uses the streetlight as a passersby and does not buy from the store), and (3) a free-nonusing rider is one who benefits externally from a service/good, but does not directly use it or is not even aware of its existence (one may enjoy the pleasant effect of a deodorant but is not even aware that the adjacent fellow uses it, or he/she does not personally use it).

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Submitted: 21 December 2006

GAWAD KALINGA PICTURES
(Taken from the Internet)
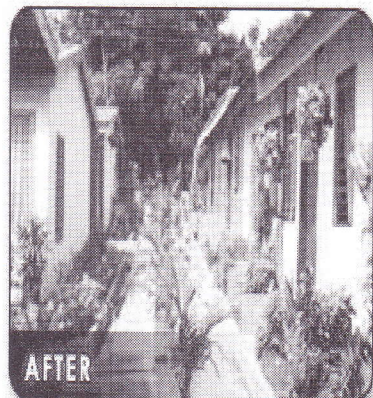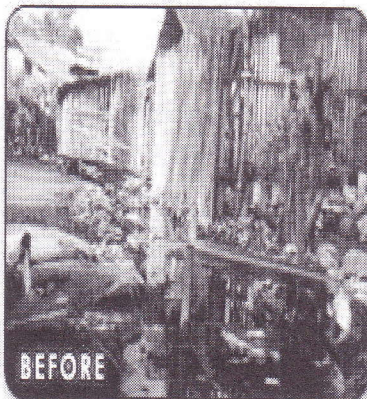
THE WORK OF GAWAD KALINGA
WILL NOT STOP UNTIL THERE ARE

NO MORE SLUMS

NO MORE HUNGER

NO MORE VIOLENCE

NO MORE TERRORISM

A CRITIQUE OF THE ANALYTIC TREND IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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In the discourse of African philosophy, what may still seem unresolved is the question of the content and methodological approach appropriate for its study. Two apparently oppos-ing camps are isolable here, namely, traditionalist or ethnophilosophical school and the Universalist or analytic school. The latter is criticized and rejected in this essay be-cause it adopts a methodological approach characteristic of Western analytic philosophy which itself has come under se-vere criticism by the post empiricist philosophers and post-modernist thinkers. We argue that the position of the ethnophilosophical group is more attractive since it pulsates with African cultural environment.

INTRODUCTION

The history of African philosophy as a distinct academic discipline in African (Nigerian) universities, has no doubt witnessed a lot of controversies, debates, arguments, and counter-arguments bordering essentially on the problems of methodology and contents of subject-matter amongst African professional philosophers.[1] This is understandable because the discipline of African philosophy, apart form being relatively new and unknown to some of those engaged in the debate, also need to be properly defined in order to avoid any conceptual confusion. Also couched in the debate is the question of the philosophical status of African traditional belief systems, which is still a bone of contention and can be used as a basis for grouping African philosophers into different schools of thought (Oladipo 1989, 31) or orientations. Although the debate may have subsided, as it is now accepted that African philosophy exists, yet some recent developments in Western philosophy have aroused our interest to interrogate and reassess, at the risk of being accused of belabouring a dead issue, the positions of these African philosophers. But is there really any dead issue in philosophy? For it is claimed that no philosophical questions, unlike mathematical ones, end in Q.E.D. In this paper, an attempt is made to state the respective positions of the two dominant currents or

trends in African philosophy. In the main, I argue, following the emerging trends in Western philosophy, particularly Richard Rorty's pragmatism, that the position of the analytic African philosophers is inadequate and should be rejected because it seems to ignore the inseparability of culture from human experience and the crucial role which culture plays in sustainable development.

RESTATING THE DISPUTE

I should begin by saying that the question of the philosophical status of African traditional thought systems, just like "the urge to practice philosophy in accordance with some fairly defined goals" without necessarily jettisoning its utilitarian relevance to society (Sogolo 1993, 2) has torn professional philosophers in Africa into different directions or orientations. For the sake of brevity two orientations will concern us in this paper.

AFRICAN ETHNOPHILOSOPHY

The first orientation, which P. O. Bodunrin (1985, xi) calls *traditionalists* and Paulin Houtondji (1983, 8) calls *ethnophilosophers,* seek—among other things—to discover authentic African ideas and thought systems uninfluenced by alien accretions (see Irele 1983, 8). In other words, it is their contention that African philosophy is the traditional philosophy, which has been inherited by contemporary Africans through their oral traditions, worldviews, myths, folklores etc. For them, the preoccupation of the African philosopher is to collect, interpret, and disseminate African proverbs, myths, folktales, and other traditional materials of a philosophical nature. It is clear from this brief summary of the position of this group that they would accept a definition of philosophy that is broad or general to include African traditional worldviews. Hence, it is their belief that philosophy is no more than the collective experience of a people, their *Weltanschauung.* This point is well stated by Innocent Onyewuenyi (1976, 521), a member of this school of thought, when he says:

> Philosophizing is a universal experience, every culture has its own world-view; if you study the history of philosophy, you will find there is no agreement on the definition of philosophy. [But] what is generally agreed about philosophy is that it seeks to establish order among the various phenomena of the surrounding world . . .

From what has been said thus far, our traditionalist group attempts in the main to derive a collective philosophy that is common and peculiar to all Africans from the welter of African forms of cultural expression. The effort of this group serves to debunk the then popular but erroneous ideas, or

what Onyewuenyi (1976, 516) calls a "picture of racist propaganda popularized in European dehumanized, philosophical circles," to the effect that African people manifested a child-like or pre-logical mentality (see Levy-Bruhl 1923, 24). Because it has been shown that no adult human being can avoid the necessity of thinking or that the ability for thinking is a special privilege granted to special people in special cultures (Anyanwu 1983, 51). Thus the expressed intention of the traditionalists is to promote, among other things, an understanding of what existence or reality as experienced in African culture means to African thought through an exposition of its underlying assumptions (see Oladipo 1992a, 44).

Let us now examine briefly the views of the other dominant strand in African philosophy.

UNIVERSALIST-ANALYTIC AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

The modernist[2] or universalist-analytic (Sogolo 1993, 2-3; Oladipo 1992b. 47) orientation, in conscious opposition to the claims of the traditionalists, argues that Africa is in urgent need of development and since development and modernization cannot be achieved in the contemporary world without science and technology, then African philosophy ought to keep faith with modern developments in science and technology. It should also make possible those conditions necessary for scientific and technological development to be engendered in African societies. Kwasi Wiredu, a member of the analytic school, expresses this point when he (1980, 32; 2004, Introduction) says that:

> The habits of exactness and rigour in thinking, the pursuit of systematic coherence and the experimental approach characteristic of science are attributes of mind which we in Africa urgently need to cultivate not just because they are themselves intellectual virtues but also because they are necessary conditions for rapid modernization .

Wiredu (1980, 49) thinks that the African philosopher should be interested in areas such as logic and the philosophies of science and mathematics which already have solid foundations in the West, where modern developments in human knowledge have gone farthest and where, consequently philosophy is in closest touch with the conditions of the modernization which he urgently desires for his continent.

Thus with a universalist conception of philosophy, these African logical neopositivists, to borrow Momoh's phrase (1985, 14), see philosophy as a rational critical study of which argumentation and clarification are essential elements. Their argument simply put is that since the traditional worldviews identified with African philosophy by the traditionalists do not meet these standards, then they cannot be philosophy. The universalist-analytic African philosophers may not be objecting to the idea of abstracting African Philosophy from African worldviews or culture (e.g., Bodunrin

and Wiredu); what they are saying in the final analysis is that "these world views must be critically examined, analyzed, rigorously argued for, and documented, if they are to be acceptable as philosophy in a universal sense." In other words, it is their contention that these worldviews cannot, in their uncritical and unanalyzed forms, constitute African philosophy.

DECONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGY OF RORTY AND OTHERS

One cannot deny that our universalist-analytic trend endorses the adoption of the analytic approach in African Philosophy. The acceptance of the analytic approach seems to justify their claims that African worldviews do not possess such essential ingredients as philosophy in a universal sense; namely, a written tradition; an individual's as opposed to group's or communal ideas or thoughts; a critical, rigorous, argumentative, and analytical method; and a rational, logical, and scientific approach, etc. As it is clear now that these notions which our analytic African philosophers hold dearly have become essentially contested in the philosophical circles, we should note that the analytic approach cannot be representative of all the methods of doing philosophy since some might adopt some other procedures of reflection and/or edification (in the case of Richard Rorty) by which the procedure of doing philosophy is conversational or dialogical. This point is noticeable in the attitude of pre-Socratic philosophers who, out of curiosity and wonder, reflected on the various phenomena of the surrounding world apparently to discover the common stuff that sustains them.

It is now familiar that the insights of the post-empiricist philosophy of science enable us not only to revise our belief in science as the only paradigmatic model, but they also suggest that there can be forms of knowledge other than those of natural science. In this connection, some post-empiricist philosophers of science such as Thomas Kuhn (1970), Paul Feyerabend (1975), and Mary Hesse (1980) have argued for the acceptance of other forms of knowledge into our theories of knowledge, truth, and ontology. Similarly, analytical philosophy, which seems to be the fulcrum upon which our universalists' argument revolves, has been brought into question. In particular, in the seminal work *Philosophy and the mirror of nature,* Rorty has argued that analytical philosophy, which is a legacy of classical philosophy, has itself come to its end and has to be abandoned. Rorty's swipe with this tradition is informed by its pretensions to the effect that philosophy is a foundational discipline, which provides justification for all other areas of discourse. Needless to say, what Rorty sets out to do is to deconstruct philosophy. According to him, philosophy, since Rene Descartes, has been dominated by epistemology. In other words, he claims that foundationalist epistemology is a legacy bequeathed to philosophy by Descartes, John Locke and Immanuel Kant.

Their views taken together compel us to see the business of philosophy as that of investigating the foundations of the sciences, the arts, culture, and morality and as adjudicating the cognitive claims of these areas. It is Rorty's view (1980, 3) that:

> Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims. It can do so because it understands the foundations of knowledge and it finds these foundations in the study of man-as-knower . . . or the activity of representations which make knowledge possible.

The point here is that philosophy, as epistemology, must set universal standards of rationality and objectivity for all actual and possible claims to knowledge.

Rorty, however, rejects this and claims that philosophy is ill-suited to perform this task because philosophy, like all other discourses, has its own presuppositions; hence, it is not the task of philosophy to adjudicate on matters that are beyond its discourse. He argues further, adopting a pragmatist position, that truth is relative to societal agreements. In other words, an assertion is true and justified if and only if it is warranted by the epistemic norms of the relevant society. The idea here is that epistemic justification is a matter of social practice, and knowledge, too, is a matter of social practice. Thus what can be truly known is not a matter of some sort of correspondence between you and the thing you claim to know, but a matter of whether your claim to know coheres with a certain social practice, a language-game, a worldview governing such claims. It is important to note that the kind of coherence here is not the internal coherence of an individual's belief but rather the coherence of a given belief or knowledge-claim with the collective beliefs and practices of the epistemic community to which one belongs. Thus, according to Rorty (1980, 188; 1982,ch 11; and 1988, 48), the community is the source of all epistemic authority. What Rorty (1980, 174; see Kraut 1990, 156-69) attempts here can be described as *epistemological behaviorism*, that is to say "explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say rather than the latter by the former." Here, there is a sense in which we can say that Rorty's pragmatism (Machan 1996, 423) is a "frank and unapologetic admission of a sort of community bounded way of looking at the world."

Now, if the claim that epistemic notions like truth, rationality, and justification are relative to the community is accepted, then philosophers, according to Rorty, should better forget the attempt to essentialise these notions because they do not have an essence. The danger in what Rorty says here is that some critics might charge him with relativism. However, he (1991a, 23; 1991b, 27) claims that his position does not lead to philosophical relativism in the traditional philosophical sense in which it means that every "belief is as good as every other."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Now let us tie the threads of our argument thus far by saying that the position of the universalist orientation in denying philosophical status to traditional African systems of thought—because they lack argumentative and logical rigour—obviously betrays their methodological bias towards Western analytical philosophy. This tradition has been severely challenged and its privileged status removed because there is no fixed method in philosophy. Hence, Rorty characterizes philosophy, following Wilfrid Sellers, as "an attempt to see how things, in the broadest possible sense of the term, hang together." Our universalist group's reliance on the method of analytic tradition in Western philosophy as a model to be adopted in African philosophy seems to commit a reductionist fallacy, apart from the fact that such method has been shown to have broken down following the insights of the post-empiricist philosophers of science and post-modernist thinkers. Hence, the position of this group is not particularly rewarding and even unlikely to promote the growth of African philosophy in the same manner as our ethnophilosophy or traditionalist orientation—whose insistence that the practice of philosophy must at all cost reflect the African cultural experience—would.

NOTES

1. A similar point is made by Abiola Irele (1983, 8) in his "Introduction" to Paulin Hountondji's book.
2. This group is called as such because of its members' training and conception of philosophy (see, for example, Bodunrin 1985, 8 and Hallen 1996, 68-71).

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LOVE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO THE SELF-OTHER RELATION IN SARTRE AND BEAUVOIR

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The author explores the views of two famous philosophers and one-time lovers about the self-other relation, particularly in the context of romantic love. In Being and nothingness *(1956), Jean-Paul Sartre famously wrote that any mode of relation between two subjectivities is doomed to fail. One of these modes is love, which is the desire to possess another freedom without altering its fundamental characteristic as a freedom. In contrast to Sartre, meanwhile, Simone de Beauvoir hints at the possibility of non-possessive reciprocal relations in her philosophical novel, She came to stay (1943). In light of such considerations as the relationship between love and the construction of self, and that between love and freedom, Dela Cruz evaluates the respective merits of the two thinkers' views. She concludes the paper with a brief analysis of the lyrics of a contemporary song performed by Seal, entitled "Love's Divine." The song has an existential theme as it links love with the naming of another subjectivity: "Give me love, love is what I need to help me know my name."*

INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this paper grew out of a conversation with one of my friends. We were talking about our mutual appreciation of Jean-Paul Sartre's radical notion of freedom, which we agreed was his original contribution to philosophy.[1] But while my friend and I were both seduced by Sartre's hauntingly beautiful view of human potentials and personal responsibility, we disagreed fundamentally about the actual extent of our freedom. He interpreted Sartre as saying that there are, in principle, no limits to the freedom of the for-itself, that any rationalization which attempts to qualify this is bad faith.

I immediately pointed out that this interpretation is simplistic especially in light of Sartre's description of our relations with other people. Indeed, it is often forgotten that in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), the human being is not simply referred to as a being-for-itself (*l'être-pour-*

soi), but also and more importantly, as a being-for-others (*l'être-pour-l'autrui*). I argued that since an authentic person can never be isolated, the regard of other people tends to fix one's possibilities.

My friend countered that one could always choose how to respond to the look of the Other. In other words, one is free to transcend other people's perceptions, to simply refuse their definition of oneself. While I was thinking about how to respond to this notion, which I badly wanted to say was typically masculine, he added that he was more qualified than I to settle the question of how free we are. He said this with the good-natured condescension of a man about twenty years my senior—who had taken the leap of faith into the unknown abyss of marriage, raised three children, and perhaps only recently started dealing with a classic case of midlife crisis.

That long-ago friendly disagreement comes to mind now as I go back to the issue of freedom and the self-other relation in Sartre's thought, especially in light of gender. It has since occurred to me that the fact that my friend is male and I female may have contributed to our differences in opinion, at least to some extent.[2] Perhaps the influence of gender has led him to read Sartre's philosophy as highly individualistic, while the same text struck me as a treatise not only on individual freedom but also on the problem of others' existence. As Beauvoir rightly observes in *The ethics of ambiguity* (1948), these two opposing concerns—the freedom of the individual on one hand and the limiting presence of others—are fundamental to the ambiguity of the human condition. While Sartre regards these two as diametrically opposed, Beauvoir attempts to reconcile them.

As I've learned from years of feminist scholarship, this perennial and hierarchical dualism in philosophical texts is inevitable, wherein the privileged part tends to be identified with the masculine and the denigrated part with the feminine. One such dualism prominent in *Being and nothingness* is between freedom and necessity. While Sartre does not directly address the relations between the sexes, focusing rather on the relations between consciousnesses, the freedom-necessity dualism is nonetheless gendered. The reason lies with the social construction of male and female roles: Men are encouraged to be independent and to pursue their livelihood and interests outside the home (freedom), while women are taught to rely on others and to care for the family (necessity). Although masculinity and femininity are set up as "complementary" in patriarchal culture, freedom is traditionally valued over necessity.

For instance, the message of *Being and nothingness* is often interpreted as one of absolute freedom. On the other hand, its pessimistic assessment of our relations with others is shrugged off as the necessary consequence of our absolute freedom. That hell is other people is seen as the unavoidable consequence of coexisting with rival consciousnesses. Similarly, Sartre's dramatic pronouncement that love is doomed to fail is generally received with cynical agreement or resignation. It is not usually taken as an invitation to explore the impracticability of love as a serious philosophical problem. Among the existentialists in Sartre's circle, it took Beauvoir, a woman, to address and resolve the problem of the Other satisfactorily, constructing a coherent ethics out of it.

In this paper, I explore Sartre and Beauvoir's unique views about the self-other relation, in particular with regard to the idea of *love*. I notice that despite a few contemporary books and anthologies on the topic—primarily those by Solomon and Higgins (1991), Solomon (1988), and Singer (1987)—love has not been sufficiently explored in philosophy. It is generally not perceived as an important issue; or at least, this is what a cursory review of available materials and course syllabi tells me. Could it be that the mere mention of anything to do with love is perceived as cloyingly feminine, and hence un-philosophical? As hooks (2002, 77) asserts, "In the patriarchal male imagination, the subject of love was relegated to the realm of the weak and replaced by narratives of power and domination."

In any case, whether one believes that gender is relevant to the discourse of love or that love is ultimately beyond gender, the topic remains a fundamental part of the existentialist quest for the meaning of human experience.

The central question of this paper is Sartre's query: *Is love doomed to fail?* I compare and contrast the answers of Sartre (yes) and Beauvoir (no) as found in their most notable works, the specific titles of which will be mentioned shortly. This paper is by no means exhaustive, since the two philosophers were prolific writers and a full-fledged analysis of the self-other relation in all of their published works is beyond my scope.

The body of the paper is composed of four main sections. In the first section, I discuss Sartre's ideas regarding love and the self-other relation, as revealed in the *Being and nothingness* and *No exit* (1945).

In the second section, I take pains to elaborate on the true nature of Sartre and Beauvoir's philosophical relationship. My goal here is to get rid of a number of persistent gender-related clichés, which hinder a proper understanding of the extent of Beauvoir's contribution to existentialism. In this section I also trace Sartre and Beauvoir's self-other relation back to Hegel's analysis of the master-slave stage in the development of consciousness.

In the third section, I discuss Beauvoir's ideas regarding love and the self-other relation, as revealed in *The ethics of ambiguity* and *The second sex* (1949).

Finally, in the fourth section, I evaluate Sartre and Beauvoir's views based on the following questions: (1) *What are the central elements of (romantic) love?*, (2) *How is love related to the self?*, and (3) *What are the implications of love for human freedom?* Here I directly address the main problem of whether love is doomed to fail. I restate it as, *Which between the two different accounts of love—conflict or reciprocity—is a more accurate phenomenological description?* I end the paper with a set of song lyrics whose import may be best understood in Sartrean terms.

CONFLICT AS THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF BEING-FOR-OTHERS

What Sartre has to say about love consists in his description, in *Being and nothingness*, of one of two possible attitudes of the for-itself

when confronted with the alienating presence of the Other. Later in this section I will discuss these two attitudes in detail. At the outset however, here is his famously tragic view of love in simplified form: Since the Other has stolen my freedom with his look, I attempt to recover it by possessing him, a free being. However, it's impossible to possess a freedom unless it is turned into an object. And because I have to seduce the Other to get him to love me, I have to objectify myself before his eyes. Therefore, either way, love objectifies both the lover and the beloved.

In order to understand why Sartre sees love as having sinister motivations and woeful prospects, it is necessary to begin with his description of the self-other relation.

Sartre's ideas about the problem of others' existence are articulated in Part Three (Being-for-Others) of *Being and nothingness*, and in his famous play *No exit*. The human being is conscious and free precisely because I constitute a *lack* of nature or essence. I am "condemned to be free" in the sense that I cannot resort to the concept of God as the giver of meaning or creator of human nature. I fashion the world and myself in accordance with my choices and preferences. Thus, it is the for-itself that assigns meaning and value upon the brute world of the in-itself.

However, other similarly free beings or consciousnesses threaten my freedom to construct the world. To illustrate, Sartre (1956, 341-42) describes walking in a park and encountering another man. Because this man is not merely an object whose position I can fix arbitrarily, like a chair or a tree, he cannot simply fit into my perspective or worldview without fundamentally disturbing it. The presence of another consciousness introduces the possibility of an alien orientation of the world. The following is an oft-quoted description of sensing the Other: "… it appears that the world has a kind of drain hole in the middle of its being and that it is perpetually flowing off through this hole" (Sartre 1956, 343). In other words, confronted with the existence of other people, suddenly I am no longer master of my world. ". . . [I]nstead of a grouping *toward me* of the objects, there is now an orientation *which flees from me*" (Sartre 1956, 342).

Not only does the Other interfere with my mastery of the situation, but his regard of me also affects my personal freedom. In the absence of the Other, I am free to construct the world as I see fit; I am a devouring consciousness that acts upon being, unaware of myself, disembodied. But the moment I sense the Other looking at me, I become conscious of myself as an object for him or her. Sartre's (1956, 347-49) classic example has to do with the activity of peeping into a keyhole, out of jealousy or curiosity. I am so involved in the stealthiness of the act, perhaps so engrossed in the spectacle unfolding before me, that I have no sense of self. I am on the level of unreflective consciousness, which—in isolation—is not inhabited by a self. Strictly speaking, I am not a jealous self so much as I *am* the possibility of jealousy.

This changes, however, when I hear footsteps approaching. The sensation of being looked at makes me suddenly self-conscious: "I see *myself* because *somebody* sees me" (Sartre 1956, 349). However, since I

cannot apprehend myself directly as an object, my self appears to my consciousness as an object for the Other. According to Sartre (1956, 349),

> This means that all of a sudden I am conscious of myself as escaping myself, not in that I am the foundation of my own nothingness but in that I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am a pure reference to the Other.

In *No exit,* Sartre further develops this abstract sketch of how the look of the Other objectifies me and thereby limits my freedom. In this play, three characters—Garçin, Estelle, and Inez—find themselves together in hell. The place resembles an ordinary living room with ugly furniture, and they marvel at the absence of brimstone and the usual instruments of torture. Gradually they discover that they are in fact each other's torturers or jailers. Estelle wants to have Garçin's attention as a man, but he will have nothing to do with her. Garçin tries in vain to convince Inez that he is not a coward, but she continually mocks him. And Inez desires Estelle, who consistently and cruelly rejects her overtures. Each character is tormented by the perceptions of one another.

Indeed, it is very telling that in hell, there are no mirrors; to assess oneself, one is forced to rely on other people's opinions. Estelle bemoans, "When I can't see myself I begin to wonder if I really and truly exist" (Sartre 1946b, 17). Alone, I am pure nothingness. But the look of the Other locates me in the world, assigns me a set of characteristics, finalizes my possibilities. If the mocking consciousness of Inez had not been there, labels such as "brave" and "cowardly" would have been meaningless as applied to Garçin. But alas, she exists and he cannot avoid her; after all, one cannot close one's eyes in hell or fall asleep there. In the presence of Inez, Garçin becomes a coward.

Thus, the existence of other people serves as the limiting foundation of the for-itself. Before the Other, I am no longer a pure lack or nothingness. I become *something,* an object for the Other. While I am free insofar as I continually create myself, the introduction of another consciousness objectifies what I cannot—due to my (lack of) nature—objectify: my "essence." Insofar as this objectification is experienced as a lack of control, as a surrender of one's freedom, hell indeed is other people. The following is the exact quote in its context in the play (Sartre 1946b, 41):

> GARÇIN: . . . What? Only two of you? I thought there were more; many more. [*Laughs*.] So this is hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the 'burning marl.' Old wives' tales! There's no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is—other people!

Finally, the Other also tends to resolve the contradictory characteristics of the for-itself. Wanting to be an in-itself-for-itself, the human being is continually engaged in both flight and pursuit with respect to being. On one hand, he or she flees from being; as for example when a

surgeon believes that she is more than an instrument, such as a scalpel, which has a fixed nature or purpose. On the other hand, the for-itself also pursues being by wanting to be its own foundation; as for example when the surgeon identifies completely with her profession and defines herself essentially as a surgeon. Because the for-itself wants to be both free and the foundation of its own being, it is a "useless passion." It desires, futilely, to be God.

Sartre (1956, 473) thus refers to the for-itself as a "pursuing flight," a contradictory being who is what it is not and who is not what it is. As a perpetual negation, the for-itself cannot be pinned down; it may closely approach an essence but can never fully constitute it. However, as mentioned above, the look of the Other reduces the for-itself into a being with an essence. In isolation, the for-itself is what it is not and is not what it is. However, before the Other, it is what it is: an object.

At this point, I hope I have provided enough background about the significance of the Other's existence to the for-itself. It is time to discuss *love*, which is a primordial attitude toward others.

My concrete relations with others are governed by two mutually exclusive attitudes, two opposing poles between which I continually swing, as in a vicious circle (Sartre 1956, 474). These attitudes are a response to the quandary in which I find myself, now that I have become an object for the Other. One strategy is to try to objectify the Other too. Another is to try to recover my freedom by possessing the Other *as a freedom*. Love exemplifies the latter attitude.

As explained in detail above, the Other has taken away my freedom, or stolen it if you will. Since another person has become the foundation of my being, I have no security in this untenable situation (Sartre 1956, 477). One solution is to try to possess the Other's freedom through love. If I can get the Other to love me (freely), I would become an absolute end for him. I would no longer reduced by his look into an object among other objects in the world. Rather, in love, "the world must be revealed in terms of me" (Sartre 1956, 482).

The tricky part is that the lover desires the Other *as a freedom*, not as a physical possession. I want a conscious being, not a robot. I don't want my beloved to be with me because, for example, he is financially dependent or because he is somehow being held at gunpoint. I want him to choose me out of his own free will. In other words, I want to possess a subjectivity whose freedom remains magically intact. Anything less than the complete preservation of the Other's freedom would objectify him and cause me to lose the foundation of my being. Recall that in *No exit*, the characters serve as a kind of mirror to one another. Since I am dependent on the Other for defining me, to deprive him of freedom is to lose a reliable ontological mirror.

However, it is manifestly contradictory to demand of a freedom that it should no longer be free, that is, for it to "will its own captivity" (Sartre 1956, 479). The very idea of a person who cannot help but choose me and be faithful to me while still remaining *free* is implausible. He would not be a person but an automaton. Hence, the Other cannot be possessed as a freedom—only as an object.

Another difficulty is that in order to get the Other to love me, I must first seduce him; I must present myself before him as a "fascinating object" (Sartre 1956, 484). The irony is that even as I attempt to recover my freedom through love, I consent to being objectified. Now, one might argue that if one loves another person and is loved in return, then the two consciousnesses would cancel out their mutual objectification. Both freedoms would be sustained. However, in principle, the merging of the self and the Other is unrealizable because one consciousness is separated from the other by the abyss of nothingness (Sartre 1956, 490).

Sartre's contention that love is doomed to fail rests on the characteristic nihilation of the for-itself. Ultimately, I cannot both recover my freedom from the Other *and* preserve his subjectivity. I perpetually swing between objectifying the Other and allowing myself to be objectified—between sadism and masochism.

In sum, Sartre (1956, 475) writes that "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others." This means that in dealing with other people, the for-itself merely oscillates between two contrasting positions. Either I counteract the Other's power over myself by objectifying him or her too, or I try to recover my freedom—which has been lost to the Other—by possessing the Other *as a freedom*. Both strategies are mutually exclusive and riddled with dilemmas. The attitude of love, since it aims to recover my freedom by possessing the Other as a freedom, is doomed to fail from the start.

BEAUVOIR AND SARTRE: MAPPING THE PHILOSOPHICAL RELATIONSHIP

We have seen from the foregoing section that Sartre's view of love complements his dismal claim that the human being is a useless passion. Indeed, *Being and nothingness* is riddled with such dark statements about the impossibility of happiness or closure, especially given our burden of freedom and the existence of rival consciousnesses. By contrast, Beauvoir casts a positive light over the human condition, which she redeems as challengingly "ambiguous" rather than simply "absurd," which is Sartre's description of existence in *Nausea* (1938).

Between the two thinkers, Beauvoir is lesser known and is often mentioned only tangentially as Sartre's "longtime companion and lover." Except in feminist circles, rarely is Beauvoir's work studied and discussed on its own, without wrongly being dismissed as just an offshoot of Sartre's existentialism. For the reader to fully appreciate Beauvoir's valuable contributions to the study of the self-other relation, in the next few paragraphs I will clarify the status of her work in the overall context of her relationship with Sartre. I do realize the irony of mentioning the following background and inadvertently affirming the sexist notion—thoroughly debunked in *The second sex*—that women are derivative beings. However, it's important to segue into the story of their relationship in order to reveal a number of gross misconceptions about Beauvoir's work.

During the prime of their lives, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre were internationally well known as the heralds of existentialism, the

first philosophy of the continental tradition after World War II. Sartre was the leading spokesperson of this movement, while Beauvoir wrote the book that launched modern feminist thought. They took controversial political stances particularly with respect to communism, which they initially supported but eventually criticized. Then of course there was the saga of their unconventional romance, which—though lifelong—admitted other lovers. It was destined to become purely an intellectual bond rather than also a sexual one, at least after the first few years wherein the two were physically intimate.

However, this romanticized "textbook" version of their famous relationship is full of misconceptions, which in turn are related to traditional views of gender. For one thing, Beauvoir was not the stereotypical meek and long-suffering woman who stayed home and fretted about Sartre's affairs. In fact, in 1931 when they had teaching posts that were too far apart for convenience, Sartre proposed marriage and Beauvoir refused him (Scholz 2000, 10). Even while with him, she had other romantic ties, the most serious of which were with the American novelist Nelson Algren and then with Claude Lanzman, whom she lived with for a time (Scholz 2000, 12-13).

Then there is the inaccurate idea that Beauvoir merely borrowed Sartre's concept of the Other in *Being and Nothingness* and applied it to her analysis of women's situation in *The second sex*. Her basis is not Sartre's work but Hegel's description of the master-slave relationship, which both she and Sartre incorporated in their respective frameworks. Her writings about the problem of other consciousnesses—particularly in her memoirs and in the novel *She came to stay*—predated Sartre's. Indeed, with regard to the importance of the self-other relation, it was actually Beauvoir who influenced Sartre and not the other way around. According to Simons (1986, 169):

> An important area of Beauvoir's originality and influence on Sartre is in the relationship of the individual to the social, historical context of the individual's action. Beauvoir was the first to address herself to the problem of the Other, a concern which later became so prominent in Sartre's work. Beauvoir also recognized earlier than did Sartre the limiting effects of the social-historical context, including one's personal history and childhood, upon an individual's choice. She found Sartre's early voluntarism exaggerated.

As a young and precocious philosophy student, Beauvoir was particularly interested in Hegel. Her ontological novel *She came to stay* reflects vestiges of the struggle between two consciousnesses as described in Hegel's *Phenomenology of spirit*. She uses as an epigraph his famous statement that "Each consciousness seeks the death of the other" (Scholz 2000, 21). (Indeed, Françoise, one of the characters in the story, ends up killing Xavière because the latter fails to recognize Françoise's consciousness in reciprocity.)

This brings me to the relevant portions of *Phenomenology of spirit* that Sartre and Beauvoir both appropriated, with different conclusions.

These concern Hegel's dialectical account of the development of self-consciousness, which proceeds in seven steps from the mastery of material objects to ascent into the realm of reason. The roots of existentialist ideas about the self-other relation can be traced back to the second and third steps: the struggle unto death and the master-slave relation.

Hegel begins with the premise that human beings relate to the world through the principle of negation. We seek to affirm ourselves by nihilating, devouring, or destroying objects. Our relations with other humans follow the same pattern: we want to master each other. Two opposing selves thus engage in the "struggle unto death," each one aiming to reinforce its identity by killing the other (Lavine 1984, 220).

However, it is not enough for me to subjugate the other; he or she must recognize my will. I need the other to look at me and acknowledge me as a self. In the end, because the death of one consciousness would ultimately deprive the other of a mirror, what emerges is the master-slave relation. Here, the master keeps the slave alive in order for himself or herself to be recognized by someone as a master (Lavine 1984, 220-221). Of course Hegel makes clear that this relation contains the seeds of its own destruction. Eventually consciousness passes over into the next stage, and then to the next, and so on until it comprehends the Absolute.

Taking his cue from Hegel's antagonistic and hierarchical description of the relations between consciousnesses, Sartre concludes that conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others. We cannot exist with one another without annihilating each other's freedom. The look of the Other objectifies me, and I cannot help but do the same thing to him or her. On the other hand, on a more hopeful note, for Beauvoir there are two possible "resolutions" to the problem of the Other's existence. One is the death of either myself or the other, which is the unfortunate outcome of *She came to stay*. However, the story presents another alternative, heretofore unrealized but possible in principle: Reciprocity (Scholz 2000, 26). Reciprocity involves my acknowledging the subjectivity of the other consciousness at the same time that he or she also acknowledges mine.

Beauvoir, a thinker who is always grounded on the sociopolitical, develops the theme of reciprocity in her two most famous works: *The ethics of ambiguity* and *The second sex*.

AMBIGUITY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF RECIPROCITY

"Ambiguity" is Beauvoir's term for the seemingly contradictory characteristics of the for-itself, its perpetual oscillation between being and nothingness. As mentioned in the previous section, consciousness desires an unrealizable goal, which is to be an in-itself-for-itself—to be God. However, the facticity and transcendence within a single consciousness are irreconcilable, which makes bad faith possible (Sartre 1956, 98). In fact, my default state is bad faith, which is a state of lying to myself.

Recall that the for-itself is what it is not and is not what it is. The human being cannot escape the contradiction through recourse in his or

her facticity, as for example when a waiter at a café embraces the role of being a waiter as his fixed function in society. Sartre (1956, 102) writes that the waiter is in bad faith because he cannot be just a waiter in the same manner that an inkwell is an inkwell.

On the other hand, neither can the human being resolve the contradiction through recourse in his or her transcendence, as for example when a homosexual refuses to consider himself a "paederast" and denies that he can be defined in any way at all. Sartre (1956, 108) writes that the homosexual in fact isn't owning up to the true contradiction of consciousness. His belief that he is not a paederast is *not* in the form "I am not what I am," since in the first place he refuses to acknowledge the second part of that statement ("what I am"). According to Sartre, the homosexual is in bad faith because "he understands 'not being' in the sense of 'not-being-in-itself.'" He is claiming, wrongly, that he is not a paederast in the same sense that a table is not an inkwell.

Thus, the tragedy of the human condition is that it is forever in bad faith. My consciousness is always reaching out toward a goal that can never be fully achieved—hence Sartre's description of the human being as a "useless passion." Understandably, this statement has been customarily interpreted as a pessimistic proclamation of the absurdity or futility of existence.

Nonetheless, in *The ethics of ambiguity*, Beauvoir (1948) heralds the possibility of individual fulfillment and social harmony, the possibility of an ethics grounded on a supreme end: The promotion of freedom. She contextualizes the phrase "useless passion" against the primordial existentialist message of optimism about human capabilities. According to Beauvoir, "If this choice is considered as useless, it is because there exists no absolute value before the passion of man [*sic*], outside of it, in relation to which one might distinguish the useless from the useful" (Oaklander 1992, 388).[3]

Therefore, despite the perpetual contradiction of the for-itself, my existence is not *absurd* so much as it is *ambiguous*. Indeed, there is an important difference between the two terms. "To declare that existence is absurd is to deny that it can ever be given a meaning; to say that it is ambiguous is to assert that its meaning is never fixed, that it must be constantly won" (Oaklander 1991, 393).

Whereas the Sartre of *Being and nothingness* paints a lonely, anguished picture of the human being—wandering a world devoid of guiding values, condemned to be free—Beauvoir attempts to ground her philosophy of ambiguity on an absolute end. This enables her to succeed where Sartre has failed, even in his dense political tract, *Critique of dialectical reason* (1960). Beauvoir is able to construct a coherent existentialist ethics whose foundation is freedom.

She writes, "Freedom is the source from which all significations and all values spring. It is the original condition of all justification of existence" (Oaklander 1992, 391). However, given the adversarial relation between consciousnesses, the dilemma is how to reconcile competing individual freedoms. Like Sartre, Beauvoir acknowledges that our relations with others

are fraught with conflict. But quite unlike him, she doesn't conclude that the conflict is insurmountable. As mentioned earlier in this section, Beauvoir allows for the possibility of reciprocity between consciousnesses. I can both recognize the subjectivity of the Other and retain my own subjectivity; we need not engage in the struggle unto death or assume the hierarchical positions of master and slave.

The preservation of the self even in the face of recognizing another consciousness means that the ethics of ambiguity is still fundamentally individualistic. However, Beauvoir clarifies that it is not "solipsistic," because, as Oaklander (1992, 401) says:

> . . . the individual is defined only by his relationship to the world and to other individuals; he exists only by transcending himself, and his freedom can be achieved only through the freedom of others. He justifies his existence by a movement which, like freedom, springs from his heart but which leads outside of him.

The beauty of *The ethics of ambiguity* as an exposition on practical morality inheres in its description of the delicate moral balancing act that humans must perform in order to protect and promote freedom. On one hand, there is the pressing need to do something about the situation of the oppressed, since the goal is not only to attain my individual freedom but also to help liberate others. On the other hand, there is the lack of traditional, pre-given values that will conveniently tell me whether a moral action would benefit rather than hinder another's freedom. For instance, when can I say that is violence justified? Ultimately, the only recourse that is compatible to the existentialist attitude is to base ethics not on a realm of eternal values, but on the socio-historical situation. This brings us to Beauvoir's analysis of otherness in her other magnum opus, *The second sex*.

The book is a phenomenological description of women's situation, ranging from a discussion of biology, history, and myths to the specific formative years, situations and "justifications" of women. For the purposes of this paper, I will concentrate on two points: (1) Beauvoir's thesis that woman is the Other, and (2) her denunciation of romantic love in the context of inequality between the sexes. The first point is the single most important idea that launched modern feminism, or what is commonly called the Second Wave. Meanwhile, the second point may be read as her recommendation for women and men regarding love, given the problem of women's otherness.

The main question posed in the Introduction of *The second sex* is, "What is a woman?" Beauvoir rejects the biological answer—that woman is a womb—because physiology alone does not suffice to make one a woman. She writes, ". . . every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as *femininity*" (Beauvoir 1952, xli, italics supplied). The fact that the question about what makes a woman is asked at all hints

at how femininity has been traditionally constructed. It is posed as a problem, in a way that the fact of being a man is not posed as such. Rather, the masculine is set up as the standard or the norm against which the feminine is seen to deviate. As Beauvoir (1952, xliv-xlv) maintains:

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. . . . She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other.

What distinguishes the relation between the sexes, in comparison to other oppositions (e.g. between groups defined by race or economic class), is that the negation appears to be one-sided. In all other conflicts, otherness is relative. For instance, from the point of view of a Jew, the anti-Semite is the Other; from the point of view of the anti-Semite, the reverse is true. But as between the sexes, man sets up woman as his Other but woman does not set up a reciprocal claim. Beauvoir explains this anomaly by pointing to the various factors that prevent women from constituting a cohesive group, resisting male oppression, and thereby winning their liberation. They have no common history, religion, and solidarity of work and interest (Beauvoir 1952, xlviii). Therefore, a woman has a stronger bond with a man from the same race, culture, or economic class, rather than with a woman who differs from her in some or all of these categories.

Nonetheless, all is not lost. Again and again in *The second sex*, Beauvoir returns to the idea that the otherness imposed on woman is a social construct. Far from being woman's destiny, it is merely a human interpretation of the data from biology, our history, and our myths.

However, what makes this otherness additionally pernicious is that women themselves are complicit in their oppression. To some extent at least, women are in bad faith. Using a classically existentialist analysis, Beauvoir argues that since the for-itself is the creator of values and that we are nothing more or less than what we make of ourselves, it is possible for women to transcend otherness. Their oppression is not inevitable. Following the ideal of reciprocity in *The ethics of ambiguity*, Beauvoir advocates equality between the sexes as an ethical and mutually beneficial goal.

Here we can see how Beauvoir's phenomenology of the self-other relation differs from Hegel's hierarchical account of master-slave dynamics and Sartre's conflict-based model of being-for-others. While one possible outcome is the total annihilation of the other consciousness, Beauvoir suggests *reciprocity*—the mutual recognition of subjectivity—as the more compelling ethical alternative.

In relation to this, Beauvoir demonstrates the damaging effects of the lack of reciprocity between the sexes in Chapter XXIII, entitled "The woman in love," a subsection of Part VI ("Justifications"). During Beauvoir's time, to a much greater extent than now in some privileged parts of the

world, social institutions and culture conspired to keep women the intellectual and economic inferiors of men. This power imbalance perverted (heterosexual) romantic love, turning women into frightening monsters. In fact, Beauvoir's indictment of the behavior of the woman in love is strangely reminiscent of Nietzsche's descriptions of the "dangerous," but really ultimately pathetic, seductress. The difference is that Beauvoir is referring to a socially-constructed situation that ought to be changed, while Nietzsche believes himself to be describing something ordained by nature.

The world of the othered woman is such that she has no life of self-development; she is shut up in the domestic sphere where her activities are repetitive and uncreative, and always in reference to other people. Of the famous female lovers or *grandes amoureuses* of her time, Beauvoir (1952, 677) says:

> No other aim in life which seemed worth while was open to them, love was their only way out.
> Even if they can choose independence, this road seems the most attractive to a majority of women: it is agonizing for a woman to assume responsibility for her life.

Through her man, the woman in love gains access to an entire world beyond her own. Wanting to live through him, she destroys her self-identity at the same time that she magnifies him in deific proportions. Echoing Sartre's analysis of love as a masochistic strategy of self-recovery, Beauvoir (1952, 688) writes, "Having become identified with another, she wants to make up for her loss; she must take possession of that other person who has captured her."

Inevitably, the recipient of her possessive regard feels pressured and trapped, and starts to move away from her. The woman may then respond in several ways, all of which indicate that she is the complete opposite of a transcendent being. One is to become even more jealous and threatened by her lover's other relationships. Another is to resort to play-acting and sexual games in the hopes of enticing him back. Still another response is to become resigned and to vow to wait for him to give her what she wants—which is nothing less than total merging. In all of these cases, the woman in love objectifies herself in the project of love. Beauvoir (1952, 691) adds that, strangely enough, the woman knows that this project is doomed to fail.

Although Beauvoir paraphrases Sartre here, there is an important difference between their accounts of love. Whereas he declares that love is doomed to fail and stops there, she suggests—in accordance with the over-all theme of *The second sex*—that it is woman's socially-constructed otherness that is at fault here. The latter can be remedied through transcendent acts, and so too can love be redeemed. Beauvoir thus develops the following preliminary sketch of an intersubjective relationship, whereby the subjectivity of the other person is accepted unconditionally.

> An authentic love should assume the contingence of the other; that is to say, his lacks, his limitations, and his basic

gratuitousness. It would not pretend to be a mode of salvation, but a human interrelationship. (Beauvoir 1952, 687)

IS LOVE DOOMED TO FAIL?

Now that I have already presented Sartre and Beauvoir's views regarding the self-other relation, as well as the role of love in it, in this section I will attempt to address the main problem: Is love doomed to fail? Sartre's answer is "yes" while Beauvoir's is "no." In evaluating the two different views, I will rely on the following criteria: (1) The central elements of (romantic) love, (2) how love is related to the self, and (3) the implications of love for human freedom.

Romantic love. Sartre and Beauvoir do not differ fundamentally in their initial definition of romantic love as a possessive emotion. The driving force behind it is my desire to possess the object of love, because I have already been possessed by him (a phenomenon we call "falling" in colloquial terms). This is consistent with the modern Western paradigm of a heterosexual monogamous relationship, which has erotic roots and which is motivated by the goal of merging two selves.[4] Traditionally, this leads to a long-term exclusive partnership that is usually formalized through marriage. Of course, neither Beauvoir nor Sartre personally adopted this ideal, which I think partly explains why love is seen as problematic from the existentialist point of view. Contrast this to traditional culture, which encourages the misleading fiction that love is the most effortless, conflict-free emotion, one that is hindered not so much by internal obstacles as by external ones. In the doomed stories of Lancelot and Guinevere, as well as of Romeo and Juliet, the love between the couple is unequivocal. It is the circumstances and external forces that force the tragic ending. But for Beauvoir and Sartre, love is inherently problematic due to the very (lack of) nature of the for-itself. In the story of modern romance, freedom creates an unbearable tension with the desire to merge with another person.

The self in love. Once again, the two philosophers share a similarly negative view of the self in love, except that Beauvoir's description is gender-specific. Both of them agree that the individual in love desires what is in principle impossible: a freedom *as a freedom.* Hence, the project of recovering from the Other the foundation of my being is unrealizable. For Sartre, even as I attempt to seduce the Other, I only end up objectifying myself before him or her. The self in love is masochistic. Meanwhile, Beauvoir takes up this idea in her description of the various strategies of the woman in love, similarly concluding that she may become masochistic.

Love and freedom. It is only in their analysis of freedom itself that Sartre and Beauvoir differ. In reading their works, I noticed two different emphases as to how the ultimate end of freedom may best be achieved: individualism on the part of Sartre, and intersubjectivity on the part of Beauvoir. For the early Sartre, the only vehicle of freedom is the self-contained, nihilating consciousness. The existence of other consciousnesses leads to an inevitable clash of wills, whereby each one threatens the other's freedom. Freedom is seen as a finite commodity that

either dwindles or increases depending on how the self relates to the Other. Given this primordial antagonism, love does not serve the end of freedom inasmuch as it inevitably objectifies either the lover or the beloved.

Meanwhile, although Beauvoir also values the freedom of the individual, she accords equal moral weight to the freedom of others. The fulcrum of her philosophy of ambiguity is freedom as the liberation of oppressed or othered people. This is expressed most masterfully in *The second sex*, where she argues that otherness is socially-constructed and associated with femininity. (This is not to say that men cannot be othered. However, when men are oppressed, there is some sense in saying that they are "feminized."[5])

This shift in emphasis from individualism to intersubjectivity in Beauvoir is consistent with her faithfulness to the socio-historical locatedness of the human being. This aspect of her philosophy obviously reflects the influence of Hegel more than that of Sartre. And although she does not develop a sustained description of "authentic love" in *The second sex*, she implies that this is realizable in principle. The key is overcoming the historical inequality between the sexes, which has corrupted romantic love. Authentic love is possible only between two truly free individuals.

In practical terms, Sartre's and Beauvoir's views have differing strengths and weaknesses, depending on the given situation.

First, I believe that Sartre's account of love in *Being and nothingness* mistakenly sets up selfhood as primordial. On this point, Beauvoir's concept of reciprocity is closer to reality. To illustrate, the ancient Buddhist teaching, the *prajnaparamita sutra* or the heart sutra, is about the wisdom of interconnectedness. In reality, we are one with the universe and the ego is merely an illusion. Meanwhile, in feminist philosophy, there is a strand of thought that emphasizes such "feminine" attributes as community and empathy (for example, Sarah Ruddick's philosophy of maternal thinking and in Carol Gilligan's ethic of care). These are presented as alternatives to the prevailing patriarchal discourse of violence and isolation. As Solomon (1988, 204) writes:

> We cannot understand love until we get over the idea that the self is, in each case, individually and inalienably our own. A strong and independent self is an incredible and rare achievement. But independence is an act of defiance and perversity, not a return to a natural state. We define ourselves in terms of other people and we are largely defined by other people, no matter how nobly individual we may be. The modern idea of the isolated self-defining self is a myth.

Even Sartre himself may be said to have toned down his radically individualistic view of freedom by the time he wrote *Critique of dialectical reason*. In this book, following his own political stance regarding the issues of his time, he attempts a daring synthesis of Marxism and existentialism. As to whether he succeeds, commentators' opinion are mixed. His other

work, *Being and nothingness* –a book that was completed before his experience of the war years, a book from the apolitical phase of his life—remains more popular. However, it is a mistake to generalize Sartrean existentialism only in terms of the absolute freedom he describes in *Being and nothingness*. In his more mature *Critique*, Sartre (Kamber 2000, 30)

> is willing to concede that the scope of free will and responsibility is a good deal narrower than he previously claimed. He acknowledges that social, economic, and historical factors play a much larger role in influencing and limiting individual choices than he had previously recognized.

On the other hand, the early Sartre's radical individualism may be particularly useful for women in certain situations. As Beauvoir herself shows in her chapter about the woman in love, women more than men may be vulnerable to losing their identity when it comes to romance. Socialized as caretakers and nurturers, women have been traditionally rewarded for forsaking their own interests in order to serve others. In this case, the Sartrean view of the self as free and abandoned—in constant struggle with other nihilating consciousnesses—may actually help women transcend their otherness.[6]

At this point, let me now settle the main question of whether love is doomed to fail. The question may also be restated as, *Which between the two different accounts of love—conflict or reciprocity—is a more accurate phenomenological description?*

My answer is not an either/or choice between Sartre's view and Beauvoir's, but one which is based on the existentialist premise that we create our own values. Paraphrasing Sartre, something has value only because it is chosen. In love, I may choose to either see the relationship as a futile entanglement with another negating consciousness, or have faith that the presence of the Other in my life will enhance—rather than diminish—my freedom. There are no principles writ in stone tablets that will tell me which choice is better, only I can define what that value means for me.

However, following Beauvoir, I believe that my unique and constantly changing social situation equips me with a reliable moral framework on which I can base the decision to love. If for example I had only recently emerged from a breakup, it would be unwise to attempt the grand project of reciprocity with another person. This would only drain personal resources better spent trying to know myself again and making future plans as a single person. In fact, in this situation, I may even take perverse comfort in Sartre's dark pronouncement that love is doomed to fail. I may feel validated by existentialism as a mature philosophy of abandonment. On the other hand, the wiser choice would be different if I had been alone for long enough, if I had come full circle in my adventure of self-discovery. In that case, it would be time to explore the possibility of merging with another self and discovering a new world.

In closing, I leave the reader with the following lyrics from a

contemporary ballad entitled "Love's Divine," performed by Seal. I include them here because the central message—that love's divine—succinctly encapsulates the heady, impossible desire that drives the for-itself, making life worth living. It is the dream of adopting a God's eye view of life: The dream of being free and yet grounded at the same time. It is the dream of going beyond myself, and yet having a name bestowed by somebody who's important to me. Ultimately, I think, this is what we are all looking for.

> Then the rainstorm came, over me
> And I felt my spirit break
> I had lost all of my belief you see
> And realized my mistake
> But time threw a prayer to me
> And all around me became still
> I need love, love's divine
> Please forgive me now I see that I've been blind
> Give me love, love is what I need to help me know my name.

> Through the rainstorm came sanctuary
> And I felt my spirit fly
> I had found all of my reality
> I realize what it takes
> . . . .
> Oh, I don't bend (don't bend), don't break (don't break)
> Show me how to live and promise me you won't forsake
> 'Cause love can help me know my name.

> Love can help me know my name.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, I compared and contrasted Sartre's and Beauvoir's views regarding the self-other relation, as part of the attempt to address a larger question: Is love doomed to fail? In answering this, I reviewed the reasons why, for Sartre, the original meaning of being-for-others is conflict. This can be traced back to the fundamental nothingness of lack of nature of the for-itself, whose radical freedom causes it to have inevitably antagonistic relations with other consciousnesses. Since the look of the Other objectifies me and steals my freedom, I seek to either objectify him too or to try to recover my freedom by possessing him as a freedom. Love represents the second strategy and is, as such, doomed to fail. A freedom cannot be possessed as a freedom, but only as an object.

On the other hand, Beauvoir acknowledges this conflict between the self and the Other and offers two possible resolutions, basing her analysis on Hegel's description of the development of consciousness (i.e. the "struggle unto death" and the resulting master-slave relation). One resolution echoes the Sartrean view, which involves the annihilation of either the self or the Other. The other resolution involves the concept of

reciprocity, which is at once the recognition of the Other's subjectivity and the preservation of my own. Reciprocity complements Beauvoir's ethics of ambiguity, which reinterprets the existentialist idea that the human being is a useless passion and grounds authenticity on the ideal of freedom for everyone. In relation to love, Beauvoir, like Sartre, describes it as a possessive emotion that objectifies either the lover or the beloved. However, she points to the possibility of authentic love upon women's transcendence of otherness and the realization of equality between the sexes.

Ultimately, Sartre's and Beauvoir's accounts of love—conflict and reciprocity—are each useful in particular contexts. Only the for-itself can choose, based on his or her own social situation, whether to consider love as doomed to fail. Finally, the ideal of modern romantic love represents the impossible attainment of both my freedom and the foundation of my being (my "name") in another person. It is a "divine" or transcendent experience because it resolves the fundamental contradiction of the for-itself as a useless passion. With love, life is worth living.

NOTES

1. True enough, Sartre borrowed ideas from thinkers as diverse as Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Kant, and even Simone de Beauvoir. However, Sartre's impassioned description of the human condition as one of enescapable freedom and abandonment certainly merits the adjective "original."

While it is often asserted that Beauvoir's work is a mere application of Sartre's philosophy to ethical issues, primarily gender, recent research shows that her idea of the Other is original. It predates Sartre's magnum opus, *Being and nothingness*, and has even heavily influenced him in his search for an existentialist ethics and his transition into what I call the "later Sartre" (the mature, Marxist-friendly Sartre who penned the *Critique of dialectical reason*). See in particular Simons (1986). Later in this paper, I will elaborate on the little-known and understated claim that Sartre's idea of the Other reflects Beauvoir's influence rather than vice versa.

2. This is not to say though that gender determines the "nature" of men and women, or that there are *essential* ways of thinking that may be labeled as either "male" or "female." Feminists were the first to distinguish between what is culturally constructed (gender) and what is biological (sex). (In fact, even sex is already being contested as an unstable category.) My own view is that while our attitudes may be deeply influenced by our cultural milieu, they are not completely determined by it. We are free, to some degree, to respond to the givens of our gendered situation, and thereby to make authentic choices. What distinguishes a feminist from a non-feminist account of male and female capabilities is the extent to which the theory acknowledges that gender—while it is a given part of the human condition—is socially constructed and flexible. *However, asserting that gender is flexible is different from saying that it is completely irrelevant.* Granted, thinking of gender in terms of the biological determinacy of sex is

contrary to the project of liberating both women and men from their established roles in patriarchy. But the other extreme—ignoring the influence of gender altogether—is equally pernicious. It is tantamount to rejecting the original modern feminist insight, pioneered by Beauvoir, that gender has something to do with otherness or the situation of being othered. Beauvoir's point is that while the Other is woman, individual women may transcend this socio-culturally-imposed label.

3. Compare this with Sartre's memorable defense of existentialism in the article "Existentialism is a Humanism," which—unlike *Being and nothingness*—was not intended for a scholarly audience but for the general public. About the people who accuse existentialism of being a gloomy philosophy that delights in despair, Sartre (1946, 2) writes, "Indeed their excessive protests make me suspect that what is annoying them is not so much our pessimism, but, much more likely, our optimism."

4. For a thorough contemporary analysis, see Richard Solomon's highly readable and cogent *About love: Reinventing romance for our times* (1988). His theory that "love is fundamentally the experience of redefining one's self in terms of the other" has startling connections to some main existentialist themes. According to Solomon, the primary motivation for love is the desire for communion with another self, who attracts me because I like who I am with him. (*Cf.* For Sartre, in love I want to possess the Other in order to recover my being.) On the other hand, Solomon continues, the greatest obstacle to love is the fact that the other person is not me. Given all our fundamental differences, the Other will inevitably become annoying or obnoxious once the temporary haze of romance evaporates. (*Cf.* Sartre's contention that love is doomed to fail because I cannot possess a freedom qua freedom.)

5. The idea that oppression is fundamentally linked to feminization is lucidly explained in Elizabeth Spelman's landmark article, "Woman as body: Ancient and contemporary views" (1982). Here she analyzes a persistent attitude in western philosophy, most aptly exemplified by Plato, that sets up reason as the ideal by denigrating the body. The rationalistic tradition is notorious for rejecting anything associated with the body—for example, sexual desire—as a corrupting influence. Spelman refers to this as "somatophobia," or the irrational fear of the (feminized) body. The body is feminized because women more than men are seen as embodied beings, as closer to nature and reproductive work. Plato thus sees embodied beings, i.e. women, children, slaves, and animals, as incapable of reason. However, even men may fall within the purview of such othered *and* feminized identities. In Plato's *Laws*, for instance, the soldier who surrenders for the sake of physical safety is acting like a woman; his punishment is to be born a woman in his next life.

6. For an engaging discussion of the tension between female autonomy and romantic love, see bell hooks' highly personal *Communion: The female search for love* (2002). Even though patriarchy has perverted love, hooks writes that radical feminism was wrong to exhort women to reject love altogether. She calls for a redefinition of romantic love that will

respect both women's freedom to love as well as their freedom to be authentic individuals.

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HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF DASEIN'S AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE AS A BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

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This paper talks about Heidegger's concept of authentic existence. One has to accept or "own" his very self in order to attain authenticity. No matter how incomplete one's existence intrinsically is, he must own such an existence in that only in doing so can one fully realize the magnitude and necessity for himself to exist authentically. Needless to say, however, the call for the human person to exist authentically requires him to come to terms with fear, dread, and concern. Fear, because the person is a being who is "hurled over" into the world; dread, because one has to face squarely his own facticity; and concern, because one has to relate himself to the world without losing grip of one's own existence.

INTRODUCTION

On account of Martin Heidegger's interest in Being (Olafson 1995, 98), "*Being and time*, begins with an evocation of the question of Being, and it is made clear that it is the concept of Being as such that the book as a whole is to be concerned with."

It must be noted at the outset that Heidegger titles Division I of *Being and time* as "Preparatory fundamental analysis of *Dasein*"[1] while he calls Division II "*Dasein* and temporality." In Division I, Heidegger (Polt 1999, 85) openly indicates that his "intimations of authenticity . . . is a way of Being in which *Dasein* is truly itself, in which we are not simply absorbed in falling in the self, but live with clarity and integrity." In this thread of thought, we "need to consider authenticity in order to understand the deep character of our Being, in particular, our temporality." In Division II, Heidegger expounds his view on authenticity by "investigating a number of phenomena . . . such as death, conscience, and resoluteness. Authentic existence will illuminate our temporality and Heidegger will then reinterpret everydayness in terms of temporality." A discussion of these is *conditio sine qua non* in order for us to understand how Dasein can comprehend Being in general.

In *Being and time*, Heidegger (Mulhall 1997, 33) bravely disposes his "basic diagnostic assumption about the errors of his predecessors and his colleagues: their failure to pose the question of Being correctly is caused by and is itself a failure of authenticity." In this light, it can be validly inferred that "the task of posing the question of Being correctly will only be achieved by an existentially authentic inquirer." This paves to a solid conviction that the issue of authenticity is very important in setting the goal towards achieving the end of Heideggerian philosophy, i.e., a philosophy of Being through Dasein. The denouement of Being, therefore, indispensably requires the authenticity of its inquirer—the *Dasein*.

In a situation where the issue of authenticity is brushed aside, the consequence would be that all fields of learning and everything that they include—be they philosophy, theology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and all other social, natural, and physical sciences—will lose their sense of meaning and value. In this respect, the question of authenticity should be given ample attention, for none is immune to the inquiry into authenticity. None has the chance of flight from the inquest of the state of being authentic. Presumably, only one can perhaps be excluded from the sharpness of this questioning, he who has already acquired the license to being true, genuine, or real; in a word, authentic.

Now, when serious thought is paid to the question of authenticity, the questioner would not only end up questioning the authenticity of things that are extrinsic to him. This is because the questioner will finally confront the question and address it back to him. Here, he will posit the "how" of authenticity, one's own authentic existence.

Strange as it may appear, but an ordinary understanding of authenticity is not in harmony with the way Heidegger understands it. Usually, this term is associated with ideas like "real," or not fake.[2] In general, authenticity should not be construed as a criterion, but rather as "an ideal which stands in need of a criterion" (Conn 1981, 5). Later, we will see how Heidegger conceives some of the ideals he sets as he develops his concept of authenticity.

Accordingly, we should wonder at how we can properly understand this concept of authenticity especially when it is applied to our very selves. In this perspective, we should ask about the nature of our lives. Do all of us have the sublime realization that as human beings, there is a specific pattern or paradigm of life according to which we are ideally required to live? In this respect, it is apt to raise another question: What does it mean to be one's self? In raising this question, we eventually ask how it is possible that authentic existence can be determined and actualized. If my existence, being a Dasein, is mineness, then I should ask, how can I really be me? These are some of the critical questions that we are going to tackle in this paper.

Historically, the concept of authenticity is a revival of the concept of goodness. To ancient philosophers, specifically Plato (1958, 83) and Aristotle, goodness is realized in the performance of a proper function. For Aristotle (1962, 14), a good flute-player and the one who just plays with

the flute show no difference relative to their performance of playing the flute.[3] Here, Aristotle asserts that as long as one functions properly (in the case of playing the flute properly) one is a good flute player. Also, the concept of authenticity is not solely a Heideggerian doctrine; it also pervades the whole ambiance of existentialist thought. It is, however, argued that it is Heidegger who makes an excellent and extensive study on this. In fact, Heidegger pioneered in using or applying the term to human existence, which later was taken up by Jean-Paul Sartre.

In spite of the traceability of the concept of authenticity to ancient philosophy as goodness in the performance of proper function, the existentialists do not appreciate the ethical tones of ethical ideas, such as "happiness in one's life," "the goodness of one's disposition," or "the rightness of one's acts." They prefer, rather, to apply authenticity to human existence. And this is one of Heidegger's intellectual projects. Undeniably, though, there is always that tempting enticement to think of authenticity as an ethical concept. This is being claimed by the ethicists. The existentialists[4] readily admit that authenticity can be reckoned within the arena of morality. However, they are quick to object that authenticity is purely an ethical concept. In their collective analysis, authenticity is a metaphysical doctrine that is rooted in ontology which finds its crowning phase in ethics.

Anyone who would aggressively attempt to reconcile Heidegger's philosophy of authenticity with the ancient view by postulating some ethical premises would definitely return to the theory of authenticity in the light of goodness. Authenticity is used by Heidegger in a very special sense; and its connection with "my-own-ness"[5] is always to be borne in mind. In the most general sense, authenticity means the awareness of one's own self. While Heidegger was primarily interested in the question of Being (*Sein*) rather than the nature of beings (*Seiende*), he is deeply concerned with the meaning of human existence. Based on Heidegger's primary interest in the question of Being, he theorizes that authenticity is a mode of existence which is owned by Dasein, who is in his real self, and is consequently concerned with the hounding quest of Being without being lost in beings. It is indispensable for man to own his existence because only then can he assert that his existence is his own task and responsibility. So, nobody should decide for man the kind of life he wants to live; it is up to the person to decide on it. My life is my own discretion. I have to be free to live the kind of life I want to live. And this freedom to choose the kind of life I want to live depends on the fact that Dasein is essentially my own. On the contrary, an inauthentic existence means the awareness of one's self brought about by the prism and spectacle of others as others see it.

It must, then, be fully understood that "Heidegger's account of authenticity. . . reveals the depth and complexity of the conception of human existence in *Being and time*" (Guignon 1984, 323). And, generally, Heidegger opines that for an existence to be authentic such existence must be an owned existence. Authenticity is indispensable in the process of the unconcealment of Being. Only when Dasein is authentic can it decide for

itself whether, as the entity it is, it has the composition of Being which has been disclosed in the projection of its formal aspects. As authentic, Dasein will be able to lay bare the seem-to-be-impermeable layers of "customary, traditional theories, and opinions about Being" (Guignon 1984, 25).

To Heidegger, Dasein has to be authentic so that it can engage in a deeper grasp of the meaning of Being. This means that to be authentic, Dasein cannot just have any style of life out of which he can dispose himself in existing as a human being. "It would appear, then, that authenticity is not so much a matter of 'content' of a life as it is of the 'style' with which one lives" (Guignon 1984, 334). Seen in this perspective, the distinction "between authenticity and inauthenticity seems to hinge not on what one is in the sense of what specific possibilities one takes up, but rather of how one lives."

This paper attempts to elucidate Heidegger's concept of authenticity qua Dasein's thrownness into the world which intrinsically allows Dasein to experience fear, dread, and concern.

COSMIC DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

The human person and the world are closely related to each other that without man there is no world and vice-versa. No one can adequately understand a human being apart from the world, and the world cannot have meaning without the human person. This relation between the human person and world is so fundamental that when this is denied the result will be an utter destruction of the foundation of Dasein's authenticity. And the correlative dependence of the human person and world in their relatedness cannot be reduced to the paradigm of subject-object relation.

This relatedness is rooted in Dasein's very existence in the world, for he is a being-in-the-world. Dasein is a Being-in-the-world; he is not a being-in-an-environment. An environment is only true to animals, not to the human Dasein. Dasein has a world, not an environment. He is not bound to an environment; he is open to the world.

However, if the meaning of human existence requires experience or consciousness, and if consciousness always has an object since it always means intentionality, then, where can this consciousness be realized? There should be a proper domain where man's finding and realizing of the meaning of his existence should happen. The answer is found in the world and the human person's inseparable relatedness to it.

Indeed, the term *world* (cosmic) is intriguing and, above all, confusing. What makes it confusing is the ordinary understanding of the word as the totality of everything. Or, more constructively, the term *world* is ordinarily understood as everything that forms the human milieu and provides the setting in which human existence has to be expressed and manifested. Besides, this ordinary understanding is deceiving; it tends to show a diversity of worlds, such as the worlds of philosophy, art, religion, sports, music, mathematics, and science. All these concepts of world as the "totality of everything," "nature," or "natural universe," are

diametrically rejected by Heidegger (see King 1966, 72), so much so that when he uses the term *world* in any of these senses, he always writes it in quotation marks.[6]

But what is this "world" we are talking about? If the human *Dasein* exists in the world, then, in what world does he exist? Is there a world where a diversity of worlds can be contained which we can call the "world of worlds"? To this, Heidegger (1962, 92) remarks:

> Is it possible that ultimately we cannot address ourselves to the "world" as determining the nature of the entity we have mentioned? Yet we call this entity one which is "within-the-world." Is "world" perhaps a characteristic of Dasein's Being? And in that case, does every Dasein "proximally" have its "world"? Does not the "world" thus become something "subjective"? How, then, can there be a "common" world "in" which, nevertheless, we are? Neither the common world nor the subjective world, but the worldhood of the world as such.

In Heidegger's view (1949a, 27), the term *world* designates "neither the sum-total of all the things of nature nor a fundamental characteristic of the community of men . . . but it means originally the 'how' in which the things are 'in the whole' as implicitly related to human *Dasein*." Further, "world" for Heidegger is a kind of clearing which opens up and is opened up by the dealings of Dasein with things by which things show forth or undisclose to Dasein. In this sense, the world is understood by Heidegger as the unconcealment of beings. The world is the locus of the denouement of beings. In this vein, the world is the correlative whole of expression and meaning in which the human Dasein encounters himself. It is that locus where the human Dasein is given possibilities that enable him to find himself and eventually come to terms with the attunement of his being who he is.

Besides, Heidegger (Dondeyne 1951, 51) also drives home his argument of the world as "happening" which to him means a propulsive, creative, and historical action of concealment and unconcealment that is dependent on the mode of Dasein's existence.

The world where the human Dasein is thrown is an experience of "meaning" that allows him to be his own and that which lets him be who he is.

"Happening" and "meaning" illustrate what Heidegger (1971, 147) opines in his one-line dictum: "to be man means to dwell." To Heidegger (Hall 1993, 133) the human Dasein is no ordinary occupant or inhabitant in the world; to him, the human Dasein is a dweller in the world. To capture the essence of Dasein's fate as dweller "in" the world, it is proper to say that all "human activity is worldly, that is, it requires a background of implicit familiarity, competence, and concern or involvement." In Heidegger's own words (1962, 92): "human being is his world and that the world has [*Dasein's*] way of being."

DASEIN: A BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

What is clear is that the human Dasein exists "in" the world. But Dasein's Being-"in"-the-world does not mean Dasein's physical location or space in the world. This means that Dasein is not "in" the world as, for instance, a spoon is "in" a glass, that is, an object "inside" an object. Rather, "being-in" is an existential characteristic of Dasein. For this, Heidegger (1962, 170) writes: "Being-in is distinct from the present-at-hand insideness of something present-at-hand 'in' something else that is present-at-hand." And Heidegger continues to argue: "Being-in is not a characteristic that is affected, or even just elicited, in a present-at-hand subject by the 'world's' Being-present-at-hand; Being-in is rather an essential kind of Being of this entity itself."

In this peculiar way of describing Dasein's Being-in-the-world, Heidegger (see Ebersole, n.d.) contends that Dasein's Being-"in" means "dwelling alongside," or "residing alongside," or "being-familiar with," since for Heidegger, Dasein comports itself concernfully in the world.

Heidegger's concept of Dasein's Being-in-the world can be better understood and appreciated through a presentation of the following topics, viz.: fear, dread, concern, understanding, discourse, fallenness, and thrownness.

Fear

"Fear could be a coward's most unwanted companion" (Babor 1999, 162). Ontologically, the inauthentic human Dasein is never afraid of life or existence. Fear, relative to existence, never matters to him. Only the authentic human Dasein affords for himself to imbibe the spirit and depth of fear. And this makes him courageously embrace the varied forms of fear, viz.: alarm, dread, terror, timidity, shyness, misgiving, and becoming startled (Heidegger 1962, 182).

In Scholastic philosophy, fear is understood as one of the irascible passions. Per se, fear induces the will to do what it will not do otherwise. It is defined as the emotion that apprehends an impending evil and manifests itself in the desire to get away, avoid, or, as much as possible, escape from such impending evil. Since fear desires to evade an impending evil, its goal is nothing else but to safeguard the self from the anticipated evil.

In view of the foregoing discussion, Heidegger's analysis of fear should not be understood through the prism used by the Scholastic philosophers. In this regard, Heidegger's analysis of fear should not be construed out of context. It must be clarified that Heidegger's concept of fear is neither ethical nor psychological, but ontological. Gleaned from this perspective (see Gelven 1970, 85), the "humanly recognizable aspects of fear become significant for the investigation of ontology." To Heidegger (1993, 182), fear is "an existential possibility of the essential state-of-mind of Dasein."

In his ontological analysis of fear, Heidegger rules out the idea that fear is a weakness of the human person, the Dasein. To him (1962, 182),

"*Dasein* as Being-in-the-world is fearful." "By no means is he suggesting that fear, any more than joy or exultation, is a predominant mode of human existence. He is not "opting for pessimism or a pathological and uncertain view of the human person. In fact, he is merely showing the reader the advantages of the existential analytic" of fear (Gelven 1970, 85).

In *Being and time*, Heidegger expounds his thought on the phenomenon of fear into three perspectives, namely: (1) that in the face of which we fear; (2) fearing; and (3) that about which we fear. To the first, Heidegger (1962, 179) asserts: "the fearsome is in every case something which we encounter within-the-world and which may have either readiness-to-hand, presence-at-hand, or *Dasein*-with as its kind of Being." To Heidegger, "That in the face of which we fear can be characterized as threatening." And that which is threatening is detrimental.

To the second, Heidegger (1962, 180) argues:

> Fearing, as a slumbering possibility of Being-in-the-world in a state-of mind . . . has already disclosed the world, in that out of it something like the fearsome may come close. The potentiality for coming close is itself freed by the essential existential spatiality of Being-in-the-world.

In principle, it is a blatant absurdity to argue that one can imagine something which one does not know. If this were applied to the issue of fear (see Gelven 1970, 85): "How can we be threatened by anything unless we exist in such a way that we are intimately connected with the world, and that this openness to whatever threatens is an integral part of the way in which we exist?" This leads Heidegger, to contend that fearing as such has found its way in unconcealing the world so that through it the fearsome may come to the fore. Therefore, the actual or concrete manifestation of fear unconceals a part of Dasein's Being-in-the-world.

To the third, Heidegger (1962, 180) maintains:

> *That which fear fears about* is that very entity which is afraid— Dasein. Only an entity for which in its Being this very Being is an issue, can be afraid. Fearing discloses this entity as endangered and abandoned to itself. Fear always reveals Dasein in the Being of its "there," even if it does so in varying degrees of explicitness.

It is interesting to note that in his analysis of fear, Heidegger beautifully paints a picture of human Dasein as a being who is horribly beset by fear. Heidegger is telling his readers that it is the fate of human Dasein to be fearful. In effect, it appears that the human Dasein's nature is so designed that it must be fearful. Yes, the Dasein must be fearful. The human person must be fearful for him to attain authentic existence. He must be fearful of his "concern for what is, and what is a mode of [*Dasein's*] my existence" (Gelven 1970, 86).

In his analysis of fear, Heidegger also explains that fear has variations. In *Being and time*, he says that the following are the variations of fear, namely, alarm, dread, terror, and other modifications as timidity, shyness, misgiving, and becoming startled. Of all these variations of fear, however, it is only dread that Heidegger develops specifically in his post-*Being and time* writings.

Inasmuch as dread is intrinsically embedded in fear, it is necessary to devote some pages to it.[7]

Dread

In *Being and time*, Heidegger (1962, 179) writes:

> That in the face of which we are alarmed is proximally something well known and familiar. But if on the other hand, that which threatens has the character of something altogether unfamiliar, then fear becomes dread.

Undeniably, dread is one of the frightening children of fear. In other words, dread is one of the lucky mutations of fear. In one of their footnotes in *Being and time* pertinent to the present discussion, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1962, 227) opine:

> "Angst." While this word has generally been translated as "anxiety" in the post-Freudian psychological literature, it appears as "dread" in the translations of Kierkegaard and in a number of discussions of Heidegger. In some ways "uneasiness" or "malaise" would be more appropriate still.[8]

Both Macquarrie and Robinson proved their contention right, since occasionally, in *Being and time*, Heidegger uses anxiety for fear. Says Heidegger (1962, 234):

> Anxiety is often conditioned by "physiological" factors. This fact, in its "facticity" is a problem *ontologically*, not merely with regard to its ontical causation and course of development. Only because Dasein is anxious in the very depths of its Being, does it become possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically.

In *Being and time*, Heidegger does not provide a sharp distinction between dread[9] and anxiety. Consequently, several among Heideggerian scholars and commentators of *Being and time* are driven to explain dread and anxiety interchangeably.[10] This predicament readily disposes us to a glaring difficulty had it not been for Heidegger's flouting resistance to such highly distasteful misconstruction of his pristine views on dread. Heidegger (1949a, 335) contends: "By 'dread' (Angst) we do not mean 'anxiety' . . . which is common enough and is akin to nervousness. "

Despite the convenience we got from Heidegger's distinction between dread and anxiety, it is still very hard to size up what Heidegger really meant by dread.

As Heidegger treads the way to expound on dread, he makes it clear that dread is not fear and vice-versa. Fear, for Heidegger, is an active feeling or passion which has an innerworldly object and reference. For instance, one is afraid of a particular illness or sickness because he may possibly be contaminated by it. Fear then is a passion which exposes the Dasein to a threat or an intimidation that emanates from an extrinsic or even intrinsic object. Thus, what is being intimidated is "the human Dasein's factual being, or some phase of this" (Heidegger 1962, 185). Fear, as fear of something or anything, always discovers a definite threat approaching from a definite direction. Hence, fear is always a fear of or a fear from. In Heidegger's own words (1949b, 335): "Dread differs absolutely from fear. We are always afraid of this or that definite way. . . ; the human person who is afraid . . . is always bound by the thing he is dreadful of or by the state in which he finds himself."

The structure of dread is quite different, for its object is practically indefinite or undiscernible. A human Dasein cannot say precisely what it is that he is in dread of. This means that nothing is the definite "object" of dread, because dread cannot be localized; it is nowhere. Hence, "although dread is always dread of, it is not dread of this or that. Dread of is always a dreadful feeling about—but not about this or that" (Heidegger 1949b, 335). For Heidegger, the indefiniteness of that which, a human Dasein is in dread of, is not to be reckoned with as a limitation in terms of definition. It rather manifests the impossibility of defining dread for it is nothing. For Heidegger, the ultimate source of dread is nothing else but nothing.

In the language of ontology, *nothing* simply means nothing. But Heidegger is a philosopher who refuses to know nothing of the nothing. To him, nothing is as meaningful as being. Nothing also bothers Heidegger so much. He does not think only of those that are, but also of those that are not. To Heidegger, the human Dasein is in dread—in dread of nothing. Despite Heidegger's insistence in his post-*Being and time* writings, it is not incorrect if we take *dread* and *anxiety* as synonymous terms. This position, as has been cited earlier, is supported by the translators of *Being and time,* John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. To this account, Heidegger (1962, 231) writes:

> In that in the face of which one has anxiety, the 'It is nothing and nowhere' becomes manifest. The obstinacy of the "nothing and nowhere within-the-world" means a phenomenon that *the world as such is that in the face of which one has anxiety.*[11]

Unlike Scholastic philosophy, which upholds the idea that nothing is nothing but the antithesis of being, Heidegger asserts that nothing is not categorically nothing. To him, it is the object of dread or anxiety in the context of the world as such. Says Heidegger (1962, 232):

> The "nothing" . . . is grounded in the most primordial 'something'—in the *world*. Ontologically, however, the world belongs essentially to Dasein's Being as Being-in-the-world. So if the "nothing"—that is, the world as such—exhibits itself as that in the face of which one has anxiety, this means that *Being-in-the-world itself is that in the face of which anxiety is anxious.*

So, gradually, we come to know that it is indeed the world that human Dasein is in dread or anxious of. Why should not Dasein be in dread or anxious of the world when, without his will or consent, he is utterly thrown into a world which is alien to him, just as he is, likewise, alien to the world? Part of the "object" of human Dasein's dread or anxiety are the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand entities. Heidegger (1962, 231) notes: "Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious."

In Heidegger's analysis, dread or anxiety singles out the human Dasein and leaves him alone to face what he still might be of the "not-yet." In this vein, the human Dasein becomes dreadful or anxious of the world because the world is the locus where he could be in contact with his possibilities which lie ahead of him.

Because of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, he dreads and is anxious of the facticity into which he has been thrown and the self that he is already in. Hence, dread reveals human Dasein's entire Being-in-the-world as his deeper threat, leading him to the choice of authentic existence that liberates him from his incarceration in the dark abyss of the various forms of fear. An authentic human Dasein faces dread. He confronts his uneasiness, his malaise, and the "homelessness" of his facticity which gives him the uncertainty of what he is to become. The inauthentic human Dasein, in contradistinction to the authentic one, is too busy trying to escape the painful pricks of dread by ignoring it and eventually soaks himself in the illusory flight from his own self in his everydayness. The inauthentic human Dasein, the "dreadless" or the "anxietyless" one, is auspicious enough that Heidegger does not despise his spiteful lot. Heidegger still shows the spirit of gentleness to him. He still accords him with worth and dignity. Here, he (1962, 68) writes:

> But the inauthenticity of *Dasein* does not signify any 'less' Being or any 'lower' degree of Being. Rather, it is the case that even in its fullest concretion *Dasein* can be characterized by inauthenticity—when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.

And with Heidegger's sort of soft-heartedness to the inauthentic human Dasein, he further remarks: "The 'in'—of 'inauthentic' does not mean that *Dasein* cuts itself off from its Self and understands 'only' the world. The world belongs to Being-one's-Self as Being-in-the-world."[12]

Thus, the "dreadless" and the "anxietyless" Dasein is spared by Heidegger from utter damnation. Hope is still in his midst. And this can be realized if such grade of Dasein starts to understand that life on earth,[13] or human existence as such, is beyond the human Dasein's choice. Life is simply tossed at his own disposition. When life crept into him, he was given no room to participate in the decision-making relative to the kind of life he has to choose. He is simply thrown into an existence called human.

The call to be one's self, the call to be authentic, does not only require Dasein to be dreadful and anxious of his Being-in-the world or the world per se. He is also called to establish a sound relationship not only to his fellow Dasein, but also to entities which each occupy a specific location in the worldhood of the world, which Heidegger calls the *structure of things in the world*. This opens us the way for a discussion on concern.

Concern

There is the "world," because there is Dasein and vice-versa. This interdependence of Dasein and his "world" gives birth to one of the existential structures of Dasein, which Heidegger calls *concern*. Through his concern, the human Dasein paints and beautifies his "world" that is given to him. It is by way of relating to things (in-the-world) and by giving meaning to them that Dasein manifests concern. By showing concern, a human Dasein gives justice and proof of his task as a shepherd of Being through beings. By shepherding Being through beings, Dasein appears to be a care-taker of the "world" or a gardener of the "world." Thus (see Zimmerman 1993, 140):

> . . . significance, the meaningful totality of reference relationships constituting the "world," is grounded in Dasein. . . . Dasein itself is that for the sake of which . . . the referential totality operates. Without the 'world' opened up by human existence, beings would not 'mean' anything.[14]

Concern is the basis of Dasein's relation to the "world." This relation, as has been explained earlier, should not be taken to mean a subject-object relation, because "Man (the human *Dasein*) is not the lord of Being. The human person is the shepherd of Being" (Heidegger 1993, 245). The way by which Dasein shows his concern in the world affects his mode of existence in the "world." Concern is fundamentally the relation of Dasein to things in the "world" in terms of using, handling, and producing. In his own words, Heidegger (1962, 83) says:

> . . . neglecting, renouncing, taking a rest—these. . . are ways of concern; . . . The term "concern" has, in the first instance, its colloquial . . . signification, and can mean to carry out something, to get it done . . . to "straighten it out." It can also mean to "provide oneself with something."

Heidegger claims that Dasein basically shows concern. And the way Dasein does this determines the mode of his existence. The human Dasein's concern is not just an occasional feature of his existence; it is rather one of the essential structures of his existence. Dasein's relationship to tools or entities he uses involves something more consequential than mere spatial relationship—an activity which is realized only by an authentic human Dasein.

A closer look at Heidegger's concept of concern will lead us to understand that it (concern) is rooted in care. According to Heidegger (1962, 169), "[T]he primordial Being of *Dasein* itself—is (namely) care." Expressed differently (Weber 1968, 541), concern is "care which is directed towards things." Heidegger (1962, 84) explains that "the Being of *Dasein* itself is to be made visible as care." This leads Heidegger to argue that care is an ontological understanding of Dasein's being-in-the-world. He opines: "Because Being-in-the-world belongs essentially to Dasein, its Being towards the world . . . is essentially concern."

Care is a vantage point where concern can be gleaned at. What is important is that Heidegger is cautious in providing a delineating line between care as human Dasein's relatedness to things as concern and care as man's relatedness to his fellow human Dasein as solicitude (Weber 1968, 541). And in the ambiance of concern, Heidegger (1962, 84) contends:

> . . . having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining. . . . All these ways of Being-in have concern.

In the preceding pages, we encountered Heidegger's firm conviction that man, the Dasein, is a Being-in-the-world; he is not a Being-in-an-environment. The introduction of the idea "environment" in relation to the human Dasein sparked the furor of Heidegger's philosophical interest. He (1962, 84) writes:

> Nowadays, there is much talk about man's having an environment . . . but this says nothing ontologically as long as this "having" is left indefinite. . . . To talk about "having an environment" is ontically trivial but ontologically it presents a problem. To solve it requires nothing else than defining the Being of *Dasein*.

In defining the *Being* of Dasein, Heidegger contends that Dasein is a Being-in-the-world. This simply means that Dasein is not a Being-in-an-environment. Heidegger's objection (1962, 84) to the idea of environment stamps out from his radical analysis that the "environment is a structure which even biology as a positive science can never find and can never define, but must presuppose and constantly employ." Despite Heidegger's distaste on the import of "environment" in Dasein's "Being-in," Heidegger

believes that "*Dasein* is essentially an entity with Being-in, it can discover those entities which it encounters environmentally." Such is the case because, for Heidegger (1962, 85), ontologically as well as ontically, Dasein's relatedness to entities belongs to being-in-the-world as concern.

It is in the "world" that Dasein encounters entities, be they present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. And this encounter is punctuated by Heidegger, since in this encounter, Dasein is called to care for them (the entities) in the realm of concern. It is one of the most distinctive features of Dasein to bear witness to the "existence" of other beings —the entities in the world. In Dasein's submission to his commitment as an active witness of the "existence" of other beings, he augments and reinforces his affirmation of his very own existence as a being-among-beings. Dasein, indeed, in the context of concern, is nothing else but a being among beings.

As Dasein explores the magnitude of the "existence" of other beings, he discovers that these beings are simply living.[15] They do not develop a sense of relationship with one another; they do not have "personal" consciousness, much less a grade of consciousness for others' welfare and the like. Birds and other animals are bereft of the ability to pay an explicit element of notice that things and other beings are.[16] Dasein is quite unique. He is not only conscious that he is conscious, but he is also conscious of that which he is conscious of. In other words, Dasein has the intrinsic capacity to have self-consciousness and much more to spark a glaring consciousness for and of other "existing" beings.

As an authentic being, Dasein exists as a being-among-beings; he is cautious that he does not lose himself in the identities of these other beings he coexists with. In his struggle to maintain the composure, structure, and feature of being, a being who is commissioned by Heidegger to unconceal Being, Dasein avoids the dangers that befall on him when he loses grip with his identity, i.e., he is reduced to the level of entities. He stops to exist and eventually loses contact with the beacon of light that guides him in his path in search for Being.

Thus, in the context of concern, authenticity lies at the heart of the human Dasein's critical and conscious role to keep abreast with his unique identity and task, which is, never to be the lord of beings, but a shepherd of beings.

CONCLUSION

Heidegger refuses to call a human being as man or woman. He prefers the term Dasein to man or woman. For him, the Dasein has to exist authentically. In *Being and time,* he has exhaustively presented a lot of ways to attain authentic existence. But the basic contention that he raised is that Dasein is a Being-in-the-world.

As a Being-in-the-world, Dasein has to confront fear, dread, and concern. Heidegger maintains that Dasein's thrownness into the world reduces him/her as a fearsome, dreadful, and concernful being. As Dasein is consumed by fear, dread, and concern, he is led to struggle towards

winning an existence that is exercised and spent in the auspices of authenticity.

The most significant aspect of Heidegger's thought is the recognition that we exist not in isolation but as a part of the world. The analytic tendency to think in terms of a solipsistic or individualistic "I" should be corrected since at the very start of our existence we are related to the Other, that is, to other Daseins and the environment. Ours is a socio-personal world: we *own* the world as an inseparable part of our existence..

NOTES

1. This is Heidegger's term for the human person. However, it should be clarified here that Dasein is not the same as consciousness and existence. What makes *man* (I am using this term generically to include woman) a Dasein is not his consciousness, but his "standing in the 'out' and the "there" of unconcealedness in which Being itself is present." This is the meaning of Heidegger's concept of *Existenz*, the person is open-standing in the unconcealedness of Being. To Heidegger (1965, 214-15), "consciousness does not itself create the openness of beings, nor is it consciousness that makes it possible for man to stand open for beings." In this light, Dasein and consciousness are different. The same is true with existence. Dasein is not existence, for existence is rather its essence. And consciousness embraces the postulate that existence is the essence of man. Thus, man is conscious of his essence, which is always situated in the world. Here, Heidegger asserts that due to man's consciousness of his existence, he is able to question it, and this human inherent proclivity to question his existence affects that where man dwells, i.e., the world. A point of clarification regarding the issue of self in relation to authenticity should be accommodated here also. In Heidegger's analysis (Polt 1999, 63), "[T]he self—whether it is inauthentic or authentic—is not a thing of any kind. It is not some hard core of our Being, some existential peachpit that remains untouched and unchanged throughout our lives. Instead, it is an existential possibility, a way of existence." This also implies that an "inauthentic existence is not a diminution of Being; it is no less real than authentic existence" (see Mulhall 1997, 33). It further means that the self— whether it is authentic or inauthentic still has its intrinsic value. If man is Dasein, then Dasein is correlatively related with the self. This position safeguards the dignity of man that even when his self is not authentic, man, the Dasein, still has dignity. This stance is contrary to Marx's view relative to man in relation to labor. To Marx, when man ceases to be productive, man is inauthentic; he loses his dignity. In effect, man is robbed of his dignity as a human being. For further readings, see Babor (2003, 21-22). It must also be clarified here that it is understandable that the concept of "self" screams for attention in Heidegger's philosophy. This is because in *Being and time,* Heidegger fitfully describes the self in relation to man, the Dasein. And for a further in-depth discussion on the disparity between authenticity and inauthenticity, read Heidegger (1993, 236 ff.).

2. The term *authenticity* is derived from the Greek word *authentikos,* which means primary or original. "It refers to a correspondence to the factual situation, a not-being-false or merely an appearance." This, as Thomas Dubay (1977, 13) remarks, "constitutes our ordinary understanding of authenticity." Obviously, our initial encounter of authenticity is far-off, different from the way Heidegger explains it. At least, we expose the Greek derivation of this word. We will clarify this further as we move along.

3. John Wild (1966, 47), in his commentary to this statement, says that "human goodness is not a property, not a quality, not an attribute of any kind, but rather something much deeper—a mode of really living and acting, existing authentically as man."

4. Many of the existentialists are not at ease with the term "authentic" because of its association with 19th century idealism. The existentialists' point is that even if authenticity expresses a moral idea, it is founded on ontology. From his end, Heidegger (1993, 236) remarks: "... the terms authenticity and inauthenticity, which are used in a provisional fashion, do not imply a moral-existential or an 'anthropological' destruction, but rather ... an 'ecstatic' relation of the essence of man to the truth of Being."

5. As we mentioned in the preceding chapter, the word "own" plays a vital role in the meaning of authenticity. *Eigen* then is the source of the word *eigentlich,* which means authenticity (see Heidegger 1962, 24, 67, 378). From this term *authentic*, Heidegger derives his discussion on authentic existence. Nonetheless, some of the Heideggerian commentators call *authentic existence* by different but related terms. For instance, Magda King (1966, 56) calls it "owned existence." Marjorie Grene (1957, 45) terms it "personal integrity." John Wild (1963, 128) also calls it by a similar term as that of Grene. The psychoanalyst, A. Weisman (1965, 168), who is also fascinated by Heidegger, calls authenticity as "identity."

6. In Heidegger's own words (1962, 93): "If we should sometimes use it (world) . . . we shall mark this with quotation marks."

7. It must be borne in mind that Heidegger himself reminds his readers regarding the different perspectives and variations of his analysis of fear are essential. This means that Heidegger (1962, 179) wants us to consider his analysis of fear collectively. This then permits us to pursue a discussion on dread.

8. Michael Gelven, however, is convinced that the best English translation of the German term *Angst* is not *anxiety*, but *dread*. In his own words, Gelven (1970, 115) asserts:

> His [Heidegger's] choice of term in the orginal German is Angst. Although Macquarrie and Robinson have rendered this as 'anxiety,' I feel that 'dread' is really a more successful choice. No single term, though, can adequately reflect the meaning of the phenomenon; but the role that the term plays in Heidegger's philosophy is central nonetheless.

9. It appears that Heiddeger goes with the Kierkegaardian interpretation of dread, but he gives a deeper analysis by clarifying certain points. Both Heidegger and Kierkegaard are engaged in basic problems like existence, dread, conscience, sin, guilt, and death. In a way, they are similar, but in spite of this, Kierkegaard is not considered a philosopher by Heidegger. For him, Kierkegaard is not a thinker, but merely a religious writer. To Heidegger, the Kierkegaardian analysis of dread is merely an attribution to the problem of existence and not so far as the problem of Being. However, in the observation of Kurt F. Reinhardt (1952, 135), "Kierkegaard's concept of dread provides the psychological setting for Heidegger's ontological analysis." V. Vycinas (1969, 53), in addition, says that "dread is not a psychological factor, but is truly ontological and of profound importance." Both views seem to be right. The fact is, Heidegger is not a psychologist, but an ontologist. In this regard, his concept of dread is mainly ontological.

10. See, for instance, M. Gelven (1970, 115-19); Yeow Choo Lak (1977, 28-30, 34-35, 45); and W. Richardson (1963, 72-74, 197).

11. For a critical analysis of Heidegger's concept of nothing, refer to Zimmerman (1993, 241-50).

12. For Heidegger, *concern* does not mean a subject-object relationship of Dasein and other entities. That is to say, when Dasein understands being as object and he is subject, this shows the concept of truth. Heidegger (Vycinas 1969, 33) rejects this because "we do not carry the images of things around in our consciousness to compare them occasionally with the things outside of our consciousness, but we apprehend, or merely think of things; we are with the things themselves outside of us."

13. In his piece "The concept of 'earth' by Heidegger," Alberto Carrillo Canan (n.d.) argues that *earth* shows itself as a concept with which Heidegger retakes the problem of propriety or properness of *Being and time* in the version of proper historicality. Here, Canan maintains that Heidegger's concept of *"earth* has a momentous link to the famous idea that Heidegger calls the oblivion of Being."

14. Zimmerman (1993, 140) argues: "Hence the phenomenon of the 'world' is not to be understood as the totality of natural entities or as the domain of creatures made by God, but instead as the structure of reference relationships constituted by and for human existence, a structure that enables entities to manifest themselves."

15. For a discussion on the difference between "living" and "existing," see Babor (2001, 177-78).

16. For further readings, see Zimmerman (1993, 242) and Tad Beckman (n.d.).

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THE DAIMON IN THE
EUTHYDEMUS[1]

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Socrates' daimonion, *that numinous "presence" restraining him from error, is prominently featured in Plato's* Apology *and plays an important role in several other dialogues. Socrates speaks of it often. It was, he reports, a constant feature of his life. It may also have caused his death because, as we read in the* Euthyphro, *he talked about the daimon so often that he aroused suspicion and resentment—and was finally indicted for impiety (*Euthyphro, *1.b). It may seem a bit scandalous that the patron saint of reason in the western tradition was a daimon-haunted personality. And many commentators tend to deemphasize the daimon, or at least not to fully investigate its role in Plato's writing. But something essential is missed in this way. Accordingly, this essay focuses on the daimon in the* Euthydemus, *which is a macabre mystical comedy. Here we see that, while the daimon is a power that sets limits, it willingly associates itself with a mysticism of the limitless (the Corybantic mania) and we see how this association bears fruit in Plato's other dialogues—especially in the notion of the Good.*

INTRODUCTION

Most of us are aware of a presence in our mind that *holds us back* when we are about to do something wrong. If we are breaking rules we ought to follow, or lying when we ought to tell the truth, or hurting when we ought to help, we feel a presence arise inside us—almost like another self, another mind—a presence which watches over us and warns us to stand by our ideals, and threatens to withdraw its protection from us if we fail to heed its message. Freud (1933, ch. 31) calls it the *superego*. My 12-year-old calls it *conscience*. And Socrates' famous daimon—which is the first main theme of this paper—is in some way like a tremendous conscience or superego, unrelenting, powerful, mysterious.

As you have heard me say at many times and places, there is something divine and mysterious that comes to me (*theion ti*

kai daimonion gignetai) . . . I have had this from my childhood,
a sort of voice that comes to me. And whenever it comes, it
always *holds me back* from what I'm about to do, but never
urges me forward. (*Apology* 31c-d)²

The other theme of this paper is the divine feeling of *mania* to which
Socrates alludes on a number of occasions.³ It is a giddy, expansive feeling,
the opposite of the daimon-feeling; for while the daimon holds Socrates
back and never urges him forward, the mania urges us forward and never
holds us back. Children feel this mania, to some extent, when laughter
infects them, and they start to laugh uncontrollably, and, to the annoyance
of their elders, they do and say the craziest things—obscene or cruel or
simply stupid things. Adults, Freud tells us (1900, ch.7; 1905), regress at
times to this condition, and in some ways, dreams restore it. But "mania"
is a Greek word for a feeling invoked by certain rites, such as Bacchant and
Corybantic rites—it is the sense of *a God approaching* in whose embrace
all is permitted.

And so I come to my thesis in this paper. Plato's *Euthydemus*, an
obscure but significant dialogue, teaches us the relation between the daimon
and the mania. On the side of the daimon, restraint; on the side of the mania,
expansiveness, permissiveness. But "opposites come from opposites," as
Socrates says in the *Phaedo* (70e); and the daimon in the *Euthydemus* actually
brings on the mania, or at least blocks the path of escape from it.

Six years ago, I published a book on the *Euthydemus*. I tried, at
least, to do justice to the maniacal side of the dialogue (the wild jokes,
strange rites, etc.) but after the first few pages, I said nothing about the
daimon, since I had not grasped its connection to the rest of dialogue, and
still less to Plato's other writings. "The daimon," however, "does not go
away" as James Hillman writes in his book *The soul's code* (1996, 8-9).⁴
And if I once slighted the daimon while writing about the *Euthydemus*, it is
not too late to make amends.

THE DAIMON IN THE *EUTHYDEMUS*

By some providence (*kata theon tina*)⁵ I happened to be
sitting there—there, where you saw me, in the undressing room,
quite alone—and I had it in mind to get up and go. But just as
I was getting up, there came the daimon's usual sign. So I sat
down again. (273a)

No doubt the daimon's sign is beautiful: the sacred usually is. But
its beautiful presence spells error. So if Socrates is getting up to go, the
daimon's arrival means: "Stay!" Disobedience would be foolish, for Socrates
knows that, though the daimon's interdictions are sometimes unexpected,
good reasons for them emerge, sooner or later.

The thing that makes Socrates' daimon greater than conscience or
the superego is its power to anticipate the future. Conscience only restrains

us from what we believe to be ethically wrong, but the daimon restrains Socrates whenever he is going wrong. Its presence *infallibly* warns of bad outcomes (warns him, for example, not to finish a sentence, or not to go into politics, or not to work with certain students), and if he takes these warnings to heart, he is assured that, in whatever sphere he moves—great or small, high or low—he will not betray his vocation.

And so, in the *Euthydemus*, he stands up to leave the gymnasium, and the beautiful numinous presence makes it manifest that leaving would be wrong. In a moment he sees why. Other people fill the room: the youth Cleinias, his close friend Ctessipus, other youths, and the two maniacal brothers, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. Something will happen among these people to which Socrates needs to lend himself. To miss it would cause some harm, both to him and them.

He would have missed, in the first place, a conversation with Cleinias which takes up the theme of happiness—in Greek, *eudaimonia* (since a favorable *daimonion* brings happiness). And Socrates' own daimon, having arranged the conversation, presides in the background throughout.

To Cleinias, Socrates says that if you want to be happy, it's not enough to have gifts and talents and wealth and health and beauty, you also need wisdom—the wisdom to use things rightly. For, of course, if you use things badly, the best things may hurt you most of all, and the daimon's law of restraint—the *"Thou shalt not!"* of its presence —will then apply universally as you hold back from the fullness of life.

> Consider, Cleinias, if you will, the case of a man who does and possesses much but who is entirely lacking in intelligence—will he really be better off than if he did and possessed little? Look at it like this. Wouldn't he err less, if he did less? And erring less, do less ill? And doing less ill, be less wretched?
>
> Yes.
>
> In which case will one do less—when one is poor or when one is rich?
>
> When one is poor.
>
> And when one is weak or when one is strong?
>
> Weak.
>
> And when one is brave and self-controlled . . . or when one is a coward?
>
> A coward.
>
> And when idle rather than busy?
>
> Yes.
>
> And slow rather than quick? And with sight and hearing that are dim rather than sharp?
>
> He agreed to these and all such cases.
>
> It seems, then, Cleinias, I proceeded, that if these things [that most people think are good] are guided by ignorance, they are greater evils than their opposite insofar as they can

minister to the needs of their evil guide; whereas if understanding and wisdom guide them, they are greater goods; but in themselves, either way, they're worth—nothing. (281b-d)

Everyone knows the negative definition of wisdom that Socrates offers at his trial. Wisdom is "knowledge of ignorance"; the wise know nothing else than that wisdom in them is lacking (*Apology 23a-b*). But here in the *Euthydemus* we have a positive definition. Wisdom is "the art of happiness." And while all our other assets—wealth, strength, courage, vitality, self-mastery—will certainly bring us misfortune if we err in the use we made of it, wisdom, on the contrary:

is the cause of good fortune in all situations: since wisdom, I suppose, can never err (*hamartanein*) but must be right in act and result . . . or else it would be wisdom no longer. (280a)

Wisdom, then, is knowing how to use whatever is surfacing *now*, whatever is coming at you *now*. It points the way to good outcomes guiding those who possess it . . . and "he with whom wisdom is present has no need of good fortune as well" (280b).

Such wisdom "belongs to the God" because it involves the transcendence of time. All the gold in the world, as Socrates says, won't help you if you misspend it. But spending or investing it fruitfully involves knowing what things will lead to, a sense of what's on the horizon (289a), and such time-transcending wisdom is more divine than human—though Socrates, too, has a share in it, thanks to his daimonic visitations.

Let us look more carefully at this wisdom that happiness depends on. "The sort of knowledge we require, fair youth, is that in which we find, at one and the same time, an art of making and of using the thing made" (289b). The wise, then, know how to wear a coat while weaving it, so they know it's the coat they want to wear; and how to dwell in a house while building it, so they know it's a house that will please them; and how to give a speech while writing it, so they know its effect will be exactly what they desire. They have similar skills as well with regard to finding things or hunting for them (289d). In the experience of the wise—who are the only competent sovereigns—it's one and the same art to hunt game and prepare it, to find friends and enjoy them, to conquer a city and rule it, to secure a crown and hold sway with it; so expectations in the present moment regarding feasts and friends and conquests and all else are not disappointed later on.[6]

As for Socrates, his time-transcending daimon restrains him in the middle of a sentence (*Apology* 39e). His daimon, in other words, foresees the use to be made of his words, and restrains him from words of bad consequence. And his whole life is like that. The daimon senses the future use of what he is making, seeking, or hunting, and if the outcome is going to be bad, the daimon stops him by coming on the scene. So Socrates stays on his path, and almost always he seems happy. His happiness brightens Plato's writing.

He is happy even as he dies. For if, at his trial, the defense he offers to the jury leads to a sentence of death, the failure of his daimon to warn him and save him can only mean one thing: that death is good.

> The sign of the god did not oppose me, either when I left my house, or when I came here to the court, or in any word I was going to say; but in other speeches it would stop me in the middle of a sentence . . . opposing me in even small matters. What do you think is the reason? I will tell you. Those who think death is an evil must be mistaken. My familiar sign would have opposed me, if I were not going to meet with good. (*Apology* 39e-40d)[7]

Rarely in the history of religion has the god's non-appearance at the moment the martyr's fate is sealed been felt as proof of the god's devotion. But with Socrates that's how it is. Silence is the daimon's highest blessing.

And yet there are times, Plato suggests, when Socrates (or a less tolerant person) might desire the daimon dead (if that were possible), just as the city seeks Socrates' death. One would grow tired of incessant interdictions. One would feel at times, perhaps, like the Man of Maximal Repression in the *Euthydemus* (281b)—the man so afraid of his strength, courage, health, wealth, etc., that he actually wishes them away, for he has a premonition that misuse of them will finally harm him; likewise the daimon blocks paths, warning of unnamed catastrophe. A higher wisdom, on the other hand, would guide us going forward, would teach us to *wear* a coat while weaving it, or *give* a speech while writing it, or *rule* a city while conquering it . . . or to grasp while still alive the point of our life as a whole (seeing life from the side of death) and shape life rightly from hour to hour (*Republic* 418c-d); whereas the daimon, by contrast, would simply *bring to a halt* our weaving, writing, conquering—and finally our life—should a bad result be in store.

Cannot divinity, when it shows itself, *urge us forward* as well as hold us back? Cannot the gods beckon with fullness—with beauty, rapture, radiance—rather than impose prohibitions on us? These are Nietzsche's questions (1954, 473-9), but Socrates also asks them. It vexes him at times, as we gather from the *Greater Hippias*, that a mysterious "acquaintance"—obviously the daimon—follows him in the street and stays with him in the house, and is like an annoying twin that restrains him from what he desires, and this mysterious acquaintance he names "the Son of Sophronicus," since Sophronicus *is* his father (288d, 291a, 304c). In brief, the daimon is a second Socrates. It is the Socrates of Socrates. As the daimon restrains Socrates but never urges him forward, so Socrates, when he teaches, has no positive wisdom to offer, but can only hold in check those who wrongly think themselves wise and, cutting away illusion, "deliver" the truths they were bearing secretly (*Apology* 23a, *Thaetetus* 150b). "A man's character is his daimon," according to Heraclitus (Fr. 119). And in Socrates' case this is true: the daimon protecting his fate is his very own essence which he

senses as something beyond him,[8] just as the Freudian superego (1933, ch. 31) haunts the ego as its ideal image.

But "opposites come from opposites" as Socrates says in the *Phaedo* (70e). The day comes, then, when the ever-restraining daimon points the way to its opposite: a divine and all-permissive mania.

MANIA IN THE *EUTHYDEMUS*

Euthydemus and Dionysodorus—whom Socrates encounters because his daimon demands it—are old sophists-brothers (formerly lawyers and kick-boxers [273c-e]). Their personalities, commentators note, are virtually identical, and it's as if a single soul had simultaneously entered two bodies.[9] In a cartoonish way, their "twoness" mirrors that of Socrates: a man and a daimon-essence.

The brothers are supposed to be sophists, but they are more like clowns than sophists. They are like clowns in a dream: huge and funny but sinister. The jokes they tell are bad. But their audience invariably laughs, because they have implanted assistants among them, devotees who laugh on cue, their laughter evoking laughter, and the crowd is gradually led to a giddy, trance-like condition where the ghastliest jokes are irresistible (276c). By the end of the performance, the audience is laughing so loudly that an excess of laughter nearly "kills" them, and the pillars, Socrates notes, start to quake as if sharing the joy (303b).

Now, the presence of the daimon means restraint, whereas, in the swelling hilarity, *nothing* needs to be restrained, so the daimon, as we say, finds its opposite. The "teaching" of brothers, moreover, is like the verbal equivalent of the mania they are evoking, a sort of mania expressed in mad logic. And Socrates receives three crucial doctrines from them: about reality, words, and deeds.

Doctrine of Reality

Pasi panta homoios, hama kai aei. "All things are equally in all, simultaneously and forever." (Euthydemus quoted in the *Cratylus,* 386d)

The doctrine in question comes from Parmenides, no doubt by way of Protagoras. It might express a profound mysticism: a perfect consciousness of the one behind the many. But it might also describe a sort of drunken blur, a tide of mania overturning everything, dissolving boundaries, etc.

What, then, shall we say? As Sartre (1964, 128) puts it, there are no "halfway measures" with being. If a thing *is*, it *is* all the way. The fullness of being is *in* it; nothing can limit it, nothing stays outside. So "all things are equally in all," that is, all are in all *to the maximum*. Usually we do not know this. But when the mania swells we start to sense it.

So it is as if, the brothers suggest, we had envisioned a certain drug, and we think that, because there is *some* good in it, taking boundless

amounts of it will give us that good in boundless measure (299b); and whatever has come before our mind now grows enormous and takes on an eerie "multiplicity"—as happens here with a giant warrior with innumerable arms and hands (299c).

When Plato was an old man—about 80—he argued in *The laws* that the elderly need *to drink* from time to time because wine enhances life's intensity, its vehemence. One must never forget that swooning overabundance which the young know better than the old. One must taste again the fullness of being (*Laws* Bks I-II).

Doctrine of Words

Oudeis pseude legei, "No one speaks what is false." (284c)

Thanks to a slogan borrowed from Parmenides—namely, "nonbeing is not (Fr. 2)"—the brothers deny that anyone can lie. For how can our words fall short of truth, if nonbeing is not. Without lack of being, *nothing* lacks reality. And if [anyone] speaks, "he speaks what is true and is" (284c).

I once lost myself for a while in the mad twists and turns of these arguments (1999, ch. 6), and will not do so again. Suffice it to say that if "all things dwell equally in all," then anything you claim to see, or expect to see, or want to see, may be drawn from the overabundance that is concealed in every speck of being. That explains the harsh sting of slander; lies gain an air of truth simply by being uttered. To cite from the dialogue— and it is indeed a sinister example—if the brothers tell young Ctessipus that he desires nothing more than to kill the person he loves, then that claim grows true as soon as it is made because, inside Ctessipus, "all things dwell equally in all," and as soon as he hears the words, "you desire your darling dead," the impulse to "murder his darling" (like a Socrates murdering his daimon) springs out of his inner life—though, to be sure, he denies it repeatedly (283e-284d).

Everyone has seen children in the grip of maniacal laughter, taunting one another with crazy and implausible slanders. "You are a dog, you are a pig; your father's a pig," etc. People say such crazy things in our dialogue (298a-298d). And the mania releasing participants from all restraint in speech threatens to close the gap between the things that are said and reality.

I once saw a hypnotist make a perfectly sensible man believe he was a dog. The man felt like a dog and barked like a dog. Inside him, then, there must have been a potential dog. And perhaps the view of Euthydemus is that we hypnotize each another, and what we collectively see is what our collective discourse evokes—or draws out of the boundlessness of life.

Doctrine of Deeds

Ouk estin hamartanein. "There is no such thing as doing wrong." (287b)

The issue of slander quickly becomes irrelevant because, when gripped by the mania, we have no thought but to accept whatever label anyone pins on us.

For if "all things dwell equally in all," then, as Socrates points out, every act has finally the same quality—namely, its "overabundance"—and moral distinctions flow away completely (*Cratylus* 386d). And so if your conscience bothers you, or your daimon restrains you, or your super-ego torments you; or if—as at 281b—you're afraid of your own gifts because misuse of them might lead you into danger, then Euthydemus has excellent news. You can shed your anxiety because nothing will ever go wrong: *ouk estin hamartanein*.

So whereas Socrates' daimon restrains him, the brothers consent to a list of things they "know how to do"—a list that begins with things that are merely implausible but then get wild and obscene.

> Do you know . . . carpentry, for instance, and shoe-making?
> Certainly, said Dionysodorus.
> And are you proficient at leather-stitching?
> Why yes, in faith, and cobbling . . .
> And they confessed they knew all things, one after the other, in response to the questioning of Ctesippus. And of course there was nothing—not even the most shameful things—that Ctesippus didn't ask them before he had done with them; but they valiantly encountered each of the questions he put to them. . . .
> And I, for my part, became quite incredulous, and at last had to ask if Dionysodorus also knew how to dance. To which he replied: certainly. (294c-d)

If Socrates speaks here of dancing, this is because he has compared the brothers to the Corybantic dancers (277d). These men were itinerant ministers. They earned their bread by providing initiations, and they were a bit like trance dancers. As Plato and others describe them, they played particularly haunting music on flutes and tambourines, and it altered the minds of their hearers. The effect of their music was indeed so peculiar that, Socrates hints, you actually came to wonder if the music was really playing—if it was still playing or not playing (*Crito* 54d). And the gods emerged from the song, each evoked by his own special melody, as if in a sort of theogony (*Ion* 536c).

WHERE THE DAIMON COMES TOGETHER WITH THE MANIA

According to Aristotle, Plato had a "secret" teaching shared only with his closest associates, and it was based upon two great powers: that of the One (= the Good) and that of the Dyad (the Great-and-Small). The One imposes limits; the Dyad, on the other hand, is limitless. All worlds—

both eidetic and material—come to be through the interplay of these (*Metaphysics* 988a, 1-10).

If we trust Aristotle's report, we can say that the tension described in this paper—the tension, namely, between the daimon that only restrains and the mania that overturns restraint—mirrors the tension between limits and the limitless that drives Plato's deepest thinking.

Plato's thinking is assuredly labyrinthine, but we will advance a bit in the direction of its center if we can move toward a place where the daimon and the mania converge. Let us try to take some steps in this direction.

All our lives we feel vexed by needlessly missed opportunities: the letters we didn't write, the encounters we didn't pursue, the changes we didn't make, the goals we didn't seek; and here it is always a question of too much, not too little, restraint. With too much restraint, you can ruin yourself utterly. But we can see that the daimon, even though it can *only* restrain, yet provides help with this difficulty.

We see this in the *Euthydemus*. Socrates is leaving the gymnasium; he would have missed the encounter with the brothers. But the daimon forces him to stay. The daimon, to be sure, could never urge him forward; but it could—if I may put it in this way—hold him back from holding back, and so the encounter takes place.

Just as, according to Freud, the superego is somehow in complicity with the id, having "deep roots" in the id (1933, ch. 31), so it appears that Socrates' daimon is in complicity with the mania.

The brothers stand for the boundless (a dyad mirroring "the" Dyad).[10] But the daimon that forms a "pair" with Socrates has itself an aspect of boundlessness. We feel bounded, for example, because our bodies appear to confine us to a single point in the space-time continuum, namely, the "here" and the "now," whereas the daimon senses things to come, entirely outstripping the horizon that opens and circumscribes our vision. Thus, the daimon derives from a place where all times and spaces flow together— where, to cite the Platonist Plotinus as he echoes the clown Euthydemus: "Each is in all and in all ways all . . . and the glory infinite" (*Ennead* 5.8.4).

Now, listen to the brothers as they promise boundless knowledge to Socrates:

> You have admitted, now, Socrates, that you always know, and know everything. So it's clear that even as a child you knew, both when you were being born and when you were conceived; and before we came into being and before heaven and earth existed, you knew all things, since you always know. Yes, and I declare, he said, that you will always know all things, if it be my pleasure. (296d)

This points to our life before birth which, in the *Republic*, is the scene of the daimon's origin. It is as if the brothers said to Socrates: "Your daimon represents but the prohibitive shadow of Good. If you want to see fullness of Good, let us help you."

The Good, indeed, is in Socrates' view that "Titan" that holds events in sway, the ultimate reason why things happen (since they happen for the best); and whoever knows the Good will know what is *good to do*, and—to return to the discussion between Socrates and Cleinias—he will not be afraid of misusing his wealth, strength, beauty, and other assets, but will confidently use them to the maximum. The Good itself, Plotinus says, would serve as "daimon" to such a person—he would not require any other (*Ennead* 3.4.6). But the Good is so enormous, so vehement in radiance, that Socrates can't bear the sight of it as it flares through the sensuous order (he is afraid of ruining his eyes), and he turns his mind to concepts—those "safer" mirrors of the Good—regarding which he discourses incessantly (*Phaedo*, 99d-100b).

The theme of silence thus deserves our attention. The daimon is described as a voice, but it comes when something is wrong. Silence is its highest blessing. There is thus a silence that speaks, and it "says" that things are as they should be.

Now all mystics, east and west, know this "speaking of the silent." To glance only at the Western tradition, Kabbalists tell us that the mysterious Hebrew word *chachmal* in the chariot discourse of Ezekiel should be translated "speaking of the silent" and is the gateway to higher worlds (Kaplan 1990, 153-55.); St. Augustine (*Confessions* 9,10), too, when he tells how Divinity came to him, describes a silence that "speaks," a silence that *is* the Lord's beckoning.

But the first elaboration in the western tradition of the *chachmal* or "speaking of the silent" is to be found in the *Euthydemus*, in a series of crazy jokes.

> What? Asked Dionysodorus. May there not be a speaking of the silent?
>
> By no means whatever, replied Ctesippus.
>
> Or a silence of the speaking?
>
> Still less.
>
> But what if you speak of stones and timbers and irons—is that not speaking of the silent? . . . And then when you're silent, said Euthydemus, are you not making silence of all things . . . so the speaking, too, are silent, my dear man, if the speaking belong among all things. (300c)

Joking aside, there is surely a "speaking of the silent." The silence of the daimon speaks of blessedness to Socrates. When his sentence of death was announced, he felt that silence most intensely, and no word could have given him such joy.

There is also a "silence of the speaking." For a mind that grows silent like death—"practicing death" as Socrates says—can wrap every sound with silence, though sounds remain.

The "Idea of the Good" (the Platonic Absolute) is silent as well. Setting aside the vagaries of chance, it is the "reason why" everything

happens as it happens; yet it is *beyond being*, as Socrates says in the *Republic* (509b); it is more like absence than presence, more like silence that speech. Of course the "never-present" Good is mirrored by Socrates' daimon to the exact degree that the daimon withholds itself silently. The daimon "speaks" when things go wrong. Its silence means that Good prevails.

May we add that, in the *Parmenides*, the One (or the Good) transcends all shape and definition—it is boundless, limitless, *apeiron* (137d). It is that which Euthydemus strives to imitate with his overabundant mania—a wicked imitation, no doubt... but it rectifies an excess of limits.

Note as well that the Good is *beyond being*. And "if it is possible," says Ctessipus to the brothers, "to [continue to] speak yet say or describe Nothing, that is what you are doing here" (300a-b).

I should add in closing that the brothers' last joke, the joke that ends their performance, is about the death of the gods. And Socrates, as if in a sort of trance, can't resist uttering the lines the brothers want to hear – paving the way for the gods' extinction. I wrote about the joke in *Socrates among Corybantes* but perhaps missed a crucial dimension of it. Here it suffices to say that the joke recalls the charge against Socrates: "Socrates is unjust in that he corrupts the young, not believing in the gods the state believes in, but introducing *daimonia kaina* —new divine beings" (24b).

NOTES

1. This essay is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented to the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER), Athens, Greece, 1-3 June 2006. Unless otherwise specified, quotations are from *Euthydemus*.

2. Translations are mine.

3. Linforth's classic essay (1946) summarizes Socrates' references to the "divine mania" and the Bacchic and Corybantic rites.

4. Hillman's book *The soul's code* (1996) which is a contemporary retrieval of the concepts of fate and calling, persuaded me—finally—to write this paper.

5. Mark L. McPherran (2005) stresses the role of providence in Socrates' thinking in "'What even a child would know': Socrates, luck, and providence at *Euthydemus* 277d-282e."

6. Studying contemporary biographies of artists, actors, statesmen, athletes, scientists, etc., Hillman finds that the early stages of a life often seem arranged to make the later stages—or the best things about them— possible, as if some awareness of the future had been operative in the past. He (1996, 6-7) writes:

> Time, that takes survey of all the world, must have a stop. It, too, must be set aside; otherwise the before always determines the after, and you remain chained to past causes upon which you can have no effect . . .

Of course a human life advances from day to day, and regresses, and we do see different faculties develop and watch them wither. Still, the innate image of your fate holds all in the co-presence of today, yesterday, and tomorrow. Your person is not a process or a development. You *are* that essential image that develops, if it does. As Picasso said, "I don't develop, I am."

7. In a substantial discussion of the daimon, Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith (1989, 237-57) helpfully wonder if it *really* intervened *whenever* Socrates went wrong. I think the import of 39e as regards the Platonic Socrates—that is, Socrates as Plato remembers him—is clear: the daimon opposes errors so reliably that its "silence", even in the case of an ostensibly fatal defeat, means that all is well, at bottom. This remembrance of the daimon is (as I hope to show) essential to Plato's thinking, reflecting its overarching structure; but of the daimonic experience of the "actual historical" Socrates many views are possible.

8. To use a word coined by Neo-Platonism, the daimon is the "Socraticity" of Socrates. It is the essence of Socrates, making "Socrates" more like itself (causative power of the forms). Hillman (1996, 11) writes:

Every individual is born with a defining image. Individuality resides in a formal cause—to use old philosophical language going back to Aristotle. We each embody our own idea, in the language of Plato and Plotinus. And this form, this idea, this image does not tolerate too much straying.

9. Hawtrey compares the brothers to Shakespeare's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are so much alike their friends sometimes get them confused (1981, 14). I myself compared them to the "Assistants" in Kafka's novel *The castle* (1926) who help "K" find his way to death. In a substantial chapter, Hillman (1996) shows how the phenomena of twins "literalizes" the daimon. And it is perhaps worth mentioning that people who encounter Euthydemus sometimes "miss" Dionysodorus, even though he is there (271a), just as a person might encounter Socrates but miss the daimonic presence.

10. The "Two" or "Dyad" figures prominently in the Pythagorean Platonism discussed by J.N. Findlay, *Plato: The written and the unwritten doctrines* (1974) and by the Tubingen School commentators. See, for example, Hans Joachim Kramer (1990) and Giovanni Reale (1990). On the related concept of *Chora* or the "Nurse of Becoming," see the important work of John Sallis (1999); for connections with Aristophanes and Euripides, see my *Socrates among the Corybantes* (1999, ch. 5).

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CREATIVE SYNTHESIS:
A PROCESS INTERPRETATION
OF CAUSALITY[1]

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Creative synthesis, an interpretation of causality developed by Charles Hartshorne in his philosophical works, attempts to provide a way out of the determinism-indeterminism debate in philosophical discussions. At the same time, it is grounded in contemporary physics which regards effects as statistical averages rather than fully predictable results of the action of causes. This paper will seek to contextualise this interpretation of causality within the metaphysics of Charles Hartshorne, establish its basis and develop its implications. The resulting philosophy of action, grounded in the principle of dipolarity that provides a new insight into the cause-and-effect relationship, attempts to address the issues of activity/receptivity, novelty/givenness, and freedom/restriction not only in the human sphere but also in the whole of reality.

INTRODUCTION

Creative synthesis, an interpretation of causality developed by Charles Hartshorne in his philosophical works, attempts to provide a way out of the determinism-indeterminism debate in philosophical discussions.[2] At the same time, it is grounded in contemporary physics which regards effects as statistical averages rather than fully predictable results of the action of causes and is thus an example of a fruitful interaction between philosophy and science.[3]

This paper will firstly seek to contextualise this interpretation of causality within the process metaphysics of Charles Hartshorne, establish its basis and develop its implications. Secondly, it will show how the resulting philosophy of action, grounded in the principle of dipolarity, can provide a fresh insight into the cause-and-effect relationship and how it can address the issues of activity/receptivity, novelty/givenness, and freedom/restriction not only in the human sphere but also in the whole of reality.

Creative Synthesis

Charles Hartshorne's concept of creative synthesis can perhaps be succinctly described as a metaphysical description of the workings of reality. Given the hostility in some quarters to anything that smacks of metaphysics, it is essential at the outset to add that the term "metaphysical" as used by him is quite different from the usage of that term that has led to the criticisms of those who have opposed any reference to metaphysics in any philosophical discussion.

In Hartshorne's philosophy, *metaphysical* means that the description can be said to be applicable to the whole of reality. He therefore rejects the understanding behind some of the criticisms that such a description refers to reality that is wholly transcendent or supersensible. Instead, he claims that that which is metaphysical is not behind or above the physical or the observable but is in itself included in the physical and the observable as well as everything else. Moreover, in his many writings he has defended the view that the pursuit of metaphysics is rooted in experience and that metaphysical analysis is related to experience. Thus, he (1983) maintains, contrary to the views of the critics of metaphysics, that there is actually an intimate and essential connection between the study of metaphysics and the empirical sciences.

On the other hand, unlike empirical sciences which also take experience as their starting point, metaphysics as understood by Hartshorne (1983, 20-22) distinguishes itself by its search for strict generality or universality. It examines the extremely general features of experience or its universal traits. It attempts to set out ideas (or categories) which are so general that no conceivable facts and no conceivable observations could fail to illustrate them. Insofar as they are so general, they are said to be always embodied in any experience and are thus exemplified in every experience. Any experience must not only be compatible with these metaphysical ideas but it must also corroborate them. Hartshorne (1962, 285; 1989, 123-26) summarises this point in this way: "Metaphysical truths may be described as such that no experience can contradict them, but also such that any experience must illustrate them." An example that he provides as a metaphysical truth is "the present is always influenced by the past." No possible experience could come into conflict with it. We cannot know that we are uninfluenced by the past since to know the past is to be influenced in one's state of knowledge by it.

Since metaphysical truths are universal, they extend not only to actual but also to possible experiences. Thus, they are said to be necessary truths (unlike the truths arrived at by empirical sciences). Metaphysical truths cannot be otherwise since they are about what is common to all possible facts. They are not just about this world but about reality in general, about any and all possible worlds. Consequently, the metaphysical search is more than the mere observation of reality (the method used by empirical sciences) since observation only shows what goes on in the actual world with its particular characteristics. Observation alone does not and cannot

show what is true in any viable, truly possible, world. The universality of metaphysical truths discloses their necessity.

Creative synthesis as a metaphysical description is thus a description that covers all of reality and is necessarily true of every reality. According to Hartshorne, in every happening or event there is an old as well as a new (or creative) element. The old consists of previous happenings or experiences which give rise to and which persist in the new. There is permanence since in the synthesis the prior data are preserved, the synthesis being the holding together of data. The many become one which in turn produces a new many, and so on. It is an accumulation of these prior acts or a "putting together" of factors into a whole. But the resulting synthesis is a new actuality or experience because a different kind of experience has emerged from the coming together of past experiences. Previously there was the separate existence of the included realities, but now there is a unity. Furthermore, the synthesis is spontaneous or free because none of these experiences—individually or collectively—dictated the exact unity that would arise (cf. Hartshorne 1962, 9-11; 1970, ch. 1; and 1973, 117-41). A synthesis emerges rather than is determined. Hence, an experience or happening cannot be fully described in its total unitary quality merely by specifying what its constituents are. Each experience enriches the totality of reality by being an additional member.

The concept of "creative synthesis" (or simply, creativity) is really Hartshorne's interpretation of causality. Every act is viewed by him as creative. However, each creative act is influenced by its past acts and does require them even if it cannot be determined precisely or fully by these antecedent acts, which are simply earlier cases of freedom. These acts, those of ourselves or of others, restrict the freedom of the new act, establishing and limiting the possibilities for an otherwise free and creative activity. On the other hand, they never determine them fully. Thus, Hartshorne defines causality as the way in which any given act of creativity is influenced or made possible, but yet not completely determined, by previous acts. Because past free acts narrow down any creative act, there can be a certain measure of prediction. Hartshorne uses the analogy of the banks of the river which give the flowing water its direction but does not entirely determine its movement. As he (1971, 216) puts it, "Causality is the boundary within which resolution of indeterminacies takes place. Causal regularities mean not the absence of open possibilities but their confinement within limits."

Hartshorne thus repudiates the deterministic version of causality. In his view, absolute determinism regards a happening as already completely predefined in its antecedent causes, each state of the world described as containing in effect an absolute map, as it were, of all subsequent and all previous states. Absolute determinism does admit that humans will never be able to read the maps except in radically incomplete and inaccurate ways. But Hartshorne regards this doctrine as an incorrect reading of the universality of causation because it is too strict an interpretation. Causes, as far as he is concerned, never determine the effect in all its details. A

cause is necessary in the sense that without it, there can be no effect. But when all necessary conditions for an event have been fulfilled, it does not follow that the event will take place in precisely the way it is predicted, merely that it may take place. A cause is necessary, but not the effect. There will be an effect but not a specific or a fully determinate effect. The creative aspect of a particular effect, therefore, lies in that it is never literally anticipated. According to Hartshorne (see Bertow 1974, 143), "To ask 'why may not the antecedent cases completely determine the given?' is to show that one has not grasped the meaning and pervasiveness of creativity or spontaneity." There is a certain originality or freshness in every effect. Inasmuch as it is creative, it is partly unpredictable, undetermined in advance.

Some Logical and Metaphysical Underpinnings

To understand more fully Hartshorne's concept of creative synthesis, we need to examine its logical and metaphysical underpinnings. It will be noted that the term "creative synthesis" indicates a certain amount of duality (as opposed to dualism) in the description as well as in reality itself. It is a concept that is grounded in the logic of what Hartshorne calls the law of polarity and supported by his general metaphysical scheme. To these we must now turn.

According to the law of polarity, which Hartshorne (1952, 2) says he has taken over from Morris Cohen, "ultimate contraries are correlatives, mutually interdependent, so that nothing real can be described by the wholly one-sided assertion of [ultimate categories such as] simplicity, being, actuality and the like, each in a "pure" form, devoid and independent of complexity, becoming, potentiality and related categories." However, although polarities are ultimate, it does not follow that the two poles are in every sense on an equal status. As mere abstract concepts they are indeed correlatives, each requiring the other for its own meaning. But in their application to the reality itself, one pole or category includes its contrary (Hartshorne 1983, 99).

This law is said to pervade reality. If one reflects sufficiently, one can expect to find all of reality revealing certain abstract contrasts, such as complex-simple, relative-absolute and so forth, which are ultimate or metaphysical contraries. The two poles or contrasts of each set stand or fall together. Neither pole is to be denied or explained away or regarded as "unreal." If either pole is real, the contrast itself, i.e., the two poles together, is also real. Although only one expresses the total reality, its correlative also says something about that reality since it is included in the other pole. There is a basic asymmetry or one-sided dependence: what is concrete includes what is abstract, not vice-versa. As a result, metaphysical categories as exemplified by concrete realities are always to be found in pairs. No concrete individual is merely simple, it is also complex. There is no such thing as pure effect. The same entity is, in another aspect, also a cause. No concrete entity can be said to be solely necessary for in a different

context it is also contingent. No happening is merely a synthesis, it is also creative.

The pairing of metaphysical categories runs through Hartshorne's metaphysical system. He does not see any contradiction in ascribing opposite metaphysical categories to the same reality provided they refer to different aspects of that reality. According to him the law of non-contradiction is incorrectly formulated as "no subject can have the same predicates p and not-p at the same time." What needs to be made explicit is they cannot be applied *in the same respect*. Hartshorne explains that a person can change in some respects without changing in every way and the world may be finite spatially and infinite temporally. In all of these the predication of contrasting attributes is not on the same ontological level for one set refers to the concrete aspect while the other to the abstract.

Turning now to his metaphysical scheme, it should be clear at this stage that reality for Hartshorne consists of events or happenings, not substances. The concept of creative synthesis is in fact a description of activity or of action rather than of things. It is for this reason that the term "process" has also been used with reference to his philosophy inasmuch as process or becoming, rather than being, is the fundamental reality. Reality thus is a series of events or activities or processes, interconnected in creative synthesis.

Hartshorne introduces a metaphysical distinction which has a bearing on the concept of creative synthesis. Calling the concrete state of any reality its actuality, Hartshorne (1961, 258) says that actuality is always *more* than bare existence: "All existence … is the 'somehow actualized' status of a nature in a suitable actuality, this actuality being always more determinate than the bare truth *that* the nature exists, i.e., in some actual state." *That* the defined abstract nature is somehow concretely actualized is what Hartshorne understands by existence. *How* it is actalized, i.e., in what particular state or with what particular content, is what is meant by actuality. The abstract definition of something, its essence, exists if and only if it is actualized or concretized somehow or is in some concrete form. However, one cannot deduce actuality which is concrete from an essence which is the abstract definition of the thing. In other words, actuality *never* follows from essence. Thus, the essence "humanity" exists if there are men, no matter which men or what states are actualized. But from "humanity" one cannot ascertain which men are actualized.[4] There is a manifest difference between existence (the truth *that* an abstraction is somehow concretely embodied) and actuality (*how* that embodiment occurs).

Since actuality is concrete, it is finite. This means that some possibilities are left out and thus prevented from being actualized. Actual reality in all cases is limited. Actualization is determination which in turn implies partial negation. It is the acceptance of limitation. It means choosing this and therefore not that. Concrete actuality must always be competitive, it must at all times exclude something else which could be equally concrete. Thus, as events come together or are "synthesized," other events are

being excluded. It would be more accurate in this metaphysics to say that the resulting synthesis comes into actuality (rather than into existence).

Towards a Philosophy of Action

Hartshorne's concept of creative synthesis, which is offered as an alternative interpretation of causality, has implications for a philosophy of action that steers away from complete determinism as well as from extreme indeterminism. Each and every action is regarded as to some extent free or spontaneous—in the metaphysical sense—and thus it can never be regarded as totally predicted or controlled. There is therefore a genuine novelty in every action. Clearly, this is at the opposite end to materialism, behaviourism or physicalism. On the other hand, a certain amount of givenness also exists because every action is partially, although in various degrees, influenced or shaped by various factors which preceded it. So while there is indeed true freedom, that freedom is never absolute. These other factors, which are other actions, restrict the actualisation of that free action. They determine to some extent the specific way in which the action comes into play. Again, this would be in opposition to theories which uphold or espouse total freedom of action.

Causality as *creative synthesis* means that every action is an effect as well as a cause. In relation to previous actions which had some influence in its coming into actuality, it is an effect. This is not only in temporal terms but also in metaphysical terms. That is to say, the relationship between antecedent actions and the present one is asymmetrical: the action as effect has no influence whatsoever on the previous actions. In relation to subsequent actions, on which it has some influence, it is a contributing cause. Depending then on which is the point of reference, every action is a cause and an effect, causality being essentially a kind of relationship between actions.

It may seem paradoxical, but in this philosophy of action, this means that every activity is also a form of passivity. It initiates further activity while being a recipient of other activities. Activity and passivity are therefore integral to the nature of action itself, there being no pure act or pure receptivity. This interpretation therefore rejects the traditional notion of *actus purus*.[5] It would also be in opposition to complete passivity advocated by some philosophical schools of thought.

A philosophy of action is usually understood as referring to the actions of human beings, Aquinas' distinction between *actus humanus* and *actus hominis* notwithstanding. In Hartshorne's metaphysics, actions or activities pervade the whole of reality. There is a difference in kind between the actions of humans and those of non-humans. But action is ascribed to all forms of reality, including those at the lowest levels. Here Hartshorne finds much support in contemporary physics which rejects the attribution of pure physicality to reality.

Such a philosophy of action would have an impact on, among others, ethical theory. If ethical responsibility, for instance, is measured not just

by one's intention but also by the amount of control that the agent has on one's action, then it seems that one must also take into consideration the nature of the action itself. In many cases our understanding of causality shapes our attribution of responsibility. In this interpretation of causality as creative synthesis, action is both given as well as free. If freedom is necessary for ethical responsibility, then every action has ethical significance since it has an element of freedom. Action is not merely the necessary or expected effect of circumstantial or societal factors. It means that every action carries a certain amount of ethical worth. It should be noted, however, that here it is the action itself (and not just the agent in the Aristotelian sense that is free). Because it is free it could have been otherwise; because it could have been otherwise, there is a need to account for the actuality of the action. In this sense no action can be regarded as "value-free." It is good to remind ourselves that since there is a hierarchy of freedoms, as explained above, it would be wrong to conclude that ethical responsibility is being attributed to all forms of creative synthesis, merely that it has ethical worth.

At the same time, however, such a philosophy of action recognizes that no action is totally free either; thus, the ethical dimension can never be regarded as exhaustive, i.e., complete. Because every action is a result of the interplay of various other actions, it is always influenced. Such an interpretation accepts, but only partially, the claim of those who insist on the role of external forces which leave every action determined. There is some truth in the claim that praise and blame—to use Aristotle's terms— must take into account that one's action is not completely one's own after all. Hartshorne's concept of creative synthesis, which is a metaphysical one, translated into a philosophy of action can provide a possible grounding of an ethical theory that is cognizant of both freedom and restriction.

In such a philosophy of action, which makes a distinction between the abstract and the concrete, one can also see in discussions of rights, e.g., freedom of speech, that one can indeed uphold the existence of such an abstract right but the concrete exercise of such a right may have to be more circumspect. This point has become particularly relevant in the debates regarding the alleged freedom of speech which was used to justify the publication of what was considered by many as insulting cartoons on a spiritual leader. The exercise of any right does not occur in a vacuum. The identification of the abstract with the concrete can lead not just to conceptual confusion but also to unfortunate tangible consequences.

The distinction between the "creative" and the "synthesis" aspects of our action can be helpful too in grounding the notion of responsibility towards the future, e.g., in environmental ethics, inasmuch as the givenness that we create by our actions now will shape the kind of situation that future generations will have. We owe it to those who come after us to ensure that their environment is suitable for their own development. Just as we are the recipients of what had happened in the past, we are contributors—in a real way—to what will be the future. It is our efforts, or lack of them, that certain possibilities are or are not actualised for others.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper I have attempted to elaborate and develop Charles Hartshorne's concept of creative synthesis as an alternative interpretation of causality and have outlined specific areas in the philosophy of action that his insights can be brought to bear . There are, of course, several other areas in which this notion can be fruitfully examined. But it seems to me, as we discuss various theories of action that his philosophy can make a positive contribution inasmuch as he addresses some of the more troublesome issues in the philosophy of action.

NOTES

1. Paper read at the International Conference on Theories of Action organised by SophiaEuropa and held at the Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, 6-9 October 2006.

2. For a complete bibliography of Charles Hartshorne's writings, see my *Religion, reason and God: Essays in the philosophies of Charles Hartshorne and A. N. Whitehead* (2004, 195-223).

3. For a particularly useful work on this point, cf. Reginald T. Cahill (2005, 205).

4. Hartshorne (1962, 276), however, holds that while actuality can never be deduced even in the divine case, bare existence, the 'somehow realized', does not follow from God's essence. For this reason Hartshorne sees some value in the ontological argument.

5. The implication of this interpretation of causality for our conception of God's reality is discussed in my *God in process thought: A study in Charles Hartshorne's concept of God* (1985).

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BOOK REVIEW

David Berreby. *Us and them:*
Understanding your tribal mind
New York: Little, Brown and
Company, 2005, 370 pp.

I remember canceling dinner appointments and other items from my "to-do" list one Tuesday night last year because I was gripped by the trailer of HBO Films' *Sometime in April*, and I did not want to miss it. I thought it was only an interesting fiction, one of those movies with a plot deep enough to make one reflect. Much to my surprise (and chagrin at my ignorance) this movie is actually based on the true story of the massacre of Tutsis by Hutus in the genocide that happened in Rwanda in 1994. In a span of 100 days, the Hutus hacked with machetes, shot with rifles, and burned alive close to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus. I remember reading about this regrettable event back in 1994 but that year has become such a remote time in 2006 and, Rwanda, such a remote place to someone like me in Manila, Philippines. It is deeply embarrassing and, yet, this is still one of the issues discussed by the journalist-academic David Berreby in his book, *Us and them: Understanding your tribal mind.* Although I can feel emotions for the tragedy, my physical distance from Rwandans allows for these emotions to be felt in detachment as well. Berreby explains that this is due to an inherent and automatic system in me that classifies the Rwandans as belonging to another group, not part of my group. They kill each other, we do not.

The open hostility between the two tribes started when two Hutu presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed. Their plane was blown up by a rocket from the ground, although as to who launched the rocket—Hutu or Tutsi—no one knows for certain, as some reports would say Tutsis while others, Hutus. But the relationship between the two tribes has always been volatile, since, commentators say, the Western colonizers have inadvertently pitted them against each other. The Hutus have been ruling since 1959 while the Tutsis were favored by their Belgian colonizers (see http://www.hbo.com/films/sometimesinapril/synopsis; accessed: 12 February 2007). When the riot broke out, Western countries did not do much to help. They refused to call it a "genocide" which would have allowed the United Nations to intervene immediately. Belgium withdrew its troops while, with France and America, rescuing only their own citizens. None of the Rwandans were rescued. When it was finally over, the then President Clinton and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan apologized for their inaction and for ignoring reports of planned riots that came to their

offices beforehand (see hjttp://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/
evil/etc/slaughter.html; accessed: 12 February 2007).

Why are these two tribes so hostile to each other? The libertarian
Murray N. Rothbart (http://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/ir/Ch43.html;
accessed: 12 February 2007) wonders in an essay:

> The crucial point is that, in both Rwanda and Burundi, Hutus
> and Tutsis have coexisted for centuries; the Tutsi are about 15
> percent of the total population, the Hutu about 85 percent.
> And yet consistently, over the centuries, the Tutsi have totally
> dominated, and even enserfed, the Hutu. How are we to explain
> this consistent pattern of domination by a small minority? Could
> it be—dare I say it—that along with being taller, slimmer, more
> graceful and noble-looking, the Tutsi are far more i-n-t-e-l-l-i-
> g-e-n-t than the Hutu? And yet what else explains this
> overriding fact? Note: as a libertarian, I neither advocate nor
> condone the centuries-old pattern of domination by Tutsi over
> Hutu. I would love to see them coexist peacefully, participating
> in a division of labor joined together by a free market. But there
> is not a chance of a whoop in Hell for such a coexistence to
> take place.

The reason for this, according to David Berreby, is the human being's
penchant to categorize people into "human-kinds" and to stick to them no
matter how mindless the categorizations are. This is just how our "tribal
mind" works. He himself describes in the first pages of his book how, on 6
May 1994, Tutsis in Rwanda tried to take refuge in a convent supervised
by mother superior, Sister Gertrude.

> . . . Sister Gertrude called in the Hutu militia. Hundreds of the
> Tutsis were shot, hacked, or burned to death. But Sister Gertrude
> did not turn over the convent's Tutsi nuns. Their veils protected
> them. Seeing this, a nineteen-year-old woman named Aline,
> the niece of a nun, begged for a veil. Sister Gertrude refused.
> Seven years later, Sister Gertrude was convicted in Belgium
> of war crimes.

Berreby explains the nun's strange judgment of the situation by
showing that she is a Hutu and therefore would sympathize with the Hutus
and turn in the Tutsis. On the other hand, she is a nun and she did not turn
in the Tutsi nuns because they belong to one group. However, by virtue
of her being a Christian, it would have been noble of her to refuse the
killing of any human being.

In exploring possible explanations for situations such as this, David
Berreby looks everywhere, from philosophy to anthropology, biology to
neuroscience. *Us and them* recounts the history of our awareness of
tribalism, its interesting and uncanny effects, and our stubbornness in
hanging on to it in spite of the fact that it almost always proves senseless.

We have the need, Berreby claims, to put people into what we think are neat categories that will predict for us what those people will do, and thus tell us what we ought to do about them. They are humankinds or stereotypes. People other than us are Tutsi, Hutu, Hindu, Buddhists, Aryans, Muslims, Jews, Archers, Eagles, Tigers, Warriors, Falcons, Tamaraws, Bulldogs, Republicans, Democrats, Liberals, Filipinos, British, Americans, Koreans, Germans, French, preachers, teachers, gangsters, white, black, yellow, good, bad, and a million other categories. We have hospitable Filipinos, liberated Americans, serious Germans, zealous Muslims, conservative Chinese, anarchist free-thinkers, etc. Naturally, each person simultaneously belongs to a different category; for instance, one may be a mother, teacher, sister, daughter, Buddhist, Archer, and Filipino all at the same time from different perspectives. But when we have chosen how to view a person, we often think and act as if her personality is monolithic, unless certain significant instances force us to change our view and reclassify this person. This is how we conclude whether a person is one of *us* or one of *them*. And if a person is one of us, then he or she is definitely one of the good guys, on our side, while one of them will be among the bad guys, always against us.

We look at people, decide, based on initial impressions, which box to put them in, and characterize them or expect them to act accordingly because we believe that people of such a category have essential traits and behavior. Berreby shows, however, that in the 1700s David Hume had already observed that contrary to the popular notion that people who are alike group together, people actually decide to group together first and then act according to how the group is defined. Many a story has already been told on how a person is first given a label and then changes his or her behavior accordingly. The shy girl becomes a snotty coed as she accidentally gets adopted by the popular clique in the campus. In the olden times, captives who used to be royalty in their own tribes are "broken-in" to become their captors' slaves and did behave as slaves. Yet, when we use a category on a person, we believe that he or she is essentially such, without history, without any chance for change.

There are, however, categories that get phased out. The classification of people into phlegmatic and nervous types, for instance, has been abandoned earlier on. For a while, they were replaced by Type A and Type B personalities, referring to the tense and the mellow types respectively. But these categories have also lost their popularity and, according to Berreby's research, have not been used in any study or report since 2004. People previously classified into these, however, have not died or been lost. They were simply recategorized. But recategorization itself does not easily happen, especially if the old categories are a result of a certain kind of stigma. People find it hard to let go and forget and will insist on their prejudices against people who have been, at one time or another, associated with something unpleasant, uncivilized or unsanitary. And Berreby is quick to note, with citations of so many examples, that categories vary from race to race, culture to culture, nation to nation. A group of tattooed and pierced individuals in America may be a sign of freedom and independence

and may be more welcome there than in China where such may be looked upon as desecration of the body and blatant disregard for and insult to ancient customs.

Even categories produced by science changes, as so many medical mistakes in the past proves. Every scientific endeavor, says Berreby, is influenced by the spirit of the times in which the scientist lives, especially by the latest technology available. "Nowadays, we like networks as explanations for human behavior, because we're impressed with the Internet. Plato had compared the mind to a chariot, Sigmund Freud's images of high-pressure emotions being blocked and redirected come from an era of locomotives and other industrial machinery." One might therefore see that human kinds are like paradigms in Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of scientific revolution*. They get outmoded and dropped. But not without a fight. As Berreby shows, although labels are temporary, they have the feel of permanence. "The mind, having learned a code, is reluctant to stop relying on it. So despised groups can get stuck." Without knowing the original cause of the rift between their families, generation after generation of Montagues and Capulets will fight just because it has been the way things are. Such is the case between the Hutu and Tutsi. It is always "us" versus "them."

Berreby asks what it is about the mind that makes us see, believe, and fight about humankinds. First, he goes back to the "discoveries" of the Victorian polymath Sir Francis Galton, who insisted that the mysteries about human kinds could be solved by proper measuring and counting. He showed, for instance, in the 1870s "the portrait of a type" by individually photographing many members of one category in the same position, in the same spot. Differing details like moles or the unique shape of a nose were blurred so that only their shared traits showed up on the image. With this process, Galton was able to show type portraits of a Victorian criminal, a sailor, military officers, and other human kinds. Others who followed suit were able to show the differences in the type portraits of people of different races. Yet, Berreby, looking at those pictures now in his own spatio-temporal location, claimed that he couldn't see any of these differences pointed out in the study.

It is interesting to note that this is most likely the reason that the ideal-language philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein started revising his initial views on the picture-theory of language he laid out in the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* and turned to the study of language-games later on in his life. Berreby informs us that Wittgenstein had a composite photo made of himself and his sisters "yielding a compound Wittgenstein of their shared features." In *Philosophical investigations* he was already using the metaphor of "family resemblance" that the Galton image showed.

The Belgian astronomer Adolphe Quetelet introduced a new human kind in 1835: the height-weight proportional person. He, however, went a step further than Galton in identifying the "average man" as the measure of moral and aesthetic goodness. An outlier in a bell curve becomes a target for suspicions and is looked upon as more likely to be immoral and ugly. It does not take so much critical thinking to notice that the link between the bell

curve, on the one hand, and goodness and beauty, on the other, is quite absurd. Yet, Berreby observes, it seems like a human mind's blind spot.

The mind likes to average. It likes to organize data into manageable units of construction. Like Galton's photographic plates, it blurs differences and sharpens similarities for easy classification. This mind, it seems, is averse to see individuals and will always go for the type in any given situation. Thus, the cliché, "birds of a feather, flock together," or "tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are."

But our human typing, although immediate and (seemingly) necessary, is a complex process, nevertheless. The kind of categorizing we do, says Berreby, depends on the needs of the situation. He relates several stories of people, usually categorized in a certain way and shunned, but becoming accepted eventually due to significant circumstances that make people change their views about them and therefore recategorize them as "one of us" rather than "one of them." A white captive of Native Americans who normally looked upon black people as "one of them" befriended a black co-prisoner when he realized that they shared the same English language that the Native Americans didn't speak. From skin color that made them different, the categorization turned to language that grouped them together. There is, therefore, a purpose in our assigning of human kinds or stereotypes.

An interesting experiment in a boys' summer camp in Oklahoma shows this clearly. The group was divided into two, which immediately turned into rival groups after being given a situation which they could work on separately. The rivalry worsened as group identities became more and more defined. The boys became extremely competitive, verging on violent. However, on the last week of camp, the boys were given a situation where they would have to work together or else lose the fun—help each other fix the truck or they don't get anywhere, or work together to fix the pipe or nobody gets water. As it turned out, the groups lost their boundaries and members of one started intermingling, even eating with members of the other. The success of the experiment showed that our biases change as our immediate goals change. This is another explanation why two warring camps, given a mutual enemy, will ally with one another. The mind always has an "eye" for practicality.

Another interesting experiment involving stereotypes involved Asian women. While there is prejudice against women as being less intelligent than men, there is prejudice for Asians as being better in mathematics than most. Asian women were asked to take a math exam. Those who were reminded that they were Asian did much better that those who were simply reminded that they were women. The power of suggestion is clearly unbeatable.

Without categorizing, however, we will not be able to make moral judgments. Berreby gives an example of a father and a daughter walking along a row of shops. We see the father go into a store and the daughter walks on. Without categorizing, we will be immune to what might be happening between the two. If we judge them both to be responsible adults, then fine. But what if the daughter is only five years old? What kind of a father is the adult man? What are we going to do upon seeing

this? What if the daughter is an adult and the father already senile? What kind of a daughter is this who will let her father wander about? What actions are we going to take for the sake of the old man?

In every case like this, Berreby shows that we need certain proximity to be able to decide on moral grounds. He gives an example of a man who loves his expensive car so much he cares for it and spends lavishly on it as if it were a member of his family. If, while crossing a railroad, he sees a child lost and about to be hit by a train, he has to decide right there and then to save the child and lose his car (for by saving the child he has to make the train switch rails that will make it hit his car) or drive on and let the child die. The car-loving person may just give up his car to save someone who is not part of his immediate group—his family. While this same person, when asked to donate $200 for indigent children in Africa may flatly refuse to do so. It's the emotional distance that does the trick. He doesn't see the children dying, while this child is right in front of him. He could delay decision when it comes to African children but if he delayed decision in his present situation, he would have a dead child in his hands. One may feel bad about the miseries of others, as people of different countries did over the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and yet, not do anything about it. Our categories change from moment to moment and we act based on the perceived immediate need.

One wonders what Mencius, who claimed that human nature is basically good, or perhaps Xun Zi, who claimed that human nature is basically evil, would say about Berreby's insights. When it comes to acting based on an assigned human kind, the boundaries between good and evil are blurred as they take different contexts.

On the other hand, to be at the receiving end of human typing could be a harrowing experience. A stranger wanting to join a group must know the ways of the group or learn it as quickly as possible or else she will be left alone, at best; persecuted at worst. Berreby writes,

> Such is the soul-wearing state of foreignness—not knowing the words, not knowing how to behave. French has a word for it, *depaysement:* decountrification. Words and deeds are what make you real to other people and reveal you to them. Not knowing the words, not knowing the deeds, you become a living shadow, alive but ignored for long stretches, like nobody's dog. Unable to take part in reciprocal exchanges that create and confirm dignity, you feel invisible.

The need to belong is so universal that we usually will run the extra mile just to find our legitimate place in a group. The continued existence of sororities and fraternities are proofs of this. That there is physical pain and a lot of sacrificing involved in initiation rituals show that the need to belong is greater than the lure of physical, emotional and mental pleasure. In our endless stereotyping, it is most important that we not only distinguish a "them" but, first and foremost, that we can identify an "us."

For the mythologist Joseph Campbell, a person is willing to go through what might be a painful initiation rite precisely because the harder it is, the fiercer one's belongingness becomes. One is marked, and therefore, one will not forget. Every act in the process is meaningful and suffused with the sacred. The group welcoming the initiate applauds his or her courage. But unlike what Berreby shows, to the mythic mind, this is a positive experience. The mark is not a stigma. It is a psychological doorstep into a world of responsibility. One will act the way one is expected to now that he or she belongs to a different group. In rites of passage, this means that the initiated person is not anymore a child and therefore will be a responsible adult that will contribute productively to the tribe.

This is, in fact, what Berreby shows in his book. However, while Campbell refers to the truly mythic consciousness, Berreby describes tribalism in the context of the contemporary mind that has lost its innocence and yet, has not learned the value of critical thinking. One might say that for Campbell, a tribe will go to war with another tribe for a good reason. A hunter will shoot a buffalo because it is needed to help make the tribe survive. But each activity requires the proper sacred ritual. There is an apology beforehand and a thanksgiving after. Everything, a person, an animal, a tree is looked upon as a person. (The Native Americans would say, Grandmother tree, Brother Eagle, for instance.) Modern tribalism is completely secular. We fight another because we perceive him or her as less than human. We kill animals because, well, they are not human and they are very useful.

In explaining the roots of this need in human beings, Berreby goes into a lengthy discussion about genetics, Darwinian evolution, and neuroscience that try to determine which parts of the brain and body are responsible for this activity. The erudition he shows here is either astonishing or annoying, depending on one's temperament. The examples seem to be endless and yet may be, in actuality, redundant. Because none of the scientific theories he mentions are ever conclusive, we are still left with mere speculations. In the end, Berreby pits the theories of the Universalist against those of the Pluralist and shows us what conclusions we may derive from each perspective. In conclusion, he tells us that whatever the root cause of our stereotyping, the fact that it is there and we can't help engaging in it does not have to lead to any negative result. Stereotyping is neither good nor bad unless we act on its implications. The book is a deep well of trivia about our stereotyping habit but the closest Berreby gets to telling us what to do about it is this:

> . . . the code is in your head, where you make and remake your version, every day. Human nature shaped that power, with its special opportunities and vulnerabilities, but it's you who wield it. Your humankind code makes nothing happen, for good or ill, unless you choose to act. Ethnic tensions, religious strife, political conflict, clan rivalries, and the like have never harmed anyone and never will. *People* do the harm.

On the whole, Berreby's *Us and Them* is an interesting read, one that might also be classified generally as a work on philosophical anthropology and therefore a fitting text for a course like Philosophy of the Person, for instance. Although one gets the feeling that for so simple a conclusion, the book could have been made much shorter. To be fair, Berreby's thesis did not really promise an answer to questions other than where our stereotyping habit comes from. And if even this was not completely answered only goes to show the limits of science and its variable theories. After all, it is subtitled "understanding your tribal mind." That it described people's natural tendency to classify and articulated my personal feelings about the Hutu versus Tutsi genocide of 1994, makes it a book worth reading. Berreby admits in his brief autobiography:

> All my life I have encountered people's assumptions about who and what I am—assumptions that were based on my appearance and actions; assumptions that were wrong. I was born in France, but my mother was American. My father's Jewish; my mother was not. English is my native language, but I briefly spoke French first. I'm a graduate of an Ivy League college, but also of a chaotic and untraditional high school run by hippies and idealists. That school was in California, where you might think I grew up, judging by the way I speak; but I've spent most of my life in New York City.
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> . . . .
>
> *Us And Them* is a book about research and ideas. But I suppose its emotional roots are in my struggles to cope with people who think their way of dividing up humanity must be the only one around. (www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm?author_number=1221; accessed: 12 February 2007)

True enough, what caught my attention that made me buy this book is the term "tribal mind" in its subtitle. It connotes a certain primitivism that we can contrast against the sophisticated ideas of our (post-) modern period. Most of Berreby's examples will show that tribalism must be condemned and contemporary leaders have condemned it as the cause of terrorism that puts the world in this state of misery and paranoia. This is why, all the more, I believe the conclusions could have been strengthened and certain solutions attempted.

A philosophical consideration of Berreby's research may yield many other insights that will serve as a very good springboard for round table discussions. Those interested in analytic philosophy may find in it exciting arguments about the philosophy of the mind as Berreby ventures into them in the hope of finding the roots of our typing humans in the nature of the mind. Linguistic analysis also plays a role in it in tracing certain stigma attached to a type name. Those fond of discussing issues in Ethics will find here a rich source of examples for ethical dilemmas and moral situations that still need to be understood more deeply. The pigeonholing of people into good guys and bad guys, the typical identification of one's group (us,

we) as the good guys, and the antagonism that usually ensue between "us" and "them" will make philosophical circles thrive.

However, I believe that Berreby is closest to Kant when he shows that for one reason or another, we are stuck with this habit and that we need to do it as soon as we learn how to do it, because human kind typing is necessary for us to function well as human beings. As Kant would say, these are the limits of human knowledge. We stereotype or else we don't understand anything. There are just too many individuals in this world to reckon with that we will not have enough time to organize our experiences if we didn't ignore the differences and emphasize the similarities among people who could be classified into one group. It is a very effective shortcut to understanding an experience. Perhaps, it is—as Kant's *a priori* intuitions and concepts—the very conditions that allow our encounter with others.

Us and them can also be another argument to show why individualism should be favored. The philosophies of Nietzsche and Sartre come to mind. Nietzsche has encouraged us to go "beyond good and evil," not allow ourselves to be defined by society's categories. Sartre has once told us to "break the frames" and create our selves using our own standards, our own terms. The theme of *Us and them* is an example of why Sartre says, "hell is the Other." Human typing, when the typing is generally on the "them" side, is a process of "othering." The one on the receiving end suffers the most if he or she lets the labels stick. Berreby would probably say that for most people, acquiring a label, if it is on the same of the good (we, us) might be a source of a peaceful and happy life. Yet, this is the reason that existentialists did not consider happiness to be the goal. Authenticity, for them, is much more rewarding but may not necessarily be a happy reward. To belong to a group, one may be safe but at the expense of the self. She becomes anonymous, resembling everybody else (again, like Galton's composite image). To Nietzsche and Sartre, it is better to stand alone and be true to oneself. In this case, one becomes a class all by herself.

Of course, on the other side of the fence, we have Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas who might be able to offer the answer to Berreby's unexplored question of what to do about our attitude toward human kinds. Tribalism in this context is a clear case of treating the self (we, us) as subject but the other (them) as object. But no relationship will thrive in this kind of setup. Thus, Buber discusses different ways of relating to another, leading to a description of what it is to have a genuine dialogue with an Other. Being a Jew, Buber knows how it is to be seen as an Other. And yet, he claims, that in his lifetime there have been many circumstances when he accomplished a sincere dialogue between persons. He even recounts in one of his works how, in a conference, amidst arguments between Jews and Christians, he and a Christian stood up and embraced each other.

Marcel, on the other hand, espouses the practice of reflection in order to see the other as a real subject, like himself. Judgments on another, he shows, may actually also apply to oneself. And thus, the existential phenomenology he proposes gives way to a more proper understanding of the self, the other, and the situation at hand. This can be accomplished if

we can keep ourselves open and available (*disponible*) to the other. To Berreby's "it's up to you" to act on your judgment of a human kind, Marcel would say, "stop and reflect first."

Emmanuel Levinas's "epiphany of the Face of the Other," might be able to explain the situation of the car-loving man mentioned earlier. What he experienced was the "surprise" as he encountered the child in that situation. It was the child's face that made the appeal to him to be saved. And the man may feel the guilt at having lived his life without consideration for the life of this child facing him at the moment. In his shame, he cannot but become absolutely responsible for her.

These three offer solutions to the problematic treatment of the Other. All of them confirm that the Other must not be looked upon as a mere object. In fact, to treat the Other as a mere object is where all the difficulties arise. As Berreby points out, everyone who is not "us" is "them" and therefore, inferior and always against us. Yet, what Marcel, Buber and Levinas require, most people will not do. It seems that with this automatic human typing ability, human beings lose the capability to think. As Berreby comments, most of it is emotional and therefore will not align with reason.

Most people are thought-lazy. Most people are averse to reflection. They would rather be told what to do than think for themselves. A case in point is found in the book itself. Berreby recounts an experiment where individuals were each included in a group and asked to look for a longest line in a picture. Each one believed himself or herself to be part of a group but actually, apart from him or her, the rest have been planted there to give the wrong answer. Most individuals, the experiment showed, although making an initially correct choice, would eventually change to the wrong answer that the rest of the group gave the facilitator. It is precisely this kind of persons that philosophers lament: those that go for the crowd's opinion no matter how absurd rather than be alone in his or her correct assessment of a situation.

Thinking takes time. To consider each and every member of a group to be a unique individual with unique needs is not only time consuming, it is also tedious. Just look at how any institution tends to be rules-based in dealing with its people. It is easier to deal with a few groups than with a hundred individuals. People tend to be very economical with their thoughts. Thus, the pragmatic value of stereotypes.

In all of Berreby's examples in the book, we will see that intellectual cowardice and laziness are what allow this perennial battle between "us" and "them." And his venturing into all sorts of scientific experiments only shows that what we need is a lesson on critical thinking. Think twice. Think why. Do not assume. Get to know the person. Change your initial opinion into a more thought-out, well-reasoned one. All these might have improved Berreby's conclusion.

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