
Editors' Introduction

I am thus referring to a university that would be what it always should have been or always should have represented, that is, from its inception and in principle: sovereignly autonomous, unconditionally free in its institution, sovereign in its speech, in its writing, in its thinking.¹

Welcome to the maiden issue of *Filocracia: An Online Journal of Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies*!

After a lengthy preparation, we, the creators of *Filocracia*, are very pleased to present to you another free and independent source of philosophical knowledge that is easily accessible online for Philosophy scholars, students, and enthusiasts.

But, why another journal of Philosophy?

In an age where the proliferation of technological gadgets have fast-tracked the lives of everyone, the demands for our increasing commitments to the effects of this vast global machinery called the internet have made us all *enframed* (to use Heidegger's famous term) within a tele-techno-capitalist world system as "standing-reserves."² While all is not hopeless, the future remains bleak for those of us who are caught within the impersonal mechanisms of fate and the endless greed of most of the materially privileged ones. The domestic phenomena of Filipinos working abroad (OFWs) caused by brain-drain and the rat-race, the exploitation of children and women economically and sexually, the destruction of the pristine

¹ Jacques Derrida, "The Future of the Profession or the University without Condition (Thanks to the "Humanities," or What *could take place* Tomorrow) in *Derrida and the Humanities*, edited by Tom Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 24-57; 35.

² See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell (New York: Harper-Collins, 1993).

environment in the name of technological and even national progress, and the despicable commodification of human labor and education are only some of the unfortunate effects of the technological domination that has come to characterize our present times.

It is then with the modest view of being another alternative site or place for discourse and questioning that we envision *Filocracia* to be. Believing in the basic power of philosophical discourse to question the complacent order of things, we want to share the burden of critiquing the established structures in order to make philosophic subversions as integral parts of the happening of truth(s). Particularly, the journal aims to produce a certain positionality that is not limited to institutional affiliations, regional identities, or nationalist aspirations. Indeed, if it has a lofty ideal, it would be one that shares the ideal of the university "without conditions," i.e., "sovereignly autonomous, unconditionally free in its institution, sovereign in its speech, in its writing, in its thinking."

The initial articles presented in this maiden issue reveal a certain philosophic bias. In a way, these articles reveal the heavy influence that Western continental philosophy has on the way current philosophical education in the Philippines is carried out, and to a greater extent, on the way the minds of the people in the academe are shaped. However, if one will look closely, they are also attempts to appropriate an essential truth of philosophical research: that one must never be limited by the knowledge that is given to you from the outside, one must also be a producer of knowledge. And this entails the possibility of production, even outside of the university, in a *university outside the university*, of an idea of reason not limited by tenure, research grants, or academic politics.

At the outset of this maiden issue, Federico José Lagdameo "From *Machenschaft* to *Gestell*: Heidegger's Critique of Modernity" offers us an interlaced reading of two central concepts in Martin Heidegger's thought: *Machenschaft* and *Gestell*. By tracing the link and the nuances between these terms, Lagdameo is able to give us an easier, albeit more strategic approach, to the Heideggerian corpus centered on the technological drama why the question of Being remains unasked. In the same spirit, Jeffrey Bartilet's "Foucault, Discourse, and the Call for Reflexivity" illustrates the manifold facets of discourse in Michel Foucault's thinking and the need for a certain reflexivity in the conduct of discourse. This model, European in a sense, suggests that truth, in all its forms, is not a simple and objective end-result of communal discourse but one that is always already implicated within

given power-relations that effect/affect its construction. Illusions about objectivity can then be removed if one is able to take heed of the Foucauldian call for reflexivity.

Rev. Fr. Prudencio Edralin's "Ricoeur's Existential Phenomenology" carefully presents the important trajectory of the eminent philosopher Paul Ricoeur's thought from eidetic phenomenology (as a search for essences) towards a phenomenological hermeneutics. Edralin illustrates that the movement from a transcendental critique to an immanent one is a concretizing gesture that enfleshes phenomenology with the concrete human dimensions necessary for an existential phenomenology.

Guillermo Dionisio's "Natural Law Tradition and Confucian Culture: Beyond East-West Divide" offers an insightful and interesting contribution to the ongoing dialogue between western and eastern philosophies today. In his article, Dionisio claims that the usual theoretically constructed distinctions between what is Eastern and Western tend to collapse if one is able to remove the selective perceptions and misinterpretations offered by regional, nationalist thinking. Through an examination of the concepts of *right* and *duty*, it is only possible to isolate the West's Natural Law Tradition and Confucian Culture as two sides of the same coin.

The next three articles in this maiden issue deal with, arguably, one of contemporary philosophy's most important figures: Jacques Derrida. Mark Joseph Calano's "Derrida's Intimations of Heidegger's *Sein zum Tode*" offers a penetrating analysis of an important, but seldom considered, theme that prominently figures in the thought of these two colossal thinkers—death. By articulating the debt that Derrida has to the Heideggerian corpus, it is possible to understand the deconstructive project as a search for an "(im)proper" phenomenology of the "other" that takes into account the concrete suffering of life vis-à-vis the "impossible" good that is *to-come*. To do justice to the encounter with the "other" requires a renewed appreciation of life and death as gifts within the context of absolute responsibility. Within the same search, Michael Roland Hernandez's "The Silence of the Sexless *Dasein*: Jacques Derrida and the Sex "To-Come" explores another relatively ignored connection between Heidegger and Derrida: that of sex. In this article, Hernandez follows the lead in exploring Heidegger's silence about the question of *Dasein*'s sexuality. The neutralization of *Dasein*'s sexuality is not a denial of its sexual existence but a re-inscription that frees *Dasein* from the limits of traditional sexual binarity. By exploring this sexual neutrality, one is brought to the originary power of the *Dasein* that is the

source of a richness peculiar only to human beings. By going beyond traditional physical dualism, a deconstructive understanding of sex moves into the appreciation of multiple sexualities, or of a sex "to-come" that is not limited by biology, anthropology, or performance. In the end, however, the author warns us against the violent politics of a cultural sexual discourse that is blind to its own shortcomings.

Virgilio Rivas' "Derrida and Žižek: On the Intersections of *Différance* and Parallax" is a witting rejoinder to the question of responsibility proffered in the two immediately preceding articles, this time from the perspective of human survival and cannibalism. Using Žižek's critique of Derrida, Rivas excellently tackles the dilemma of human responsibility in an age of technological domination. The question of how human beings can survive, as responsible humans, is problematized in the face of the only option that they have. Using this trope of cannibalism as the fundamental structure of human life, this article proposes the overcoming of egoism if the human race is to survive.

One feature of this online journal is its "Area Studies" section that caters to researches that are decidedly local and ethnographic. For this maiden issue, we are very proud to introduce two pioneering studies in Bikol cultural studies: Jesus Cyril Conde et al.'s "Hybrid Christianity in the Oral Literature and Ethno-botany of the Agtas of Mount Asog in the Bikol Region of the Philippines" and Victor John Loquias' "A Linguistic Exploration of the Bikol Concept of *Tood*: Towards a Philosophical Framework for Education." These two latter articles reveal the potential for a rich interaction between indigenous philosophizing and the utilization of digested philosophical frameworks.

Conde et al.'s field research studies a hybrid form of belief in a reality composed of visible and invisible beings existing at the same space and time. In this reality, the belief in the power of plants and animals is instrumental for different relations between human beings and various invisible entities. The Bikol region is predominantly Christian due to its history as a part of Spanish colony. Yet, the mountain people of Asog believe in a reality in which indigenous culture overpowers Christianity. It is a cultural hybrid that shows the power and identity of Filipino post-colonial culture.

Meanwhile, Loquias' article explores the *Bikol* concept of *tood* as a philosophical framework for education. The English term "learning" may be equally enunciated in *Bikol* language as "*pagkanood*" whereas "practice" may be spoken "*pagtood*" and "friend" or "fellow" as "*katood*." *Pagkanood*, *pagtood*

and *katood* together become intertwined cognates because of the employment of the same root word *tood*. Although this root may have diverse usages and contexts in various parts of the region, it becomes a unifying and central concept for the three cognates.

We conclude this maiden issue with two book reviews: on Paul Patton's *Deleuze and the Political* by Raniel Reyes and on Slavoj Žižek's *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* by Jayson Jimenez.

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May *Filocracia* be one of these avenues where philosophy teachers, students, enthusiasts, and independent researchers can seek enlightenment [or not] and also, as a welcome space for a more fruitful dialogue for scholars not only in Philosophy but also in the Humanities and the Social Sciences. As we write our alternative histories, may we always continue to be disturbed by the questions that restore life to its original difficulty.³

The Editors

³ See John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 209.