

The 12th Asian Conference on Ethics,
Religion & Philosophy (ACERP2022)

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

ISSN: 2187-476X

Organised by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)
in association with the IAFOR Research Centre at Osaka
University and IAFOR's Global University Partners



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MARCH 29-31, 2022 | ONLINE FROM TOKYO, JAPAN

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy – ACERP 2022

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2187-476X



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The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)
Sakae 1-16-26-201
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi
Japan 460-0008
www.iafor.org

Table of Contents

<i>Reincarnation: Back From the Dead</i> Jean-Marie Decuyper	pp. 1 - 14
<i>NipponEthics Stakeholder Model- Understanding How Japanese Companies Manage Key Stakeholders</i> Yurika Uematsu Bhuiyan	pp. 15 - 27
<i>The Elevation of Luxury: Art Infusion and Artification as Vehicles for Creating Shared Value</i> Matt Johnson Robert Barlow Prince Ghuman	pp. 29 - 51
<i>An Appraisal of the Filipino Catholic Devotion to the Black Nazarene in the Light of New Evangelization</i> Joseph Albert DG Reyes	pp. 53 - 61
<i>Jesus the Economist: Envisioning God's Economy of Solidarity and Equality to Global Resilience</i> Simon Peter T. Balanquit	pp. 63 - 75
<i>Building Resilience Through Self-Care: Art and Aesthetic Wellness</i> Amy Lee	pp. 77 - 86
<i>The Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in The Formation of Faith, Morals, and Resiliency of Filipino Christian Character</i> Romeo N. Alvarez	pp. 87 - 106
<i>Rethinking the Principle of National Self-Determination: Toward a New Approach for the Question of Palestine</i> Hani Abdelhadi	pp. 107 - 117
<i>The Ethics of AUKUS: Diplomatic Duplicity and Proliferation Perils</i> Craig Mark	pp. 119 - 134
<i>AI Ethics in Next Generation Wireless Networks: A Philosophical Outlook</i> Rahul Jaiswal	pp. 135- 144
<i>Profiting From Polytheism: The Commodification of Mythical Beings During the Covid-19 Outbreak in Japan</i> Antonija Cavcic	pp. 145 - 154
<i>Zhuangzi and Plato: Language – World – Language</i> Raz Shpeizer	pp. 155 - 164

Reincarnation: Back From the Dead

Jean-Marie Decuyper, Independent Scholar, Belgium

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

It is in the nature of human beings to search for the meaning of life. In this connection the idea of reincarnation is steadily gaining greater credence in the West. In this essay the author takes a critical look at the various aspects of the reincarnation concept and presents the arguments of both its supporters and detractors. He continues by explaining why reincarnation is increasingly attractive to many people, examines the various possible research approaches and launches a plea to concentrate on the following fundamental question: could a properly constructed experiment settle the matter once and for all. Finally he gives a look ahead to the future of reincarnation research.

Keywords: Past Lives, Reincarnation, Soul, Spiritual Archaeology, Time Capsule

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1. Reincarnation: The Belief

The phenomenon we call a human being, according to some, is nothing more than a self-conscious body, a mass of cells that is aware of its existence.

When the nuclei of sperm and ovum melt together the genetic material of the biological parents is combined. The specific sequence of bases of the nucleic acids then form the code for the potential characteristics of the body, intellect and nature of a new individual. At the risk of oversimplifying one could say that the creation of a person is nothing more than the merger of two sets of macromolecules in favourable conditions, whereas its growth and development is to be described as a little gobbet of matter that undergoes a complicated series of chemical reactions.

If a person is just matter or at least has a markedly material nature, is any form of survival possible after the destruction of the body? In the strictly material view consciousness is merely an epiphenomenon of the brain: once the brain stops working, consciousness comes to a complete full stop. In this view believing in life after death is just wishful thinking by people who are unable to accept their mortality.

Christians look at things differently: they believe that once the physical body dies the immortal soul will continue to exist as a conscious entity. On the other hand, if the soul does not need matter to survive – the Christian view – why should the soul need matter to come into being? The question about life after death is thus intrinsically linked to the question about the life of the soul before conception. This then leaves us with the question of what the meaning is of a human life on earth. Is it perhaps a physical interlude in the continuous stream of the development of the soul? That would imply that a person does not have a soul but is a soul temporarily in possession of a body. If this, then, is the case, is it so that more than one of these physical interludes is possible or even necessary?

It is this latter consideration that brings us to the heart of reincarnation – etymologically speaking 'back in the flesh' – which in the common view means that you are repeatedly reborn as a human being. Here we should add that this contrasts with the Hindu view of the transmigration of souls which considers that people can also return as animals.

A central element of reincarnation teachings is the karma principle, according to which a person is confronted life after life with the consequences of his or her actions, and as result of this confrontation is stimulated, usually unconsciously, to perform actions that have ever better consequences, that is to say that more joy and harmony is created within the person and for the person's surroundings. Karma is in other words a guiding teaching principle in a constant cycle of action and correction, creation and recreation, in which a person is ultimately able to stabilize and his or her sense of oneness with the entire structure becomes ever more profound.

Is this really such a strange idea to the Westerner? It rather depends on how you look at it. Proverbs like 'As you sow, so shall you reap', 'The chickens come home to roost', 'As you make your bed so you must lie on it' all come close to the same idea.

Indeed people apparently believed in reincarnation when Jesus was alive. Just think of the disciples when they were asking Jesus about a blind man, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2, KJV). Here you might ask yourself when the

man would have committed a sin, he was after all born blind. A failure to think things through by the questioners? Or an implicit reference to a current belief in reincarnation?

Until recently in the West unbelievers as well as advocates of reincarnation were tiny minorities in a sea of Christian belief. Nonetheless the persuasive power of Christian doctrine on the afterlife has lessened significantly in recent decades. People are no longer prepared to believe in the old story of an eternal afterlife in heaven or hell. Either they drop the whole concept and declare, “I don’t believe in anything anymore, dead is dead”; or they start to take an interest in reincarnation. There can be quite a difference between the two extremes, which I might illustrate with the following anecdote.

During a discussion a young woman fails to convince her non-believing brother of her pro-reincarnation views, and vice-versa. When at last he realises that further argument is pointless, he sighs with disappointment, “How can you possibly believe in reincarnation, I thought you were so smart!” Her reaction is prompt, “How odd! I was just thinking that you were so smart! Why can’t he believe in it?”

Pre-Christian literary sources from Scandinavia and other parts of Europe also suggest a widespread acceptance of the concept of reincarnation in the past. For example we may recall that Julius Caesar noted in his book, *“The Gallic Wars”*, that the Druids teach that “souls do not die, but after death pass from one body to another”. The growing interest in reincarnation in the West is possibly not entirely due to cultural-religious influences from the East, but may be equally well regarded as a revival of local ancient beliefs, quite apart from the fact that people are increasingly inclined to think for themselves about the great questions of life (Haraldsson, 2006).

People in our western situation who believe in reincarnation, do not usually have the sense they blindly believe in something, but rather that they have finally discovered how life really works. For this reason they do not just view reincarnation as a belief but rather as a basic law of nature, which you are inevitably subject to, whether you believe in it or not. From that point of view objecting to reincarnation is as meaningful as signing a petition against gravity.

2. Reincarnation: The Disbelief

Believers point out that belief in reincarnation has existed throughout human history and has been present in all cultures, and they like to rattle off quotes by famous people who believed in reincarnation. As might be expected this cuts no ice at all with the critics. After all for how long did people believe that the world was flat? The respectable age of a belief system is thus absolutely no guarantee at all of its correctness: old nonsense is still nonsense.

Anybody who looks for an answer to the great questions of life in religion, often gets the impression that the people who are required to give the ‘expert explanations’ do not really seem to know the answers themselves but that they have to believe it, either because somebody in authority says so, or because that’s what it says in one or other holy book. Moreover it is perfectly clear that both in the past and at present decent honest people believe in wildly different, often contradictory, things. The authenticity of belief is thus apparently no guarantee of the content of that belief. In other words the human capacity of self-delusion is inexhaustible.

Anybody who says that reincarnation is not a belief but a natural law and that consequently reincarnation happens to everybody, whether you believe in it or not, is faced with an even greater problem. Thousands of millions of people must have been reincarnated but this process is still not recognized everywhere in the world. A major problem one might think. Why is this so? What is the difficulty really about? Or does it have something to do with the essential nature of reincarnation itself?

People who do not believe in reincarnation are often quick to say, “But nobody has ever come back!”. Closer examination though quickly reveals this to be a weak argument. For example imagine that your beloved grandfather is reborn during your lifetime and that this joyful event were to take place in your circle of acquaintances, how would you recognize your granddad? Do you expect his pipe, from which he was inseparable, and his old walking stick to be lying in the cot with him? Or would you be expecting the baby to look like grandpa, or to have a similar character? Might be difficult, especially if it turns out that it’s not the personality but the soul that is reborn.

3. Reincarnation: The Self-Evidence

Believers in reincarnation usually assume that when the person experiences death the identity is absorbed as a subpersonality into the entirety of the soul and that in the next life the incarnating soul will be attracted to an embryo whereof the genetic traits, living environment and key people fit in with the life plan of the soul and the amount of karma that must be lived out. In this process any memory of a previous life will be no more than an unclear echo of emotion, rather like the vague sounds reminiscent of a previous recording you sometimes hear on a taped-over cassette. Most people do not even notice these echoes of their previous lives, they are drowned out by the noise of everyday consciousness.

The mind is generally not capable of chronologically invoking detailed information about past lives, because the new-born person has of course a new brain and past life data are simply not available, at least not in the same easily accessible way that is used when retrieving memories of the current life. So not only do you not recognize your reincarnated granddad, the man (or woman) concerned has no idea that he (or she) was once your beloved grandfather. The most that you will notice is that for one or other inexplicable reason you get on very well together.

In practical terms this means that nearly everybody starts again with a virtually complete lack of memory about any of the previous lives.

Again according to the believers such ignorance initially has only advantages. You can begin over and over and again with a clean sheet, without being consciously much hindered by the echoes of the traumas and setbacks of previous lives. Of course the consequences, the burdens and the challenges continue to be present but you blame them entirely on unpredictable external factors, which does not mean that you do not deal with them, absorb them and make the best of them, or sometimes not. Thus everybody goes their own way, unconsciously clearing up the baggage of the past and building their near and distant futures.

Just as you cannot keep on ordering pizzas and letting the remains and the empty boxes pile up in the kitchen, as time goes by, usually a lot of time, the longing to tidy up and clean up the kitchen starts to grow and you want to sort out all the baggage you are still carrying around with you from your previous lives. The ignorance that was a blessing at the start of

your cycle of incarnations becomes steadily more burdensome as time goes by, say believers. You want to examine exactly who you are and what you were – or, more precisely, your soul was – in the past and for this reason you develop the sensitivity of your internal perceptions. This is not always a joyful period because the more that the mist rises the more clearly you recognize your own role in who you are and what happens to you. It can be a sobering experience, moreover it is not just somebody who makes a lot of mess who finds his/her life turned upside down, the person who cleans up thoroughly may also experience tremendous upheaval. Of course there are also advantages to having a big spring clean. People who clear up their karmic lines faster than usual are convinced that their power and clarity increase, that they draw greater enjoyment from (very) old friendships and that they acquire a broader understanding of the recurring strong and weak aspects of the entirety of their life experiences, so that they know better who they really are and what they still have to do.

Believers thus expect that reincarnation will become self-evident to ever growing numbers of people, which for them is just as self-evident as the fact that water is wet.

4. Reincarnation: The Research

Memories of past lives, acquired under hypnosis or otherwise, have always existed. Nonetheless even believers question to what extent such memories may be unconsciously influenced by what the person concerned might already know about the period in question, for example by reading about it. As a matter of fact, hypnosis does not enjoy a very good reputation with respect to ‘recovered memories’ in general. Under hypnosis these may be indeed abundant, lively and detailed, but – as research has shown – they are not necessarily accurate. Apparently imagination and fantasy continue to function perfectly well during hypnosis. This, by the way, is also the reason why information obtained under hypnosis is not acceptable as evidence in a criminal investigation, but must be handled in the same way as tips, which require further verification.

Likewise the fact that reincarnation therapy (i.e. psychotherapy that uses past life regression) might work, is of course neither proof of reincarnation as such, nor of the historical accuracy of the recovered material. Even so anybody who has had the privilege of conducting an extensive series of ‘reincarnation sessions’ with one and the same patient will have been surprised by the immense panorama of experiences and interwoven traumas, and all the accompanying emotions and perceptions. When there is an improvement in the quality of life in the ‘here and now’ of the patient upon working through these – the object of any therapy – this still does not constitute proof but it does suggest that further investigation of the subject might have merit.

Another line of research could be the ‘identified reincarnations’. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition such persons are referred to as *tulkus*, who are viewed as the reincarnation of certain keepers of specific teaching lineages. It sometimes happens that prior to his death ‘an enlightened lama’ will give an indication of where to look for the following incarnation so that he can be sought out by the senior figures of the monastery where he lived. This is put into practice with a great deal of stringency, and various tests are also applied. For example the young child is expected to ‘recognize’ the favourite personal items of his predecessor. The Dalai Lama is also identified anew by means of such techniques. The recognition and official installation of a tulku is an event that results in great religious and financial status, both for the tulku and for his family, which of course is not refused. Occasionally though the selection of the tulku is disputed and becomes a source of friction. Has the ‘true’ tulku been selected?

Has the selection of a particular tulku not brought undeserved benefits to one or other family? And what happens when rival factions designate different tulkus? It has even happened that a tulku has noted to his disappointment that he had no influence whatsoever in his monastery, and that he was only being used as a sort of religious publicity stunt in order to collect donations from enthusiastic believers (Kapstein, 2002). In other words, things are not always so elevated and holy as it might seem at first sight. The selection of tulkus is thus not proven absolutely, certainly not when you apply Western scientific standards, although the principle as such is thought-provoking in the extreme.

The godfather of reincarnation research is undoubtedly the late Ian Stevenson (1918-2007), a psychiatrist who worked for the University of Virginia. The author of more than ten books on the subject, his *“Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation”* (1974) became a bestseller. Stevenson travelled the world over a period of forty years, collecting around three thousand cases of children who claimed to remember previous lives. Many case histories were impressive: the children were not only capable of saying who they had been, where they had lived and who their family members had been, they were often able to provide remarkable details about their previous lives, including details of how they had died. They revealed elements that they could not ‘possibly’ have known and which upon inquiry turned out to be nearly all true. Particularly striking were birthmarks and birth defects that appeared to have a direct connection with a traumatic termination of the previous life¹.

The reaction of the scientific community was mixed. Stevenson had supporters who took him seriously, but most scientists considered him gullible and simply ignored his work. A major criticism from his detractors was that he had been hunting for evidence in favor of reincarnation and that he had taken too little account of less elaborate explanations like fantasy and fraud. Stevenson (1997) himself thought that these case histories were as such not proof of reincarnation, but that reincarnation was the best available explanation for many cases.

When Stevenson retired in 2002, his research was taken over by Jim B. Tucker, a psychiatrist at the University of Virginia.

5. Reincarnation: The Experiment

The argument between believers and non-believers has already been going on for a couple of millennia. It is thus not something that could be thrashed out during a frank and open-hearted discussion. We will have to take a different approach. For this reason I think that both the believers and the non-believers should abandon their fortified positions and work together to find the truth. To the scientists, who are usually non-believers, I would say, “Don’t be afraid of the unknown”, whereas I would advise the believers, “Don’t be afraid of the scientific method.” My point is, if reincarnation really takes place, then it is not a belief but a law of nature and there are only two things you can say about a law of nature: one is that natural laws do not cease to exist when we do not really understand how they work or when we disagree with them, and two is that any natural law can in principle be shown to exist, or at least that should be our ambition.

¹ One hypothesis is that these case histories could be the result of an ‘incomplete death experience’: because of the traumatic previous end of life, the personality was not absorbed into the entirety of the soul, but reincarnated immediately often while maintaining the character and preferences of the previous personality.

Setting up a conclusive experiment will not be easy, but every era has its own particular problems. Just as Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) put an end to the discussion about air pressure by sending independent observers up the Puy de Dôme with a tube full of mercury, it should in principle be possible to design an experiment that would settle the discussion about reincarnation one way or another, however difficult or impossible such may appear to be at first sight.

A way of understanding an ‘incarnation cycle’ might be to think of a line of dashes, but where you can see no further than the end of your current dash. Investigations of reincarnation usually limit themselves to the dashes that lie behind us. The testimonies of individuals may then be exceptional and the observed synchronicities truly remarkable, such as for example in Ian Stevenson’s case studies, nonetheless this is merely retrospective research. Anybody who really wants fully to demonstrate reincarnation must necessarily also do prospective research.

As soon as an individual thinks that he² knows where his future life will take place, he might take the trouble to conceal a time capsule at that spot so that he can recover it in that subsequent life. A remarkable achievement indeed, one which not only would require that the person concerned has some idea of his distant future, but also that in the future he will be capable of seeing (fragments of) his distant past, or shall have at least the awareness that he once hid something away and can moreover find that hiding place. Such a procedure bears comparison with the selection of a tulku, but with the difference that the tulku is not ‘found’ by third parties, but that the person concerned ‘discovers’ it for himself and tries to prove such by finding ‘his’ time capsule again.

The idea of hiding things and recovering them at a much later date is moreover by no means new. The Tibetan religious traditions speak of *termas*, valuable ritual objects and sacred texts that are carefully hidden, and of *tertöns*, persons who discover such hidden treasures at some auspicious time occasionally hundreds of years later.

In our experiment the time capsule would of course have to be recovered by the person who hid it away in a previous life, and only by him. This would mean that the capsule would have to be so well hidden that nobody else could find it, not even by accident.

Even if the time capsule were to be recovered in the future, certain other conditions would obviously have to be met before one could speak of a successful experiment. For example the subject would have to hide the object unseen but also ensure that nobody else was aware of the project so that the hider could not be forced to reveal the hiding place. Moreover to ensure that he would not voluntarily reveal the secret, the content would have to be sufficiently valuable to ensure that the subject had every reason to keep it secret, at least if he wanted to prevent somebody else becoming its new owner in the future.

You might regard this as an inappropriate form of long-term egoism – a far from spiritual attitude. Even so it would be a guarantee. Compare this situation with that of your local craft baker. If this person were to make delicious bread just for the love of humanity, you might reasonably worry that one day he might get fed up and stop, but if he is making top quality

² In order to ensure the easier reading of the text, the shorter masculine spelling is used on behalf of both genders.

loaves simply to earn a living, you might justifiably expect him to go on baking until he reaches retirement age. In this case egoism is thus more reliable than altruism.

To summarize: if the time capsule contains undeniable proof of the identity of its maker, cannot be found accidentally, revealed by coercion, and is sufficiently valuable for the maker to have every interest in remaining silent about its existence, the basic conditions of a sound experiment will have been met.

It would be a nice bonus if the talents of the subject would permit not just the prediction of the broad lines of the future life, but also the ability to foresee the circumstances in which the time capsule would be recovered and would be able to enclose a handwritten description of these in the time capsule. Should in the future the finder remember the hiding place it would be best if he were to announce this in advance, so that this hermetically sealed space could be opened in the presence of witnesses. The chronology of the events, from recall to effective opening should be accurately recorded. If the contents of the capsule are intact, including the handwritten statement about the circumstances of its recovery, then I would think that a trustworthy link between individual past and individual future will have been established and the dashed line referred to earlier will have been shown to exist.

In closing I would like to say this. Anybody who is convinced that reincarnation takes place but does not want to resolve the reincarnation question by experimentation is lost to science. Does it matter? Perhaps it matters more than you might at first think. When somebody objects, “What you are saying about reincarnation has no basis in science”, what he actually means is not what you are saying about reincarnation is not true, but rather, “I have no reliable way of determining what you say is true or otherwise”. It is not an attack on your views but a criticism of the obscurity of your views. Making your position transparent is thus the essential thing. Reformulate your view so that it is transparent, measurable and testable. Give a number so that we can calculate. Fix a place and a time so that we can go and see. Provide an object so that we can feel. This is not rigidity or the arrogance of science, to the contrary: it is the longing to be satisfied with nothing less than the truth. What belief could be satisfied with less?

6. Reincarnation: A Look Ahead

Reincarnation cannot be fully understood when one continues to hold to the outdated view that a person has a soul. As explained above a person does not have a soul, rather a person is a soul and it is the soul that has a body. This is a Copernican shift in point of view and how one regards human evolution down the ages. Once you start seeing things in this way, everything becomes much easier to understand.

My recommendation that talented believers could help substantiate their claims with a verifiable time capsule experiment does not mean that we should all rush to start concealing time capsules. Even if you do not conduct any experiments and simply lean back and relax, clarification will come of itself. After all it is a typically human trait to hide all kinds of valuable objects. With the increasing lucidity of humanity, it will be inevitable that there will be a few individuals who start to ‘remember’ where they have hidden things in the past. That the persons concerned would then want to check the whole thing out goes without saying, indeed they do not need me for that. My role is little more than that of the trend spotter who gives notice that this kind of ‘spiritual archaeology’ is likely to increase in future. In fact I would heartily recommend documenting such finds with all due scientific rigour. In my

estimation we are going to be increasingly confronted with discoveries of this nature in the coming decades.

The most recent trend in reincarnation research concerns the comparison of previous life lines. This is an activity where people compare their individual previous life experiences – however they may have uncovered these – and then jointly work to see if they can piece together the historical elements to arrive at a coherent whole, in order to answer questions such as “who was who” and “what exactly happened”. The ‘recognition’ stemming from previous lives, including each person’s share in ongoing ambitions and projects throughout time, leads not only to a deeper understanding of the incarnation cycle and the karmic connections of a whole group of like-minded people, it sometimes provides a surprising insight into the behind-the-scenes events of the documented historical past. Should such consensual information be confirmed by new historical or archaeological inquiry, this would rightly be regarded as a breakthrough. To the best of my knowledge this has not yet happened, but some research groups are so careful and thorough in the examination of their data that surprises might well be expected in due course.

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***NipponEthics Stakeholder Model-
Understanding How Japanese Companies Manage Key Stakeholders***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Business concept is gradually changing on a global level, shifting from a chiefly profit focused viewpoint to a more stakeholder focused perspective. As the number of social enterprises increase and business enterprises become more socially conscious, leaders worldwide face the challenge to accommodate this shifting trend from stockholder interest to stakeholder interest. Japanese companies have long proven to be successful, using a unique stakeholder management approach. This paper focuses on Japanese companies, analysing the importance and management style of five key stakeholders - customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders and the environment. Taking Aristotle's virtue approach, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of business practices, social values and corporate culture, subsequently developing the NipponEthics Stakeholder Model, which shows a unique balancing mechanism practised in Japanese society; the position and role of all five stakeholders are explained using this visual aid. The paper investigates a complex scenario and provides a simple, practical model, so that businesses outside Japan can understand the structure of this symbiotic ecosystem based on a platform of respect. Additionally, the model can be utilized domestically on Japanese business failure scenarios, aiding the assessment of imbalance and analysing the reasons for such decline.

Keywords: Stakeholder Theory, Social Business, Japan, Customer, Employee, Supplier, Shareholder, Environment

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1. Introduction

Business philosophy is gradually evolving on a global level, moving away from a purely profit focused perspective to a more stakeholder focused approach. Social enterprises and socially conscious businesses are on the rise as there is a shift in trend from stockholder interest to include other stakeholders' interests (Deloitte Insights, 2018). While Adam Smith's invisible hand (guided by self-interest) had been the mantra for many traditional businesses, especially in the west, commonly recurring business scandals, such as the sweatshop crisis, environmental degradation, principal / agent deception, have raised concerns regarding companies managed chiefly in the interest of stockholders. Imbalanced corporate strategy creates vulnerable parties, where the persistent focus on one theme is often achieved through the expense of another (Zona, Minoja & Coda, 2013). The need for balance or moderation is an age-old idea and an Aristotelian theme that came long before capitalism. Furthermore, research indicates that companies with stakeholder focus have a long term view, providing them with competitive advantage, marked by better earnings, revenue, investment and job growth (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Japan, being an isolated country for some 250 years, has developed a unique stakeholder management approach, proving to be successful without pursuing self-interest. Amartya Sen describes Japan as "the most successful capitalist nation in the world (that) flourishes economically with a motivation structure that departs firmly - and often explicitly - from the pursuit of self-interest, which is meant to be the bedrock of capitalism" (Sen, 1993: 50). While researchers have analysed areas of stakeholder perspective in Japan (Tanimoto, 2017; Allen, Carletti & Marquez, 2007; Maitland & Umez, 2006; Wu & Wokutch, 2015; Allen & Zhou, 2007; Jackson & Moerke, 2005), a comprehensive model is yet to be developed for practical use, focusing on stakeholder importance and management technique. Taking Aristotle's virtue approach, we investigate Japan's social values, corporate culture and business practices to develop the NipponEthics Stakeholder Model. The purpose of this paper is to create an accessible model that illustrates how Japanese companies manage relationships with five key stakeholders - customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, and the environment - to understand the unique balancing mechanism that led to their success.

2. How Japanese Companies Manage Key Stakeholders

2.1 Customers

Modern Japan is renowned for excellent customer service; *kyakusama wa kamisama* directly translates to 'customer is god' and this perception is emphasized in companies' policy and customer management. The concept of customer as god instead of customer as king originates from hospitality culture and bushido code (Al-alsheikh, 2014). Hattori (2008), as cited by Al-alsheikh (2014), explains how guests in olden days were considered to be gods bringing good fortune to homes, imbuing a hospitality culture. Additionally, the samurai bushido code stressed politeness as an essential part to uphold harmony, which till this day remains ingrained in the nation and its culture. Hannon and Sano's 1994 paper examined 19 Japanese companies of differing sizes from diverse industries in search of customer-driven policies and practices; they found that from employee recruitment to training and retainment, the notion of 'customer comes first' is stressed repeatedly to employees. A few key examples from Hannon and Sano's 1994 paper are listed here. ANA Hotel pamphlets highlight customers come before employees and the hotel itself - an introductory document provided during the employment application process. Prince Hotels use customer role plays during the

interview process. JAL's president's speech to new recruits reiterates two main themes - safety and customer service. Dai Ichi Kangyo Bank's orientation program includes extensive group and independent study of proper business behaviour and customer expectation. Nippon Express assigns new university graduates to two to three years of field training, interacting closely with the customers. Sumitomo Bank uses video recordings of customer-employee relationships for training and improvement purposes. Daiei's staff work in sales twice a year to remind them about the core of the business - their customers.

Face-to-face personal contact is highly valued in Japanese customer service and various cultural practices such as seasonal gift giving, introduction (*aisatsu*) of new staff, allow for more personal visits with business clients. While it may be unusual in many countries to see a current supplier visiting just to say hello, in Japan this type of personal touch, which requires more effort than an email or a phone call, is much appreciated as it shows how each customer is valuable. Business to business relationships also require a clear point of contact so any problem can be discussed with one key contact, who has background information and understanding of the unique requirements of the client. Khan, Naumann, Bateman & Haverila (2009) conducted a cross-cultural study of 700 senior managers in Japan and over 700 senior manager in the US; they found that in contrast to the US, Japanese companies placed greater importance on the performance of account representatives and technicians when determining their level of satisfaction with the service. Long term relationships with suppliers further deepen this personal customer-supplier relationship and instill the sense of 'it's not just business, it's very personal'.

2.2 Shareholders

As Japan practices stakeholder capitalism, the companies are not run primarily in the interest of shareholders, but with a broader view that includes the interests of other stakeholders. Yoshimori's 1995 survey of senior managers, as cited by Allen & Zhao (2007), shows that an overwhelming 97% feel the company belongs to all stakeholders, and not just shareholders; similarly 97% think job security is more important than dividends, starkly contrasting the views of US and UK managers participating in the same survey. This popular consensus, along with the structure of corporate governance, allows Japanese companies to focus on long-term gains, instead of short-term profits (Jackson & Moerke, 2005). Shareholders, who hold the sole voting power, choose the board of directors by majority vote, and the board in turn chooses management from members within the board. While shareholders are the owners and retain the rights to change management and in extreme cases of conflicting interest, inside shareholders (cross-shareholding partners, including the main bank) may compel management to give priority to their interest (something that is sparingly exercised only with long term decline in stock prices and consistent losses). In some ways, Shishido (1999:30) claims that employees may be the "(quasi-)owners of the firms", a thought that is seconded by Ahmadjian and Robbins (2005). It is common practice in Japan for inside shareholders, including major shareholders, to leave the management decisions to the board members and core employees. Outside shareholders have no voice in corporate governance (only recognized in the financial market), regardless of how much stock they own, and can only monitor by exit. Hence, external monitoring such as hostile takeovers (forceful acquisition of a company by directly going to the company's shareholders), although common in the US and UK, are inconceivable in Japan.

Although Japanese companies are not run chiefly in the interest of the shareholders, in many ways they have more rights and protection compared to their US counterparts (Shishido,

1999; Allen & Zhao, 2007). Japanese shareholders can directly nominate and elect directors, and determine dividends and management remuneration through shareholder meetings. Japanese corporate law not only protects shareholders from possible abuse from company management, but also allows them the right of inspection of company accounting books and other related documents, and the right to make proposals to be considered in shareholder meetings. Furthermore, any wronged shareholder can file a lawsuit against directors of the company with a minimal flat fee. (Shishido, 1999)

While there is increasing pressure for Japanese companies to change and give more rights to shareholders, especially given the increasing number of foreign investors, Japanese companies continue their status quo. Gotoh (2019) argues that this decision is costing the economy by increasing the number of non-regular employees, thereby reducing the Japanese average household income. Japanese CEOs are also among the lowest paid in the world and unlike other countries, a significantly smaller portion of their compensation is tied to stock options (Pan & Zhou, 2018). This indicates a different set of corporate governance mechanisms are practised to align shareholder-management incentives (commonly referred to as the principal-agent problem or the agency problem), with factors such as long-term employee development and seniority based promotion playing significant roles in mitigating / removing opportunistic behaviour.

2.3 Employees

Japanese companies typically hire university graduates, many of whom stay with the company till the age of retirement. While long term employment is not uncommon in other nations, Japan is unique in that it has one of the highest proportion of employees with 20+ years of tenure among the OECD countries, with companies encouraging internal promotion of long standing employees (Ono, 2007). Although lifetime employment is not contractually stated, hence harder to measure, it provided job security to 38.9 percent of male employees employed by large companies and 23.8 percent of male employees employed by all companies in 2016 (Jones and Seitani, 2019). Japanese employees often refer to their companies as *uchi no kaisha*, which literally translates to 'our home's company', showing linguistic embodiment of lifetime employment and devotion of the employees. While the structure of the Japanese labour market is evolving in recent years to include more contractual workers and thereby reducing lifetime employment - an issue that media continues to highlight - Kuriyama (2017) states companies' continued effort to provide employment security has helped keep the country's unemployment rate low (2.8% in 2020, according to the World Bank).

Once employed, workers experience various lateral moves within the organization, learning different aspects of the business through job rotation, and after they have accumulated 10-15 years of experience within the company, they are considered for promotions (Itoh, 1991). White-collar workers and blue collar workers are both promoted based on experience within the company and personal merit ratings. Ono & Shiraishi's 1993 survey as cited by Ono (2007), shows that Japanese executives give more importance to employment length or nativity (employees who have worked in the same company from the start of their employment lifetime) than American companies, showing Japanese companies' emphasis on employees' loyalty and accumulated knowledge of the organization. Given internal promotion requirements and an external environment, that is generally not conducive to job mobility from company to company, employees have low incentive to change companies. Another key distinguishing factor of Japanese employee management is their lack of pay for

performance or immediate reward system; instead we see that the employee's reward is spread over the length of their service, following a seniority based promotion and pay structure, which again reconfirms an outlook of long term security for employees over short-term immediate gains sharing.

Japanese companies are much like a community, looking after and protecting the interest of their employees. Ahmadjian and Robbins (2005) echo this by highlighting stakeholder capitalism in Japan, arguing that companies in Japan are run in the interest of employees rather than the interest of shareholders. For example, Keidanren (Japanese Business Federation), consisting of 1,444 Japanese companies, is currently working on work style reforms, focusing on reduction of employee working hours and encouraging employees to take leave (Keidanren Annual Report, 2020). This reform can help improve the work-life imbalance of Japanese employees and reduce workaholism and related problems in the country.

2.4 Suppliers

In order to solve the quintessential supplier-related problems of over-pricing, poor quality products and long lead time, Japanese corporations have chosen the route of implicit long-term contracts and cooperative relationships with suppliers. This starkly contrasts the general American approach based on short-term supplier contracts and aggressive bidding among the suppliers. While short-term contracts may solve the problem of over-pricing and long lead time, these suppliers typically do not invest in expensive relationship-specific assets that could enhance the quality of the products, given the ephemeral nature of the contracts (Hills, Jones & Schilling, 2014). Long-term supplier commitment and cooperative relationship with suppliers have been linked to enhanced supplier performance as a source of competitive advantage (Lee, 2004; Helper & Sako, 1995; Clark, 1989).

The Toyota Group, sometimes referred to as a *keiretsu* (core manufacturing firm and its network of suppliers within its value chain), has a hands-on approach with its suppliers, providing them with training and resources, while keeping a strict scorecard system that clarifies expectations. The suppliers are given rigorous targets for quality, cost, delivery and technological capabilities (Toyota Supplier's Guide, 2021) and encouraged to work together to bring about improvements. Supplier associations are formed which facilitate self-learning (*jishuken*); additionally Toyota provides assistance to its suppliers by sending experts to suppliers' factories for training and process improvement as part of its Supplier Support System. For instance, Toyota Motors Thailand established The Toyota Cooperation Club (TCC) as an initiative to improve local suppliers' effectiveness; TCC provided lectures and activities-based training on various aspects of quality management, as well as providing a platform for its 92 first tier suppliers to network with one another (UNCTAD, 2001).

Japanese companies, regardless of their sizes, tend to engage in long term commitments with their suppliers and this is considered the societal norm (Kuriyama, 2017; Kato, Nunes & Dey, 2016; McGuire & Dow, 2009). Long term engagements allow companies to understand one another's requirements and unique ways of doing business, enabling companies to create an infrastructure for a long lasting relationship with advanced coordination. The supportive nature of their engagement creates additional goodwill and parties are willing to invest in the relationship, which further strengthens performance. Japanese suppliers place a high level of trust on their customers; according to Sako & Helper's 1996 survey of over 1000 suppliers, cooperative supplier-customer relationship based on information exchange, technical

cooperation and long term commitment, are some of the key elements that helped build trust and reduce opportunism.

2.5 The Environment

The Japanese way of life has a strong reverence for nature and this can be seen in various aspects of day to day life. From a young age, children in Japan are taught the concept of *mottainai* (wastefulness) in school and at home, learning the importance of preservation of energy and recycling (Yolin, 2015). Households separate recycling products into different categories - glass bottles, PET bottles, plastic, papers - following clear material marks provided on the packaging, thereby actively contributing to the initial sorting process. Shintoism, the major religion of Japan (69% Shinto, according to the World Factbook), often associated with the Japanese way of life, is based on the belief in *kami* in all things, placing high respect on nature. Buddhism, the second major religion of Japan (66.7% according to the World Factbook), teaches inter-relatedness of all things in nature and *karma*, inspiring peaceful coexistence between mankind and nature. Although most people in Japan are not religious (according to Japan Social Survey (JGSS) 2015 cited by JGSS Research Center (2017), 68.6% do not follow a religion), and it is common to see syncretism of *kami* and buddhas, as shown by the previously cited overlapping percentages of religion (Robertson, 1987; Reader, 1991), religion and culture are interlinked into a way of life that encourages living together with nature. *Hanami*, a celebration to enjoy sakura flowers, is an event which embodies the concept of *kami* in nature. These cultural, societal and individual experiences - some long-standing, others more recently institutionalized - may affect the way CEOs, managers and consequently, companies approach environmental issues.¹

Large companies in Japan perform well in terms of management of carbon emission and waste disposal; they are generally regarded as being ahead of North American counterparts, and on a similar level to European companies (Cremers, Grundin, Yamada, Goerg, & Nuttall, 2021). As of 2019, 18,026 Japanese companies were ISO14001 certified, ranking Japan second in the world in terms of ISO14001 certification (ISO, 2019). Eco Action 21, a Japanese environmental management system for SMEs, registered 5,600 companies as of 2010 (UNEP, 2013). Kyoto Environmental Management System Standard website (KES), which is a similar environmental certification for SMEs, also reports certification of over 4,000 businesses. Japanese companies tend to analyse their supply chain, checking the environmental friendliness of business partners, often giving preference to environmentally friendly goods or services, especially after the Act on Promoting Green Purchasing in 2001. Bigger companies sometimes require their suppliers to have environmental management systems in an effort to 'green' their supply chain. Additionally, a large percentage of big firms publish environmental reports (more than 80%, according to Japan's Ministry of Environment 2012 report), although the percentage is lower for SMEs with sales below 100

¹ At a business conference in Bangladesh, a CEO of an established business publicly announced his disdain for environmental rules as he could not understand why businesses should care about spending money to treat industrial waste. The Japanese company representatives, present in the same meeting, shook their heads in disbelief at this callous remark. While this may be an act of transgression in Japan, it is not an unusual perspective in Bangladesh, where environmental concepts are fairly new. In Bangladesh, it is a common sight to see untreated waste being dumped in the rivers, people throwing bags of household trash from the rooftops of their high-rise buildings to empty plots next door, individuals littering without a second thought. As a Bangladeshi-Japanese growing up in Bangladesh, I could see how his accumulated experiences might have influenced his comments, and how unbelievable it must have seemed to a Japanese person with contrasting experiences in Japan.

billion yen, presumably due to lack of funds and knowledge of environmental initiatives. Environmental reporting provides transparency for the public, facilitating clear communication about environmental initiatives undertaken by the companies.

Japanese companies' level of environmental commitment was influenced by a combination of law enforcement, availability of right waste management resources and support, and societal awareness of business' impact on the environment. For example, illegal dumping by waste disposal companies posed a major problem in the 1970s and the 1980s, making headlines in the media. Public skepticism towards waste disposal companies further thwarted the construction of much needed new waste disposal facilities, creating a vicious cycle of illegal dumping. The government imposed strict measures to address this crisis, introducing a penalty of up to 100 million yen (close to US\$1 million) for illegal dumping, increasing accountability of major waste generating businesses, and providing support for development (UNEP, 2013; Fujikura, 2011; Ministry of Environment, 2006). Businesses which were previously using the cheapest waste disposal companies, started selecting their partners more carefully, thereby reducing the black market of illegal dumping. With the right atmosphere, combining law, resources and awareness, the number of illegal dumping cases that peaked in 1998 dropped 88% by 2015 (Ministry of Environment, 2017). As such, Keidanren (Japanese Business Federation) Voluntary Action Plan on the Environment (1997), providing clear measurable voluntary goals by companies in 36 industries, is testament to the industry's commitment to the environment. (Keidanren, 1997).

3. NipponEthics Stakeholder Model

Analysis of the five stakeholders - customers, shareholders, employees, suppliers and the environment - shows a unique balancing mechanism among them, in an intricate web based on a platform of respect. This is illustrated in Figure 1 (next page), which will henceforth be referred to as the NipponEthics Stakeholder Model.

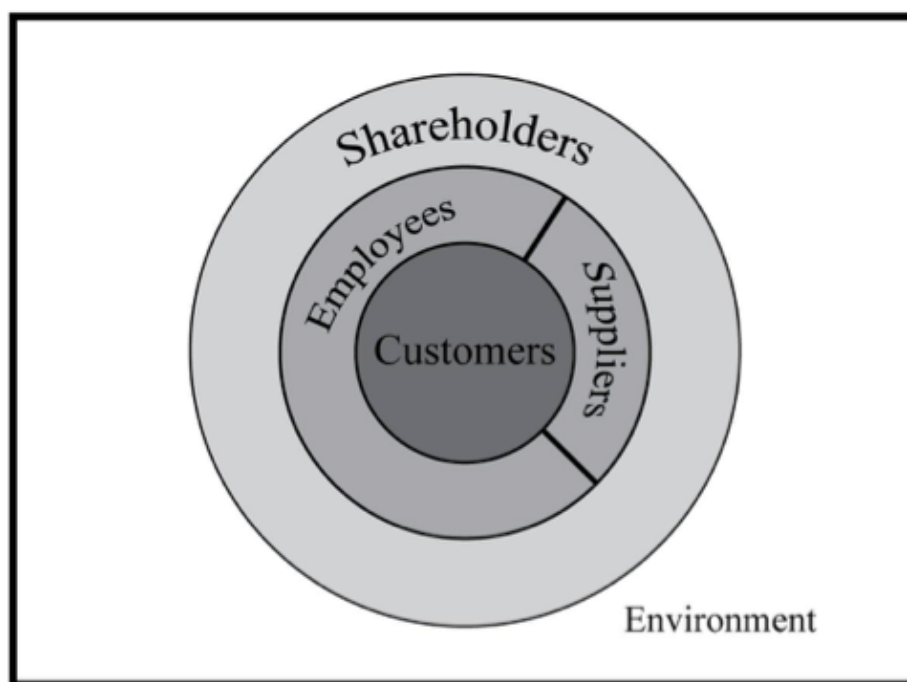


Figure 1: NipponEthics Stakeholder Model

The figure above is explained from the core outwards, summarizing the analysis in the former section of the paper. The core function of the business and the reason for its existence is the customer. The importance of customers is paramount and repeatedly emphasized in new employee training and upheld in company policies. This genuine interest in serving the customers and providing something that is useful to them is at the heart of the model, driving the mission of the business. The customers are kept at the center throughout the implementation of different policies and utmost effort is given to ensure customers' needs are gauged and met. Employees and suppliers work as partners to serve the customers' needs, taking an adjacent position to the customers in this concentric circle model. The employee-supplier relationship is a long-term one based on mutual trust and respect. Training and resources are provided for supplier growth, and suppliers are seen as an essential part of the business in a direct position to affect supply chain efficiency. While suppliers are given clear indication of their performance, this relationship remains cooperative in nature. The model places suppliers in a key position in partnership with the employees, who cover a greater surface area due to their leading role. The outside of the concentric circle consists of shareholders - the owners of the business. The owners delegate management to the employees, entrusting them with key decision making power and keeping a hands-off approach. This allows companies to focus on long-term growth, rather than short-term profits. In this ecosystem, shareholders play the role of business supporters placing trust in the employees to make the right decisions, intervening only when there are consistent long-term losses. In some ways the owners are akin to spectators, providing financial capital and believing a democratic process will carry out the optimum output. Employees' long-term association with the company, seniority-based pay structure, and compensation packages with low proportion of stock, all act as control mechanisms, discouraging opportunistic behavior (such as the principal-agent problem) and providing a focus on long-term development of the company. Employees frequently remain in the same company till the age of retirement, and companies try to provide security against recessionary job losses; Hannon & Sano (1994) uses the term human resource development instead of human resource management, to depict this ongoing incubation process of company employees. Finally, the environment is placed outside the concentric circle, not because it is not a core component, but because it is a part of all the stakeholders. In essence, Japanese society places a high focus on inter-relatedness, encouraging harmonious coexistence with nature as a duty. The collectivist nature of the society provides a strong sense in individuals to uphold their duties to the community, hence all stakeholders feel they have a part to play in protecting the environment. Although 'black companies' (a Japanese term for exploitative companies) exist in Japan, and pollution spiked during the bubble economy with many illegal dumping cases (UNEP, 2013), the implementation of environmental policies and provision of appropriate resources brought a drastic decline to such incidents. It is important to note that the NipponEthics Stakeholder Model is based on general Japanese companies and these generalizations cannot be applied to 'black companies', which are far from the norm in Japan.

A recurring theme in the NipponEthics Stakeholder Model is the idea of respect and a sense of gratitude to the other stakeholders. Each of the five key stakeholders studied in this model receives and gives respect to the others in this symbiotic ecosystem, where each recognizes the importance of the role played by the other.

4. Conclusion

Japan's stakeholder management is particularly unique and maintains a delicate balance among the five stakeholders examined in the NipponEthics Stakeholder Model. Japanese

companies remain profitable while acting as a community, protecting and serving the needs of others. Taka (1994) compares Japanese companies to *mura* (local community), stating how businesses have taken on many of the roles expected from the community; similarly, Akio Morita, former CEO of Sony, refers to businesses in Japan as social businesses in his 1988 interview with Upon Reflection host, Al Page. This study attempted to dissect a complex scenario to provide a practical and simplified model, especially with the hope to aid businesses outside Japan which would like to understand or pursue a model that is not chiefly profit driven. Additionally, NipponEthics Stakeholder Model could be used domestically to aid the assessment of imbalance in Japanese business failure scenarios, and analyse the reasons thereof.

As with research that tries to simplify complex scenarios, this study is not without its limitations, losing some valuable information in the process of simplification. The stakeholder analysis could, for example, include competitors, business communities, government and others that are part of the Greater Society. This study does not look into the complexities in management and contributions made by part-time employees, who are essential members of the businesses. It does not go into further analysis of individual customers, their rights and limitations. It does not explain the complexities of work culture development at the individual level, morphed by the education system and societal expectations. While these particular areas fell outside the scope of this research, they remain important areas to consider for future research.

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***The Elevation of Luxury: Art Infusion and Artification
as Vehicles for Creating Shared Value***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Luxury brands have historically benefitted from engagement with the artistic community. There is a robust academic literature on the specific benefits for luxury brands of using mechanisms like art infusion and artification as a means of enhancing brand image and overcoming challenges associated with modern market conditions. Less clear, however, is how luxury brand involvement with the arts can benefit the artistic community and contribute to societal well-being more generally. In this paper, we argue that some means of artistic engagement should be considered more socially responsible than others and show how Porter and Kramer's (2011) creating shared value framework can help brands develop strategies that use art to simultaneously benefit brand and society. We highlight three specific means by which luxury brands can create shared value through their artistic engagement: 1) through reconceiving products and markets, 2) by redefining productivity in the value chain, and by enabling local cluster development, including the promotion of underrepresented artists. We close by considering how these engagements with art may play a larger, more transformative role in the CSR strategies of a luxury brand, enabling it to transcend from a corporate entity to a purveyor of culture, art, and well-being.

Keywords: Shared Value, Corporate Social Responsibility, Artification

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Introduction

The luxury industry has a long history of turning to art and artists for inspiration (Baumgarth et al 2014, Baumgarth et al 2018). However, establishing and maintaining connections between the worlds of art and luxury is now more than ever considered an essential part of luxury brand strategy (Jelenik 2018, Soito 2018, Okonkwo, 2009). In fact, the creative directors of today's luxury brands are often characterized as artists themselves, whose creative vision, leadership, and charisma are viewed as being essential to the company's success (Dion & Arnould, 2011). In many respects, this seems like a natural pairing. Like fine art, luxury goods are the product of craftsmanship and expertise and are created with the aim of evoking emotional connection (Heine & Berghaus, 2014; Poelina & Nordensvard, 2018, De Angelis et al, 2020). But the reasons for this convergence go beyond natural affinity: luxury brands seek out involvement with art and the artworld, whether through artist collaboration, sponsorship, corporate museums, or other means, to elevate the esteem, status, and value of the brand (Chailan, 2018; Kapferer, 2014).

Though while the collaboration between art and luxury has only become a major focus of study in recent years, the two share a long, intertwined history. In one of the earliest collaborations of this kind, in the 1930s, Salvador Dali partnered with the Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli to reinvigorate her clothing designs (Gibson, 2003). In 1965, Yves Saint Laurent would draw heavily (and famously) from Piet Mondrian's artworks in launching his iconic haute couture (Kim, 1998). In 1966 he would release another art-inspired collection, this time by the pop art of Andy Warhol (Kapferer, 2014). These are but two of many examples of luxury designers taking creative inspiration from the work of trendsetting artists throughout the 20th Century. However, it was not until the 1980s that luxury brands truly began to treat fine art as a potential brand asset above and beyond its value as a source of raw creative inspiration, a shift that correlates with the increasingly popular trend of creating foundations to preserve and promote their artistic legacies and broader connections to the art world.

More generally, the incorporation of art and artistic vision within a brand's products and narratives elevates its status and value (Kapferer 2013) and associates it in the minds of consumers with attributes commonly valued by those with high status tastes (Kapferer 2013, Kapferer and Bastien 2012). In particular, luxury brands benefit from the fact that channeling the creative power of renowned artists imparts an aura of rarity and uniqueness to products and the brand itself (Chailan 2018), which helps to satisfy the demand of luxury consumers for these features in their products (Kapferer and Laurent, 2016, Rucker et al., 2011) and experiences (Cuny et al 2020, Batat 2019a, Shukla et al., 2016). Finally, associating luxury with art may also provide a stiff barrier to entry for would-be competitors, who are unable to overcome the challenge of building these connections with the art world, which are oftentimes complex, nebulous, and tacit (Chailan, 2018).

There are two related ways that these effects tend to be generated, via *art infusion* and/or *artification*.

From art infusion to artification

Unlike art infusion, which is about using the power of art to generate useful effects like the art infusion effect described above, luxury artification is the process by which luxury brands seek to secure the perception of their products *as* art (Batat 2019b, Shapiro 2019, Kapferer,

2014). What does or does not count as art is effectively a social construct, meaning that, while artification does tend to rely in practice on collaboration with established artists, its success or failure depends on how those collaborations, along with other means of influencing public opinion, lead to a social transformation in how their products are viewed (Shapiro, 2019). The design of retail spaces, sponsorship and curation of museums housing their products, and broader marketing profile are therefore as much a part of the artification process as the design of the goods themselves.

Luxury brands often create art through collaboration, with some brands relying to a far greater extent on the cache of artist partnership. For example, LVMH engaged the process of artification with Japanese artist Takashi Murakami in their "Speedy Bag" collection. The collaboration blurred the line between artist and product line, not only by virtue of its duration and consistency (spanning 2003 - 2015), but because of the privileged artistic freedom that LVMH allowed. Not one to downplay the artification of his brand, LVMH Creative Director Marc Jacobs remarked of the collaboration, "It has been, and continues to be, a monumental marriage of art and commerce. The ultimate crossover – one for both the fashion and art history books." (Milligan 2009).

Arguably the finest and most ambitious example of this effect is the recently completed Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris (Mase and Cedrola, 2017). Erected in 2014, the 126,000 square foot art museum was designed by Frank Gehry and cost nearly \$900 million to create (Faynaed, 2014). The museum's permanent collection includes works owned by Founder and CEO Bernard Arnaud from a range of influential artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Gilbert & George and Jeff Koons (Moore 2014). The Fondation has made a concerted effort to ensure the museum is not merely a platform for direct brand promotion by housing and hosting a truly extensive and diverse collection of art and artistic voices and developing programs to promote young and emergent artists. The museum is now home to a range of educational programs relating to the arts and provides special scheduling and pricing for school trips, along with steep discounts for teachers and professional artists. The aim is for the space to become an iconic, public museum in the spirit of Paris's other great art institutions, helping to secure public perception of the LVMH brand as fundamentally committed to the value, promotion, and production of art, culture, and taste (Riot 2017). While early controversy in the museum's construction and development may have delayed that process, the authenticity behind its mission distinguishes it from many other luxury brand competitors.

The difference between this approach and that taken by direct competitors like Gucci is stark. Gucci's broader artification strategy has involved producing a series of public exhibitions including, among other things, the "The Artist is Present" exhibition at the Yuz Museum of Shanghai and the creation of a series of collaborative murals or "artwalls" painted in London, Milan, New York, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Sepe & Anzivino, 2020). However, their own foray into the museum world has been markedly brand-focused. Whereas the Prada and LVMH museums are dedicated to the broader public promotion of art and artists, Gucci Garden (formerly Museo Gucci) in Florence serves exclusively as a shrine to the history of the brand and emblem of its artistic vision for the future. Visitors to the museum can dine at the Osteria, where they will pay high prices for food prepared in the kitchen of a three Michelin Star awarded chef. They can browse Gucci-related books and other media in the bookstore and even purchase clothes in the Garden boutique. Furthermore, they can explore displays cataloguing a history of the Gucci brand and the phenomenon of "Guccification" through its codes and symbols, its "historical jet-set customer," and – most importantly from

the perspective of this paper – the sources of creative inspiration for its past, present and future.

Clearly, there are some significant differences among brands in terms of how their art infusion and artification strategies connect with a broader commitment to promoting and actively participating as creative forces within the arts. The rest of the paper views these differences through the lens of social responsibility, arguing that, as tastemakers with the power to shape public perception of the arts, luxury brands have an opportunity to generate significant social value through their interventions in the art world.

Instrumental Benefits to Society

How do art experiences and participation in the arts contribute *in general* to human well-being in society? There are many possible ways to answer this question. It goes without saying that art has intrinsic value above and beyond its capacity to generate such effects, in the form of aesthetic pleasure experienced by those who create and experience it. Corporations can and should take this value into account in considering the role they may play in promoting the arts in society. However, beyond these intrinsic sources of its value, which are deeply personal and can be difficult to quantify, there are some clear instrumental benefits of art for individuals and society at large.

Art experiences not only provide us a means of creative expression but deepen and enrich one's emotional life by engaging us to adopt new perspectives, deepening the reflection on personal experience, and even stimulating reflection on the meaning of life. One landmark study out of Scotland identified a strong link between attendance at artistic and cultural places and events and perceived life satisfaction (Leadbetter & O'Connor, 2013). The study involved analysis of survey data from nearly 10,000 respondents, and the result held even when accounting for other factors, including age, economic status, income, and education. Specifically, the authors found that those who had visited such a place or event in the previous 12 months were nearly 60 percent more likely to report good health than those who had not. Similar findings have been found to hold in Sweden (Bygren et al., 2009), Norway (Cuypers et al., 2011), and Finland (Hyypä et al., 2005).

Beyond the direct contributions of arts participation, exposure, and education for human well-being, the arts contribute considerable instrumental value in society as a source of economic stimulus. A recent National Endowment for the Arts study found that “the value of arts and cultural production in America in 2019 was \$919.7 billion, amounting to 4.3% of gross domestic product” (NEA, 2021: 1). Moreover, from an employment standpoint there were 5.2 million “arts and cultural sector” jobs in America in 2017, which amounted to 3.3% of all U.S. jobs. Those jobs are estimated to have paid workers a total of \$446.7 billion dollars (NEA, 2021). These numbers include 35 arts and culture fields, including broadcasting, movies, streaming, publishing, the performing arts, and arts-related retail, meaning they far outstrip the scope of the discussion in the paper so far (Florida, 2019). Nonetheless, they do provide a clear indication of the significant role that the arts and adjacent industries play in one's daily economic life.

Though the mainstream media and entertainment industries play a prominent role in driving these numbers, it is important not to underestimate the powerful impact that investing in the arts can have at a local level. Arts festivals and events can have a particularly dramatic positive impact on local economies by attracting visitors, creating jobs and developing skills,

attracting and retaining businesses, revitalizing places, and developing artistic talent and investing in future value (LGA, 2013).

Beyond these benefits of immediately investing in local level initiatives, additional knock-on effects of all forms of arts and culture investment (including supply chain effects) extend within and beyond the immediate communities in which such activities occur (Five Lines Consulting, 2012). For example, a report on the arts and culture industries by the British Center for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) concluded that these effects alone contribute as much as 1 percent to the UK GDP (CEBR, 2013). Evidence of such effects is well-substantiated in the U.S. as well, where the impact of the arts and culture sector is diffuse, adding over \$72 billion to eighteen rural state economies, which are those states in which 30 percent or more of the population live in rural setting

Using Art to Create Shared Value

The central motivating idea behind CSV is that corporations have historically taken a damagingly narrow view of value creation. Porter and Kramer argue that modern corporations “continue to view value creation narrowly, optimizing short-term financial performance in a bubble while missing the most important customer needs and ignoring the broader influences that determine their longer-term success” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). As a result, they argue, companies “overlook the well-being of their customers” and, among other things, ignore “the depletion of natural resources vital to their businesses, the viability of key suppliers, [and] the economic distress of the communities in which they produce and sell” in the name of promoting short-term profitability (Porter & Kramer, 2011). The alternative they propose is for us to cease viewing business and society as being “pitted against each other” and instead recognize that “societal needs, not just conventional economic needs, define markets.” Moreover, they emphasize that “social harms or weaknesses frequently create *internal* costs for firms – such as wasted energy or raw materials, costly accidents, and the need for remedial training to compensate for inadequacies in education” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Therefore, solving these problems through innovative strategies and technology can often be viewed as a means of increasing productivity and expanding markets rather than merely a source of increased costs.

Ultimately, Porter and Kramer identify three primary strategies for promoting shared value. *Reconceiving products and markets* involves focusing primary attention on developing products and services that meet important societal needs. As the authors put it, “An ongoing exploration of societal needs will lead companies to discover new opportunities for differentiation and repositioning in traditional markets, and to recognize the potential of new markets they previously overlooked” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). *Redefining productivity in the value chain* involves identifying those places within a company’s value chain where increased efficiency, policy changes, and internalization of externalities may provide benefits to society at large while improving the bottom line. Finally, *enabling local cluster development* involves supporting and building physical and human capital necessary to sustain growth and development among “geographical concentrations of firms, related businesses, suppliers, service providers, and logistical infrastructure” that support a company’s core business. They argue that pursuing the creation of shared value by refining a company’s practices in these three areas will not only improve social outcomes but ensure long-term business success.

Of course, no account designed to assign the social responsibilities of business will be perfect, and CSV has at times been criticized. For example, critics have argued that, in posing the possibility of “moving beyond” tradeoffs between economic and social value creation, it ignores the very real situations in which choosing to pursue one will come at the expense of the other. Furthermore, CSV has been said to place undue focus on the role of reconceiving new products and markets, without offering guidance for companies that “produce products that are of questionable social good” (e.g., tobacco companies) and to gloss over the scale and complexity of value chains in its aim to identify “win-win” scenarios that will require little sacrifice on the part of global corporations (Crane et al., 2014). Another important criticism relates to the potential impact of CSV’s broad promotion of “local cluster development” which, when uncritically implemented, can disrupt local economies and lead to “migration issues, overcrowding, and precarious [local] dependencies on a particular industry” (Crane et al., 2014; Martin & Sunley, 2003).

Two Routes to Transformation

At this point in the paper, the attention turns to understanding what it really means for luxury brands to embrace the practical value of art in general, by taking concrete steps to use it as a means of creating shared value. There are two main directions they may take to do so: by *deepening art infusion* and *broadening artification*.

Deepening art infusion. The phenomenon of art infusion need not only apply to products but may also involve the transformation of ordinary management processes by introducing art as a medium for reflection and engagement. As described in significant detail below, art can play an important role within business organizations by disrupting ordinary routines and patterns and facilitating new and exciting forms of engagement among internal and external stakeholders.

Broadening artification. Like art infusion, luxury brands should view the artification process as being not merely about the transformation of products. Rather, the transformation of products into art requires using the market power these brands command as tastemakers to create a world within which their products will be more broadly recognized and received as works of art. Part of this involves telling the brand’s story to the world in artistic terms, cataloguing the creative direction of the brand and its legacy for the world to see. However, it should also involve combining genuinely creative artistic output with efforts to proliferate arts awareness and a broader receptivity among the public to the value and importance of art in its increasingly diverse forms. Using the power and influence of luxury brands to cultivate such an audience is not only good for the brand and part of the artification process, but also potentially good for society in many ways.

Reconceiving Products and Markets

Strategies that involve deepening art infusion and broadening artification both provide potentially valuable means of reconceiving products and markets and thereby creating shared value in society. The discussion begins by considering the use of art infusion strategies in the workplace to promote so-called interspaces within which the usual norms of interaction among individuals and groups are “temporarily suspended, thereby enabling the expression and exploration of new ideas and behaviors, which individuals and groups can choose to take forward afterwards” (Paolino & Antal, 2020, para. 16).

Art has the ability to function as a means of bridging gaps in communication and facilitating new forms of communication that would be difficult or impossible to cultivate without it (Antal, 2014; Antal & Strauß, 2015; Paolino & Antal, 2020). This applies to the workplace and stakeholder engagement as well as it does in other areas of civil society (Taylor et al., 2015). Barry and Meisek (2010) identify *art collection*, *artist-led interventions*, and *artistic experimentation* as the three primary ways that arts-based initiatives are typically introduced within organizations. Any of these means can be used to upend conventional workplace norms by creating “interspaces” that empower new forms of communication among employees, management, and stakeholders. These shared experiences can lead to new insights that inform a luxury brand’s product development and marketing approaches, contributing to the role they play in promoting shared value. This is an example of deepening art infusion, through extension of arts engagement and participation to new social spheres.

Some companies have used art collections or the infusion of workspaces with works of art as a means of disrupting expectations and fostering renewed communication, supposing it will function as a means of transforming the way that members of the organization see and think about their working lives. Executives at EA Generali, an Austrian insurance company, introduced art collections into the workplace that “provoke and irritate” with the aim of spreading “creative unrest” throughout the company (Breitwieser, 1995). Following a similar strategy, Mads Øvlisen the former CEO Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk intentionally sought to acquire “difficult” artworks from unknown artists and exhibited them through the company workspace, which many employees found appalling and controversial. His hope in doing so was that “people would stop and think, and...start asking questions about themselves, their ways of noticing things, and their work” (Aunstrup et al., 2000; Barry & Meisiek, 2010, p. 8). Despite unrest that initially followed the art’s introduction to the workplace, researchers report that employees did ultimately take inspiration from the art, describing it as a kind of “symbol of being able to undertake weird projects” (Barry & Meisiek, 2010, p. 8). In fact, years later when Øvlisen retired and workers were given the opportunity to move the art, they would ultimately decline to do so.

A recent case study cataloguing such a process at Bruno Rossi, an Italian luxury shoe producer, offers particularly useful insight into the potential value of such events. In that case, CEO Riccardo Sciutto brought three artists representing past, present, and future to learn from employees and produce separate pieces of art for the company space that would re-establish a sense of pride in the shoe production process that had been lost as the scale of the company’s production had increased (Paolino & Antal, 2020). Through a process of engaging with employees, members of the local community, and competitors, the artists drew on the history and culture of the business to produce work that became a source of meaning and pride for the employees. The process drove continual conversation among stakeholders about the company’s legacy and its future. Furthermore, the artworks became, not only meaningful symbols of the company story, but emblematic of the shared experiences through which the art had been created, about which there was widespread enthusiasm (Paolino & Antal, 2020).

These findings suggest that creating interspaces through different kinds of artistic interventions can facilitate reconceiving markets and products in at least two ways. First, by facilitating new forms of communication that are not bound to conventional workplace norms and providing a means for stakeholders within and outside of companies at different levels to engage and interact with one another, the use of art in this way promotes creativity and cross-pollination of ideas that is bound to generate constructive change. The outcome is even more

likely if firms specifically use art as a means of stimulating discussions about the company's future direction, including discussions about product development and corporate identity.

So far, the primary focus has been on how art infusion can impact internal company dynamics and the product development process. However, if the artification process is truly to be part of a broader effort to create shared value in society, luxury brands will need to undertake a dramatic reconception of how they cultivate and address the market for their products. Specifically, luxury brands committed to CSV must dedicate significant resources to promoting and supporting the arts within communities. Deepening this artification process involves luxury brands moving beyond merely cultivating the standing of their own products as art, to focus on promoting the value of creating, engaging with, and enjoying art more generally. By using their market-shaping power to open access to and stimulate public appreciation for the arts, brands can help create a society with stronger tastes for artified products and ensure the success of their brand strategy over the long-term. By taking genuinely public-spirited action through arts philanthropy and sponsorship, the cultivation of social and educational programs dedicated to the arts, and creation of shared spaces for arts experiences and enjoyment, luxury brands will not only benefit society, but create market conditions for their own success.

Redefining Productivity in the Value Chain

Many of the beneficial features of extending art infusion into the workplace can also help luxury firms to begin redefining productivity in the value chain. Fostering improved stakeholder engagement and transforming the relationship of workers and management through artistic interventions can not only stimulate reflection on the nature of the business's products, but on the inefficiencies and social costs imposed by current supply and production processes. Therefore, art interventions might be used strategically, as a medium for engaging employees and suppliers, to spur reform of production and supply chain processes by engaging workers and contractors to participate in identifying and solving problems.

This approach, in which employees, technicians, and suppliers are treated as a resource for improving productivity, shares philosophical features with the "Toyota Way." The latter revolutionized manufacturing by introducing "Just-In-Time" production to assembly line processes and – more importantly from the current perspective – facilitating vastly improved employee relations and morale, by prioritizing collaborative partnerships among and across workers and managers of different elements in the production process. Toyota's approach abolishes the oppositional norms of traditional factory relations between workers and managers, normalizing teamwork and continual feedback loops between floor workers and management. This facilitates "continuous process flow" by ensuring that managers in charge of resolving production challenges can act based on full information, and with authentic buy-in from workers, who are consulted as active participants in developing solutions.

Given the evidence suggesting that regular use of art as a medium for engaging employees can stimulate cross-sectoral discussion that breaches established hierarchies and humanizes social relationships in the workplace, it seems that using such methods has potential to help promote efforts to redefine productivity in the value chain. The best resources for managers to learn about and understand inefficiencies and sources of lost value within the supply, production, and distribution process are employees and other internal and external stakeholders. As discussed previously, under the right circumstances, using well-designed artistic interventions to foster tighter and more open communicative relationships among

these parties is a potentially powerful strategy, and one that can help companies truly understand their own business operations from the inside out.

Enabling Local Cluster Development

As Porter and Kramer note in their discussion of local cluster development, “The success of every company is affected by the supporting companies and infrastructure around it” (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 12). For luxury brands deploying artification as a strategy, local cluster development must involve designing the infrastructure that will empower future artists and foster a creative network and culture. Doing so will not only provide a range of profound benefits for society, but also allow them to secure channels through which to find and work with the best and brightest emerging artists. Consistent with the previous discussion, luxury brand investment in the arts often involves the creation of museums and other venues for public consumption of art. However, broad investment in educational and training programs for aspiring artists and designers to develop their talents will also be essential. By creating and fostering the growth and nurturing of emerging artists through such programs and securing space for local art appreciation and community engagement, luxury brands can create the conditions out of which the next wave of creative inspiration will emerge to shape and influence their products. Authentic engagement with these communities ensures that luxury brands will retain the cutting-edge artistic bona fides that drives their status as tastemakers and preserves the value of their brand.

It will be particularly important for brands to attend to the important value of diversity and inclusion in developing their approaches to enabling local cluster development. Although there is growing attention to empowering diverse artistic voices, the reality is that the art world remains a space that is often dominated by whiteness. Even as art shows and museums have seen an increase in the representation of people of color, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ art and artists, these cultural spaces – including their management, staff, employees, and patrons – continue to remain less diverse than the general population. Furthermore, public education about art remains primarily focused on historically “canonical” figures while art and artists from minority race, culture, gender, and sexual orientation categories and communities are significantly underrepresented (Arts Council England, 2018). The net effect of these deficiencies is that, in spite of much progress, these minorities continue not to see themselves reflected in world of art – not only to their own detriment, but to that of the artworld itself.

Luxury brands therefore have an opportunity to advocate for and foster a more inclusive artistic community. There are many possible ways to do so, but two stand out as particularly important. The first involves directing targeted funding and lobbying efforts to arts education and support programs that redefine the artworld in more inclusive terms and provide minority students with opportunities to not only see themselves reflected in the history of art but to bring their own artistic visions to the world. Second, luxury brands must continue taking steps to ensure that their own endeavors involving art infusion and artification not only feature a panoply of diverse and underrepresented artistic voices, but that the artworld itself, including the infrastructure through which it is implemented, is equally open and inviting to minority populations.

Conclusion

Luxury brands have historically benefitted from engagement with the artistic community. There is a robust academic literature on the specific benefits for luxury brands of using mechanisms like art infusion and artification as a means of enhancing brand image and overcoming challenges associated with modern market conditions. Less clear is how luxury brand involvement with the arts can benefit the artistic community and contribute to societal well-being more generally. This paper argues that some means of artistic engagement should be considered more socially responsible than others and showed how Porter and Kramer's (2011) creating shared value framework can help brands develop strategies that use art to simultaneously benefit brand and society.

Further attention must also be dedicated to emerging technologies such as Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), which provide both artists and brands the ability to collaborate in the digital domain, and allow consumers to purchase a kind of exclusive ownership over these digital creations (Javornik et al 2021). Owing to the exclusive nature of this digital ownership, luxury brands have shown inordinate interest in this technology and several luxury brands, including LVMH, Burberry, and Gucci were among some of the first to auction NFTs (DeAcetis 2021). Given the clear differences between physical and "internet" art, it's unclear how if and how shared value can be cultivated in the digital domain.

Finally, while art is generally considered non-zero sum, some have argued that there are negative consequences for a society that becomes overly reliant on corporate art (Wu 2003, Vitaly 2004). For example, as luxury brands become increasingly integrated within the artworld, it could crowd out other potential artistic sources. This is especially threatening given that even well-intentioned luxury brands may be predisposed to engage (intentionally or not) in promoting and creating art which is biased, self-serving, and supportive of luxury ideals such as status-seeking and ostentation at the expense of other virtues. In sum, there are many ways in which the art of luxury brands may produce unintended consequences, and future work is needed to better understand these pitfalls and how to address them.

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***An Appraisal of the Filipino Catholic Devotion to the Black Nazarene in the Light of
New Evangelization***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Popular devotions are reflections and expressions of the people's faith. They are expressions of how people recognize God in their lives, and as a shared experience, they foster expressions of devotion and thus become a manifestation of prayer. Popular devotions as forms of prayer and worship do not contradict the Sacred Liturgy but are acknowledged as legitimate by the Apostolic See. Moreover, popular devotions, in general, lead to the cultivation of some values. One of the most popular devotions among Filipino Catholics is the devotion to the Black Nazarene, a life-sized statue of Jesus Christ kneeling on one knee carrying the cross-dressed in a maroon robe. His face is marked with wounds and blood. His head is crowned with thorns with three gold-plated metal rays on the top of his head, with his eyes looking up to heaven. The Black Nazarene devotion balances Christology from below and above, i.e., Christ does not remain crucified. Instead, he brings the hope of resurrection to those who fervently approach him with faith, hope, and love. It suffices to say that the Black Nazarene serves as a means for the Filipino faithful to encounter Christ in their lives. Given this, this paper aims to appraise the Black Nazarene Devotion as a means that contributes to the New Evangelization among Filipino Catholics. More specifically, this paper seeks to answer how the devotion to the Black Nazarene aids Filipino Catholics in their desire to sustain and grow in their faith.

Keywords: Black Nazarene, Popular Devotion, New Evangelization

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Introduction

Christianity in the Philippines has spread so many devotions that influenced Filipino cultures. Black Nazarene is one of the many popular devotions in the Philippines that call people into conversion and religious zeal. Devotions serve as one of the ways of evangelizing the Filipino Catholics, reflecting on the lives of the icon, witnessing the miracles, and joining the other faithful to live out the values taught. Devotions have a significant role in strengthening one's faith and relationship with God. However, not all devotees know and understand the backgrounds of their practices, their more profound meaning, and their importance in how it contributes to evangelization.

It is essential to note the place of devotions in the evangelization of the Catholic Church. The researcher will be using a qualitative approach/methodology in the study. This paper focuses on the devotion to the Black Nazarene in the light of the new evangelization. It aims to answer the following questions: *What is the Black Nazarene devotion? What are the historical and sociological aspects of the Black Nazarene? What are the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding popular devotions? How does the Black Nazarene devotion serve as a means that contributes to the New Evangelization among Filipino Catholics? What is good about popular devotions? What are the negative practices or beliefs that need to be clarified? Lastly, what are the recommendations to the people regarding the devotion?*

Historical and Sociological Aspects of the Black Nazarene

History tells us that the Black Nazarene is known to be sculpted by a Mexican sculptor and was transported to Manila on May 31, 1606, during the Spanish period by the first group of the Order of the Augustinian Recollects (OAR) by a galleon. It was first kept in the Bagumbayan church, which is now Rizal Park. It was transferred again to a bigger church of the Augustinians in Intramuros in 1608. By order of the Archbishop of Manila, Basilio Sancho Junta y Rufina, the image was transferred to the Quiapo Church under the patronage of Saint John the Baptist. On April 20, 1650, it obtained Papal approval from Pope Innocent X. The image survived many crises like fire in 1790 and 1920 that destroyed the Quiapo Church, earthquakes in 1645 and 1863, and the World War II bombing in 1945.¹

Most Filipino devotees are not overly concerned about its origin or history, but they only focus on their hope that their petitions may be granted. They may be helped in their struggles in life and witness miracles. Other devotees consider practices to be a way for them to share His passion and offer their lives to Him. This devotion could be the reason why, every day, especially during its feast day, it's flocked by thousands or millions of people.

Countless people wait in line and try their best to reach the image of the Nazarene. During the procession, people witness blood and sweat. People faint and are injured because of the crowdedness, yet they continue trying to pass their towels to touch the Black Nazarene. Why do large crowds gather at its feast, processions, and shrine? Where did their energy, joy, and devotion come from?

Sociologist Clifford Sorita said in his article "*Understanding the Devotion of the Black Nazarene*" that the devotion comes from a deep-rooted personal experience with the Divine

¹ <https://www.esquiremag.ph/culture/lifestyle/black-nazarene-the-tale-of-traslacion-a1729-20190109-lfrm> (accessed on June 8, 2021)

whereby a pilgrim undergoes a direct experience of the sacred, either in the material aspect of miraculous healing and acquisition of various temporal needs or in the immaterial aspect of the inward transformation of spirit and personality. It is a personal and communitarian religious experience.

Regarding the methodology in understanding the Christological aspects of Popular Devotions, they are described as much more rooted in a Christology from below. Christology from below means its starting point is from the *historical Jesus*. Historical Jesus and generic approach start from below, but we still uphold the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus. They come from the people themselves, touching their lives and inspiring them. There is an emphasis here on the earthly life of Jesus, his words of preaching with the apostles, and his actions performed to the people of Israel. In this method, it answers how much of the ordinary life of Jesus affected and influence Christian believers in their practice of faith and expressions. We give more focus here on Jesus' way of life with the Israelites, being a simple man living with his parents in Nazareth before he started his ministry, his human aspects of maturity, intelligence, and behavioral development. We encountered Him in the Gospel as a person who "continued to grow and to become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him." (c.f. Luke 2: 40). He was not exempted from the sufferings of daily life, immune from the pain and daily hardships to earn a living and survive a day. Because of this in his ministry, he became too sensitive to the needs of the people, in the fight for justice and the restoration of everyone's dignity, in healing their sickness, and fighting for their rights. He suffered from the people of Israel, lifted their dignity, and preached the Kingdom of God to whosoever was willing to accept his call of discipleship and conversion. We don't disregard here his Divinity as the Son of God and the miracles he performed.

Another method of understanding devotions is through Christology from above. Christology from above teaches us that Christ, because of his love for humanity, suffers, died, and destroyed death and sin. Christology from above means it is an approach whose starting point is from the dogmatic claims of our faith. Son of eternal God (second person of the trinity)/ it is a dogmatic approach (It's dangerous because we can end up just spiritualizing Jesus. To start from dogma, without strong historical foundations, would be superficial and unrealistic (memorizing without critical thinking). Devotion is one of the Christian ways of trying to reach and experience God in some simple ways of forms of prayer and practices like touching the robes and body parts of the statues of saints, attending novena masses, and fiesta mass, pilgrimages, offering intentions, etc. Others knew them as popular spirituality, popular religiosity, a religion of the people, and the widespread religious sense.² The focus permanently resides in the word "Popular," which means the "People," or the "People of God." These devotions are continuously "loved" and "cherished" by the people.³ Christology from below or above is a matter of methodology on how we go about the study of Jesus Christ. With the said methodologies, we need to make sure to have a balance between the two to avoid too much emphasis on the humanity of Jesus to the point of disregarding his Divinity and vice versa. Popular devotions serve as a bridge of experiencing both methodologies in becoming closer to God and in having a deeper relationship with Him.

² Austin J. Lindsay, C.S.Sp., "Popular Piety: Link Between Priest and People," *Priest*, March 1983, 40.

³ Bernhard Raas, SVD, *Popular Devotions Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicles of Spiritual Growth*, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1992), 15.

Significance of the Black Nazarene Devotion to New Evangelization in the Philippine Context

Through the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church learned her very own missionary nature and continuously renewed her way of evangelization throughout the time, adjusting to the signs of the times, and giving weight to the rise of new issues concerning the World and in the Church's way of life. The need for evangelization was emphasized in the Church's document "*ad Gentes*" (to the World). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops said: "Church's *ad Gentes* ('to the world') mission given to her by Christ is the proclamation of the Good News to those who do not know him. The historical and social circumstances of the twentieth century prompted the Church to renew her mission to evangelize."⁴

It was given importance again by Pope Paul VI in his writing, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, as he stated one of the purposes of the Church's existence: to evangelize, preach and teach, and be a channel of God's grace and forgiveness.⁵ Saint John Paul II renewed the call for evangelization in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. Saint John Paul II first used the term "New Evangelization" in 1983, addressing the Catholic Bishops of Latin America in Haiti.

Here, the Black Nazarene in the Philippines enters with its ardor and passion. The influence of the devotion must not remain just a mere attraction but must lead to conversion and renewal of faith and love for God and others. The New Evangelization does not only mean carrying out the Gospel but also deepening one's relationship of the faithful and the Church, application of the teachings in the Second Vatican II, and inculturation of what is already present, accompanying every faithful towards the Christian way of life leading them to repentance and love of God.

For the celebration of 500 years' presence of Catholic Faith in the Philippines, the Black Nazarene has already been considered a gift to Filipinos in strengthening their faith and closeness to God. Having been enculturated in the Filipino Catholics' lives, the Catholic Faith always finds its place in the hearts and minds of devotees. The Black Nazarene became already a part of the lives of the faithful, renewing them from their faith and purifying them from their doubts, trials, and daily Christian lives. Pope Francis acknowledged the importance of such devotion in the process of enculturation and evangelization of faith in the culture of a community.

The Black Nazarene serves as one way of inculturating the Christian faith to Filipinos and also serves as a new form of evangelization as it proclaims Jesus Christ Himself and gives way to devotees to have personal experience with Him. Devotees of the Black Nazarene are usually the poor, those suffering from different kinds of sickness, and those answered in their prayers. The common people (poor) and usually men shared their sorrows with Christ carrying his Cross. The devotion to the Black Nazarene is different because it is Jesus Christ himself, whom the devotee adores. People are kept on coming back because of their faith, giving thanks to Him, and expressing their gratitude to God through their passion for

⁴ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis United States Conference of Catholic Bishops., *Disciples Called to Witness The New Evangelization*, 2012., (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), p.5.

⁵ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on the Evangelization in the Modern World (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*), 8 December 1975, Vatican archive., https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html. no. 14

devotion. They believe that because of their devotion, their petitions were granted. In exchange for it, they wanted to repay by participating and attending annually the feast days and special occasions of the Black Nazarene. The Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines stated: "We see in this Jesus one who can identify with us in our poverty, sufferings, and oppression; one who can reach out to us as a forgiving and healing Savior in our weaknesses and failings."⁶

It is in this religious experience that the concept of "*Panata*" started. It is a vow or promise where devotees and pilgrims would repeatedly come back to renew this spiritual encounter. It was also a challenge to the devotees that even after the experience, their faith and formation must continue in their ordinary lives or else it will just become a mere fanaticism. The image shows itself as a figure of Christ who is so close to the poor and the suffering that Christ himself was poor who accepted conviction and death on the Cross.

Furthermore, on the Black Nazarene, they see a Jesus who is so human, ever-loving, and willing to stay with them and a God who is so merciful in forgiving them their sins, healing them from their sickness, and liberating them from the society full of biases and classes. The image helps them identify themselves with God, who is also suffering from them, and feel solidarity. It is difficult for the poor to have thought of Jesus Christ as the King, but a God who became man too and redeemed by their sins liberated them from the sufferings they experience, like healing their sickness and preaching the Kingdom of God. Jesus, who is God, became human for Him to be with us. People also take devotion as their chance and a way to express their solidarity with the Christ who offered himself.

Other traditional practices were revolving around the image, namely: *Pahalik* (kissing of the statues), *Pasindi* (lighting of multi-colored candles outside of the Church), *Padasal* (from the devotee or the Priests), *Pabihis* (the changing of the garments of the Black Nazarene), *Pabendision* (sprinkling of Holy Water after masses or the kissing of the hands of the priests), *Pahawak* (touching of the statues or the garments of the Black Nazarene), *Pamisa* (Mass Offerings), *Pagnonobena* (Novena prayers or masses), *Pagpasan* (Carrying of the wood of the carroza or the rope attached to it), *Pagyayapak* (walking barefoot during processions), *Paglalakad ng Paluhod* (processing to the altar on bended knees)

New Evangelization and Popular Devotions

Pope Francis invited the faithful to a renewal of their profession of faith amidst the changes happening around them and encourage them to respond to the need to continuously evangelize the World and open themselves to encounter the Lord. In his Exhortation, he mentioned that "Whenever we make an effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's World. Every form of authentic evangelization is always 'new.'"⁷

⁶ Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*. (Manila: CBCP, 1997), no. 555.

⁷ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (*Evangelii Gaudium*), 24 November 2013, Vatican Archive, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed on February 27, 2020), no. 11.

Evangelization is a call for conversion. Devotion to the Black Nazarene is a call for faithful to conversion, continuous renewal of faith, repentance from sin, and living out of Christian values with the example of Jesus' actions. "The proclamation of the Word of God has Christian conversion as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel through faith. Conversion is a gift of God, a work of the Blessed Trinity."⁸ A devotee should not remain to evangelize by attraction, which means participating in different activities of the Black Nazarene without understanding them and without a total change of heart. During the feast day of the Black Nazarene, many people are joining yet; the question is how many among them understand what they are doing? A lot of people attend, and how many will remain to evangelize fully? That means they will carry out the invitation of conversion in their daily lives.

Insights, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Insights

In the light of the New Evangelization, there are prevailing problems regarding devotions in general and the Black Nazarene that challenge the ministers and pastoral leaders. There is always a need for renewal and purification to avoid confusion and conflicts with faith. Popular devotions are loved much by the people and readily appreciated because of their lively component that could easily be adapted more than Liturgy, seemingly experienced as tedious and limited. Liturgy seems to be so far and unattractive to ordinary people looking for consolation. Most devotions have their days in a week where there will be novena or mass in honor of the image, which for others becomes more special than that of Sunday mass celebration. Others faithfully attend the special practices/festivals allotted to the devotion rather than Liturgy itself.

Over-emphasizing the devotion leads the faithful to some misconceptions of their image of God as there is a promise attached to the devotion, the person fulfills the ritual/ practice to gain favor on God, "I do something so that God will give me."⁹ The faithful narrows down his/ her understanding of God, having a false image of God who rewards whoever does/practices something and receives nothing for those who do nothing. It changes the motivation of the faithful.

Having enough education is the best solution to the problem. Learning from its history and earlier practices will give the faithful a stronger conviction of their devotions. Pope Francis said: "we need to be realistic and not assume that our audience understands the full background to what we are saying, or is capable of relating what we say to the very heart of the Gospel, which gives it meaning, beauty and attractiveness."¹⁰ Giving the devotees ample time to catechize them, explaining the basic teachings of faith, Liturgy, basic concepts of

⁸ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (*Redemptoris Missio*), 7 December 1990, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html (accessed on March 8, 2020), no. 46.

⁹ Bernhard Raas, SVD, *Popular Devotions Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicles of Spiritual Growth*, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1992). 27.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (*Evangelii Gaudium*), 24 November 2013, Vatican Archive, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed on February 27, 2020), no. 34.

God's images and devotion, incorporating them in their sermons, recollections, talks, and pastoral visits, giving symposium and theological hours concerning the Black Nazarene. Popular devotions, in general, are influencing a lot of faithful in the strengthening of their faith. Some have their devotions inherited from their parents, or others vowed to practice such devotion for reasons they associated, like healing from sickness or becoming successful in life. For some faithful, they follow devotions without having a grounded knowledge of the practices. Problems or dangers arise when there is already an over-emphasis and attention on the devotion than the Liturgy itself when there is no real transformation in their lives, as Fr. Bernhard Raas, SVD said.¹¹

Obligations

Pastoral leaders should carefully watch and analyze some practices given more priority than the Liturgy and study the best action they should take. The Philippines' Black Nazarene image always attracts and gathers thousands, millions of people on its every feast day and other special occasions. Regarding this particular devotion, there were many mythical beliefs and prevailing ignorance about it, which must be corrected according to theologian Msgr. Sabino A. Vengco, Jr. clarified that it is wrong to celebrate its feast on January 9 as it is "out of season" in the Liturgical calendar. January 9 is still part of the Christmas season. Msgr. Vengco asks: "How can you be celebrating the birth and the coming of Jesus when already he is there bowed down beneath the weight of the cross?" He continued by saying that the celebration is "in violation of the fundamental principle that any popular devotion must harmonize with the liturgy and must lead the people, the faithful, into the liturgy."¹²

Devotees should always be advised and reminded to avoid any excessive practices and expressions that would harm themselves and are not demanded by anyone. Different gestures and observations equipped with the understanding and background knowledge are exemplary. A word grounded in faith and trust in God is good, but too much exaggeration to the point of getting hurt must be reflected upon as what always happens in the event "*Traslacion*." Msgr. Vengco also explained that January 9 transferred the image from Intramuros to Quiapo, which has no connection to the image portrayed. The Black Nazarene depicting Christ carrying the Cross initially during the Spanish era is celebrated during the Lenten Season and must be as Msgr. Vengco stated. He was also concerned about the Black Nazarene's excessive practice that had already become "superstitious, fanatical and even idolatrous." Most people are eager to touch the image during the procession and even throw their towels and ask to wipe the image.

It is a challenge for the faithful to be evangelized not only by attraction but by conversion. What are the tasks of the Church to keep the fire on devotions and contribute to the new evangelization? It should all begin with the ministers and pastoral leaders taking care of the images and other priests and catechists. Evangelization should start with the leaders. Saint John Paul II said: "We cannot preach conversion unless we are converted anew every day."¹³ Evangelization through devotion must always lead the faithful to conversion, which should

¹¹ Bernhard Raas, SVD, *Popular Devotions Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicles of Spiritual Growth*, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1992), 26.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (Redemptoris Missio)*, 7 December 1990, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html (accessed on March 5, 2020), no. 47.

happen first among the leaders. Having a positive attitude towards popular devotions, specifically the Black Nazarene, must also be considered. Having great respect and appreciation towards the people and careful observance of their practices and reasons must be given priority to the ministers and pastoral leaders. Why are they practicing them? What are the prevailing reasons for their devotions? With these questions in mind, they will enable themselves to have a mutual understanding of the devotion and the people themselves.¹⁴

After the observation, a thorough reflection and discernment could begin with the help of theological inquiry and historical research. Only with these methods can ministers and pastoral leaders have the right decision on how to purify, recommend, or even stop such devotion. Excessive practice and ignorance will always lead to superstitions and shallow beliefs. Pastoral leaders and priests should have adequate historical and theological knowledge of devotions such as the Black Nazarene and the beauty of the Liturgy.¹⁵

They should encourage everyone to participate more in celebrating the real presence of God, the Eucharist. Having an active, alive, and participative Liturgy will draw more people to appreciate the Eucharist and other sacraments. Popular devotions are in touch with the people. The Black Nazarene is portraying an image of commonality with others, continuously drawing people toward Him. Ministers and pastoral leaders need to know the people's needs, wishes, and desires, especially the poor. In the celebration of the Liturgy, priests could integrate the needs of the people in the intentions, introductory words, homilies, and prayers of the faithful.¹⁶

What are the obligations and rightful attitudes the devotees must observe? The faithful are always looking for something that could quench their thirst for divinity, the longing for the absolute healing of their brokenness. They are a people whose love for the Lord usually depends on the external activities they do, like the devotions, and on the outcome or fruit of their faith after the practice. Black Nazarene is a kind of Christology unifying the Christology from below and above. There should always be a balance of the two, a Christ who does not remain crucified but also brings hope to everyone for their resurrection; in the end, having basic catechisms and knowledge of the devotion and Liturgy should always remind us what the proper practices of the devotions are and avoid excesses.

Conclusion

The Black Nazarene is a powerful image of God who is in solidarity with the poor in their poverty and suffering, and it is the same God who gives them hope that someday, their poverty and suffering will end. Conversion, commitment, and renewal to the life of Jesus must always be the end of the devotion; without transformation, the devotion will remain an external activity leading to fanaticism, externalism, and sentimentalism; then, the faithful are just evangelized by attraction. Devotion to the Black Nazarene is not a one-time event but an everyday challenge of renewal and conversion. It involves social responsibility and morality. Holy images or statues should not be worshiped, and instead, be accorded "respectful veneration." There should be an emphasis on the broader community.

¹⁴ Bernhard Raas, SVD, *Popular Devotions Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicles of Spiritual Growth*, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1992), 28- 29.

¹⁵ Ibid., 28.

¹⁶ Ibid., 30.

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***Jesus the Economist: Envisioning God's Economy of
Solidarity and Equality to Global Resilience***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Throughout the earthly life of Jesus, he spoke regularly about wealth, possession, ownership, poverty, and even the economy's taxes. As a result, multiple interpretations of Jesus as an economist have emerged: some believe He was a socialist, while others believe He was a capitalist. This paper is a case study of the historical Jesus that focuses on understanding Jesus as an economist by envisioning God's economy, not by placing Him into a single economic system of being a capitalist or socialist, specifically on how Jesus as an economist contributed significantly to global recovery and resilience in present time. To put it into context, God's economy is seeing the entire world as God's household; all creation of God belongs to God's household. In God's economy, Jesus was concerned about solidarity and equality, not with the profit of a single individual or group, but with the well-being of all, as recounted in the scriptures. Regardless of the economic system we follow, this pandemic has presented various issues. These issues have an impact on the economy of the country and lead to increasingly dangerous crises, injustices, and inequities among the population. As a result, every nation is attempting to recover economically, and every country hopes for global recovery and resilience. Reconnecting to Jesus' teachings and examples of solidarity and equality is a focal point to global resilience.

Keywords: Economy, Resilience, Solidarity, Equality, Household, Collectivism, Jesus

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Introduction

There are various images or titles that are attributed to Jesus, such as the *Messiah* (Mk 8:29), Son of God (Jn 20:31), Son of Man (Lk 19:10), Word or *logos* (Jn 1:1), Lord (Lk 2:11) Rabbi (Jn 9:2). These are some of the titles or images attributed to Him that can be found clearly in the scripture. One image of Jesus that may not be directly stated in the scripture but usually comes out when understanding the historical Jesus is – the economist. Though Jesus did not engage in any formal studies in economics nor clearly and directly preach any technical terms about the economic system. He frequently talked about wealth, possession, ownership, poverty, and even taxes which constitute the economy, during His earthly life. With this, what could be the relevance of the historical Jesus as an economist in our modern time?

Method of Theology

This paper uses a theological method of correlation formulated by Edward Schillebeeckx, regarded as one of the twentieth century's most prominent Catholic theologians. This correlation is between "two sources" of theology, which he labels the two poles of theology: the experiences of the tradition and present-day experiences" (Fiorenza, 2011, p.43). In the first part, this paper conducts historical research on Jesus as an economist in envisioning God's economy of solidarity and equality, which constitutes the first pole. Then, correlate it by analyzing the recent experiences (second pole), particularly on the impact caused by the pandemic. In our current situation, pandemics have wreaked havoc on the planet, causing a slew of problems economically, socially, and even spiritually. These issues have an impact on the economy of every nation and lead to crises, inequalities, and injustices.

First Pole: Historical Jesus

This first source of theology depicts the tradition of the Christian experience. This is an encounter of the people with the historical Jesus, which leads people to their understanding of Jesus.

Jewish Economy During the Time of Jesus

The socio-economic context of where Jesus came from is essential in understanding the historical Jesus. Capper (2011) mentioned that "Jesus lived in a society of massive wealth and differentiation between the political elite and the mass of ordinary people" (p.107). He further described the agrarian society in two classes:

Between a narrow governing class or wealth elite, numbering less than one or two percent of the population, "the few" [hoi ologoi], "the notables," "the rich," "the powerful" [hoi dynatoi], and the large mass of small tenant farmers, laborers, and rural artisans, "the many" [hoi polloi], "the people," "the poor," the "weak" (Capper, 2011, p.108).

We can see the vast gap in numbers between the elite and the poor, an elite group comprising less than one or two of the total population, and a large group of people is poor. With such a gap in their social structure, the elite families wield power in societal governance. According to Hakkinen (2016), "the wealth and status of the elite families ensured their influence in politics so that they were able to control both local and regional governance and also profit from taxation" (p.2). In addition, Draper (2003) stated that "Jesus came from Nazareth, a

village wherein the sole source of income was subsistence farming by peasant landholders.” He also explained the life of a peasant in the time of Jesus:

The peasant may or may not own his own land, but it is a feature of peasant life that they are required to pay dues of up to half their crop to a landlord, who has established jurisdiction over them. This is called their *rent requirement* and epitomizes the *asymmetrical power relation* between peasant producers and their controllers. It means that the peasant never prospers beyond a certain point because increased production results in increased in rent (Draper, 2003, 84).

This could be the reason why a considerable number of the population comprises poor people. For, even if they work hard and produce more, the demand from the elite group will also increase. It would be challenging for poor people to overcome poverty because of some injustices and inequality. Hakkinen (2016) also cited M.I. Finley that “inequality was typical for all the societies in the ancient world...not between town and country, not between classes, but simply between rich and poor” (p.1). Therefore, to see the socio and economic context of a historical Jesus, we realize that Jesus came from a community where inequality, injustices, and poverty were apparent.

Jesus is typically associated with marginalized or people in lower classes, for he came and lived in a not well-off family. Jesus was born in a manger (Luke 2:7), and his father worked as a carpenter (Mt.13:55), a work that he eventually embraced. According to Edayadiyil (2009), “the sacrifice that Jesus’ parents offered in the temple (Lk 2:24) amply illustrates that his family was poor” (p.4). He further stated that “Jesus’ whole life was identified with the poor, and he in every sense is one of the typical poor (anawim) of the Old Testament” (Edayadiyil, 2021, p.4). But Jesus being with the marginalized does not mean that He never mingled with the elite group of people. He also interacted with the religious elite, such as scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees, members of the Sanhedrin, including Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (Jn 3:1-21; 19:38) (Jones, 2016). This interaction of Jesus with the poor and wealthy people would give us a picture of His economic viewpoint. Bess (2012) claimed that “Jesus made his reputation as a Jewish economist, one with very strong opinions about wealth and property, about the relationship between the rich and the poor.”

Furthermore, if we examine the scriptures thoroughly throughout his earthly life, we can see that economy was a component of His earthly life and ministry. Jesus talked about wealth and possession in the story of the rich young man (Mt 19:16-30). He taught parables about agriculture and land, such as the parable of the sower (Mt 13:1-9), the parable of the mustard seed (Mk 4:30-32), and the parable of the tenants (Mt 21:33-46). He also asked his followers to invest in treasures in heaven (Lk 12:32-33, Luke 14:13-14). Given that the central theme of his mission was the kingdom of God, his teachings also touched on the economy. Yet, there are various interpretations of Jesus as an economist; some say He was a socialist, and others perceive Him as a capitalist. “Socialists finesse Scripture to justify redistributing wealth to “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40), while capitalists overplay the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)” (Flax, 2022).

Jesus as Socialist

Socialism in the Christian context is described as “simply a natural consequence or outworking of Christianity; the Bible teaches that God is the Father, and socialism is the system whereby the people of the world or a particular society can live as brothers and sisters” (Williams, 2016). Everyone belongs to one family, having one Father in heaven –

God. It signifies that the theme of socialism can be seen - humanity encompasses one huge family, despite individuality and distinctions. One scriptural basis could attest to that can be found in the Gospel of Matthew “as for you, do not be called Rabbi, you have one teacher, and you are all brothers, call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven” (Mt.23:8-9). Williams (2016) also claimed a socialist interpretation on verses of Beatitudes:

Verses such as “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3) and “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt. 5:5) were given socialist interpretations: the Kingdom of Heaven belonged to the poor rather than the rich; the earth would be inherited by the meek rather than being controlled by the capitalist and landlord class (p.30).

This narrative conveys a message of hope to the poor and oppressed, implying that Christ's teachings include the concept of brotherhood, solidarity, equality, and socialism. Another reference to Jesus' socialism is the parable of the rich young man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31). For Williams, this parable serves as a warning to people in positions of authority or influence who do not use their varied powers in a socialist manner. But then, the common reference to Jesus as a socialist can be seen in his response to the rich young man seeking eternal life "go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" (Mt.19:21). These are some examples in the life and teachings of Jesus denouncing wealth and warning the rich people about how they treat their wealth. Jesus wants to distribute the wealth to those less fortunate. Jesus' special attention to the poor and marginalized people signifies equality, solidarity, and fairness for everyone.

Jesus and the Capitalism

Capitalism is defined as “the utilization of goods and service as a means of profit-making” (Annot and Martindale, 2021). They discuss competition as one of the tenets of Christianity concerning capitalism:

Since the fall, man has lived in an economic environment of scarcity (Gen 3:17-19). All products and services are scarce; there is more demand than supply for everything...In capitalism, the demands of many buyers and the supply of many producers determine who gets what via competition – the suppliers compete for customers, and customers compete for products with their money. As we Christians, we must be good stewards of our resources (Proverbs 31:10-31, Mt 25:14-30, and Lk 16:1-13). That means we must do the best we can with what we are given. Doing the best we can in an environment of scarcity means we sometimes do better than others and win, and sometimes we do worse and lose (Annot and Martindale, 2021, pp. 9-10).

There we can see the principle of competition in the context of stewardship of Christianity. More than winning, God wants us to do our best in cultivating and developing the resources. The parable of talents (Mt 25:14-30) taught by Jesus can be seen in the framework of stewardship. The master in the story was pleased for the servants to earn him the most profit, except for the one who buried the talent and did not gain anything. The master, like the capitalist, is more pleased with servants who produce more than the servant who gains nothing. This story supports the argument that capitalism has a place in Jesus Christ's teachings.

Jesus Envisioning God's Economy

The historical Jesus did not openly stimulate nor encourage a specific economic system for people. Thus, understanding Jesus as an economist must be seen on a broader scope and not put him in a single economic system of being a capitalist or socialist. He talked so much about economics in his earthly ministry, especially how He envisioned God's economy (Smith, 2012). The word "economy" can be traced back to the Greek word *oikonomia*, which is composed of two words: *oikos*, which is translated as "household," and *nemein*, which is translated as "management and dispensation" (Leshem, 2016). To put it into context, we can see the entire world as God's household; all creation of God belongs to God's household. Therefore, Jesus as an economist is about Jesus managing God's household by promoting solidarity and equality for all.

Second Pole: Contemporary Experiences

Two contrasting elements characterize the second pole in Schillebeeckx's correlation: its hopeful orientation to the future and its confrontation with an excess of suffering and senseless injustice, both of which were caused by the utilitarian individualism of Western Modernity (Fiorenza, 2011). This goes with the increasing wealth and power with instrumentalizing the human person and society at the expense of the environment and human well-being (Boeve, 2004). In today's context, the COVID 19 outbreak and the social and moral challenges it spawned constitute the second pole.

COVID-19 Outbreak (Contemporary Situation)

Coronavirus disease (COVID 19) has wreaked havoc on people's lives worldwide. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID 19 outbreak a global pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). Globally, as of January 13, 2022, there have been 315,345,967 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 5,510,174 deaths, reported to WHO (WHO Coronavirus Dashboard, 2022). This pandemic has brought a slew of problems, including social and economic catastrophes and widespread human suffering and death. According to the World Bank Group, "this is the largest crisis response of any such period in the Bank Group's history and represents an increase of more than 60% over the 15-month period prior to the pandemic" (The World Bank, 2021). Likewise, there will be 205 million unemployed individuals in the labor sector in 2022, up from 187 million in 2019 (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). As to the United Nations' response to COVID 19, "it is more than a health crisis; it is an economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis, and a human right crisis" (United Nations, n.d.). COVID 19 has disproportionately impacted specific individuals and groups—as characterized by factors such as race, class, gender, disability, age, displacement and homelessness, and migration status, among others—reflecting longstanding disparities and inequalities not only in health and health care but also in society (McNeely and Schintler, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it has highlighted global social inequalities and injustices, such as gender inequality, circumstances where the poor people get poorer and ethnic inequalities.

Gender Inequality

The COVID-19 virus does not discriminate between males and females infected. However, the pandemic is highlighting inequalities, including gender disparities. Antonio Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, described women's inequality:

Women are disproportionately represented in poorly paid jobs without benefits, as domestic workers, casual labourers, street vendors, and in small-scale services like hairdressing. The International Labour Organization estimates that nearly 200 million jobs will be lost in the next three months alone – many of them in exactly these sectors. And just as they are losing their paid employment, many women face a huge increase in care work due to school closures, overwhelmed health systems, and the increased needs of older people. Many men, too, are facing job losses and conflicting demands. But even at the best of times, women do three times as much domestic work as men. That means they are more likely to be called on to look after children if businesses open while schools remain closed, delaying their return to the paid labour force (Guterres, 2020 para 6-9).

While the crisis has had a detrimental impact on most people's lives and careers, women's jobs and livelihoods are more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic (Azcue et al., 2020). This indicates that the pandemic's major concern is not just every country's health system but also its commitment to equality.

Poor get poorer, and the rich get richer

According to the International Labour Organization, around 600 million people work in the hardest-hit industries, such as hospitality and retail; these sectors are represented mainly by women, ethnic minorities, migrants, the low-skilled, and the young; they also tend to pay poorly (Romei, 2020). She also cited Sebastian Konigs, a labor economist at the OECD, in her article "more vulnerable labour market groups – notably the low-skilled and workers in non-standard jobs – have been most strongly affected by job and earnings losses so far which could further increase existing wealth inequalities" (Romei, 2020). As a result of the pandemic's influence on the labor group, the poor become poorer. On the other hand, the rich get richer because of their opportunities in this kind of situation. Romei presented that:

The 10 richest billionaires in the world increased their wealth by \$319bn in 2020, with technology billionaires accounting for the vast majority of the gain, according to research by Bloomberg. According to Chuck Collins of the Institute for Policy Studies, billionaires' wealth "is surging," and "many of them are profiting from our increasing dependence on cloud-based technologies, online retail, drug research, telemedicine, videoconferencing — services that have become essential services during the pandemic (Romei, 2020).

Ethnic Inequalities

Volkan Bozkir, the President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, said that "today, the COVID 19 pandemic has laid bare the existing vulnerabilities facing the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups" (United Nations Human Rights, 2021, para 1). As COVID 19 progresses, discrimination and inequalities have grown. According to Ian Goldin and Robert Muggah, "the pandemic is deepening geographic inequality with people living in poor places being more vulnerable to the health and economic impacts of the pandemic" (Goldin and Muggah, 2020). This means that COVID 19 has a greater impact on poorer areas due to fragile health and economic situations. Both Golden and Muggah used the example of a downturn in the United States:

Within a month of the pandemic hitting the US, 22% of small businesses went under. While 17% of white-owned businesses failed, 41% of black-owned businesses collapsed. One reason for this disparity is due to the way pandemic hotspots

concentrated in poorer neighbourhoods. Black-owned businesses also generally had weaker underlying finances, fewer reserves, and much weaker contacts with banks and financial institutions empowered by the government to administer emergency grants (Goldin and Muggah, 2020, Ethnic inequalities on the rise section, para 1).

Furthermore, they claimed that wealth inequalities reflect inequalities on other dimensions, such as income, where black workers earn 9% less and Bangladeshi workers earn 20% less than white workers in Britain, and people from racial, religious, and ethnic minorities have been threatened with physical violence, hate speech, and conspiracy theories accusing them of spreading the virus during the pandemic (Goldin and Muggah, 2020).

Correlation of the Two Poles

The method of correlation emphasizes a critical confrontation between tradition and the modern situation. In this sense, new contextual experiences help to cast a fresh look at the tradition on the one hand, and this tradition, as an ever-renewing interpretation of experiences, produces perspectives that give a Christian dimension to this modern context on the other (Boeve, 2004). Both sources (poles) have something to offer in deepening one's faith. After recognizing Jesus' concern for solidarity and equality in God's economy, the question becomes, "How can this be of help in responding to the challenges and crises brought to us by the pandemic?" or how can Jesus' teachings and examples of solidarity and equality be used to build global resilience?

Gender Equality

One of the facets of God's economy that needs to consider is gender equality, particularly the participation of women in God's household. Thus, it is necessary to look back on how Jesus related to women. Jesus, in the light of the Jewish environment, appears to be a unique and sometimes radical reformer of the views of women and the roles they played in His people's culture (Witherington III, 1998). He described the role of women in Judaism and compared it to the Christian community:

While women were able neither to make up the quorum necessary to found a synagogue nor to receive the Jewish covenant sign, these limitations did not exist in the Christian community. The necessary and sufficient explanation of why Christianity differed from its religious mother, Judaism, in these matters is that Jesus broke with both biblical and rabbinic traditions that restricted women's roles in religious practices and that He rejected attempts to devalue the worth of a woman or her word of witness. Thus, the community of Jesus, both before and after Easter, granted women *together* with men (not segregated from men as in some pagan cults) an equal right to participate fully in the family of faith (Witherington III, 1998, p.127).

This had a significant influence on the public, increasing the number of followers. Many people, particularly women, were drawn to Jesus due to his reformation of equality. Grenz (1995) stated that:

women found the message of Jesus appealing because it gave them equal status with men and new avenues of religious service. They sensed that the gospel granted women, as well as men, the opportunity to participate fully in the community of God's new people (pp 63-64).

In addition, Kategile asserted that “Jesus’ attitude towards women gives credibility to women and their ministry during his time” (Kategile, 2020, para 9).

In today’s crisis, Antonio Guterres asserts that “gender equality and women’s rights are essential to getting through this pandemic together, to recovering faster and to building a better future for everyone” (United Nations, 2020). According to the research conducted by Azcue et al. (2020), “the faster the policymakers and business leaders act to push for greater gender equality, even as the COVID-19 crisis continues, the bigger the benefits not just for gender equality but also for economic growth” (p.9). Many women have experienced restrictions and inequalities in the past years; let Jesus’ teachings and examples be a spark of reformation in dealing with equality. Though Jesus lived where the patriarchal system was evident, He supported equality by stressing the participation of women in the Divine plan through missionary works. He opposed the people’s customs and culture by seeking equality, not because of their social status but by being a human person. Therefore, Jesus, as described in the scriptures concerned about fairness and equality in God’s economy, not for the profit of a single person or group but rather for the welfare of all.

Collectivism

In his book *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels*, Bruce Malina described the social structure in Jesus’ time. He mentioned that “for the people of that time and place, the basic, most elementary unit of social analysis was not the individual person considered alone and apart from others as a unique being, but the dyadic person, a person always in relation with and connected to at least one other social unit, usually a group” (Malina, 1996, p.38). It means that a person’s identity is formed through their relationships with others. Strauss (2007) stated that “it is sometimes called dyadism, meaning that essential identity comes from being a member of a family, a community, or a nation” (p.230). As a result, if a person’s identity is developed through participation in a group, actions should be carried out to benefit the group or community. This social construct suggests that a group’s goals are more important than individual goals. Malina refers to it as *collectivism* in his book; he believes that “the defining attributes of collectivistic cultures are family integrity, solidarity, and keeping the primary ingroup in good health” and that it focuses on the ingroup’s views, needs, and goals rather than a single group. (Malina, 1996, p.79). In the time of Jesus, the ingroup consisted of the core group around Jesus or called Jesus’ faction. For Malina, what distinguishes a faction from other coalitions is that the faction is personally recruited by a single person for the recruiter’s purpose. Furthermore, he declared that “the virtues extolled by collectivist cultures will be attitudes that look to the benefit of the faction founder and his goals: the gospel of the Kingdom of God” (Malina, 1996, p.89). In other words, people who have expressed an interest in joining the faction have to facilitate and carry out the leader’s goals. In the context of collectivism, Jesus being the leader, conveyed his desire for equality and solidarity; hence, the disciples aligned their views and goals with Jesus’ mission. Today, everyone is called to realign their views and goals with Jesus’ vision of God’s economy of solidarity and equality. As the world grapples with the worldwide crisis caused by COVID 19, international solidarity must be employed for global resilience. No race, ethnic group, or specific community must be left behind.

Solidarity with the Poor

A huge gap between the elite and the poor has existed since the time of Jesus and is still a condition that the world faces today. Because of this gap, Jesus, as seen in the gospels,

showed a radical social concern for the poor or the marginalized. "The Gospels present Jesus repeatedly reaching out to those at the bottom of the social pyramid—poor people, women, Samaritans, lepers, children, prostitutes, and tax collectors" (Edayadiyil, 2009, p.8). This ministerial work of Jesus was stated in *Lumen Gentium* "just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and persecution, so the Church is called to follow the same route that it might communicate the fruits of salvation to men" (LG para 8). This emphasizes Jesus' love for the poor, implying that everyone should love, care for, and assist in alleviating poverty's burden. Likewise, Pope John Paul II speaks about solidarity as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* para 38). This means, according to Pfiel (2020), "shares the same source as the preferential option for the poor: God's love and passionate desire for the flourishing of each and every person and for all creation" (p.8). In the present global crisis due to pandemics, the ones that suffer the most are the poor. "First, they have the highest risk of exposure to the virus, and least access to quality healthcare; second, recent estimates show the pandemic could push up to 115 million people into poverty this year – the first increase in decades" (UN News, 2020). In these most trying times, the solidarity with the poor must strengthen. Global recovery and resilience require assistance and care for the world's most vulnerable and impacted individuals; solidarity with the poor is needed. This calling has been engraved in us by our Creator. As Fr. Kammer emphasized, "if we forget the poor, we have forgotten God and our own radical interconnectedness: to God as life-giver and to one another as sisters and brothers" (Kammer, 2009).

Conclusion

The world has been facing COVID 19 for the past two years now; different nations and global organizations have facilitated and implemented various COVID responses to address the problem in terms of healthcare and the economy. However, these problems affect not just every nation's economic and healthcare systems but also every individual and community's social and moral well-being. For Christians, Jesus is the ultimate norm of morality; thus, it's critical to revisit His teachings and examples whenever moral or social problems occur.

Jesus treated women differently from the cultural norm in His time; He saw all individuals, male and female, as equals. He believed that everyone has something to offer in God's economy; thus, He called everyone to participate in the Divine plan. Different women have witnessed the earthly ministry of Jesus and were given the task to share and proclaim the Gospel. The same responsibility must be given to the women of today, an equal representation and the right to participate in decision-making in times of pandemic.

This pandemic has brought global poverty, especially to the most vulnerable in society. Now is the time to revitalize worldwide solidarity and support. In Jesus' time with the collectivistic culture, everyone is called to align their views and goals with Jesus. This suggests that a person who follows Jesus must prioritize the goal of the community, not on personal interest. If Jesus envisions solidarity and equality in God's economy, that must be the common goal of everyone who embraced Jesus in their life. Thus, the desire for global resilience must be shared by all people, not just a few.

The title of Jesus as an economist based on historical research does not suggest any specific economic system today. It is not a question of whether Jesus promotes socialism or capitalism but rather a question of how Jesus can be a great help in building global resilience

and recovery from the pandemic. As the world struggles with global inequalities and injustices, everyone has to see the world through the eyes of Jesus, who sees God's economy of solidarity and equality as the key to a brighter future.

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Building Resilience Through Self-Care: Art and Aesthetic Wellness

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Into the second year of the pandemic, most educational institutes have made adjustments in order to continue the delivery of courses and programmes. Some regions have resumed a kind of normality and returned to face-to-face interaction for regular classes, and some regions may have adopted a hybrid mode to facilitate better communication with students. No matter what the actual implemented mechanism is, educators over the world have come to realise that rethinking “education” is necessary, in terms of the mode of delivery, as well as the value and kind of education we are offering to students. Besides reflecting on the mode and nature of education, another consensus among educators is the need to enhance students’ resilience, both in formal education and informal curriculum. This paper is a proposal on building resilience of university students through co-curricular activities, focusing on self-care. Young people in higher education sector are going through the threshold of adulthood, and this period is already full of challenges about personal identity and value. The pandemic is only a reminder to us of the importance of this core component for university students in their education. The proposal here is to use art as an indirect and informal learning experience to guide students to better self-care.

Keywords: Aesthetic Experience, Emotional Wellness, Playback Theatre, Personal Stories, Connection

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Introduction: What is not new in the new normal?

Since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, different sectors of life have been looking for ways to manage the disruptions caused, at first temporarily, but later also to prepare ourselves for a world and life permanently changed because of this prolonged and extensive disruption. For the past 24 months or more, the global society has been through different stages of the pandemic, with varying situations and individual strategies to cope. In the education sector, the most immediate and obvious disruption was the day-to-day teaching and learning activities across all levels. When social distancing measures were implemented, schools and universities responded by shifting the teaching and learning activities online, and adopting a hybrid mode for skills/courses to which physical interaction is absolutely essential.

Two years on, impact of the pandemic on education is not simply a matter of finding an alternative mode of conducting classes and communicating with students. All other learning activities that are conducted outside classroom are also affected; if these activities are deemed essential to whatever aspects of development students are involved with, they will probably be moved online together with the core teaching and learning, if not, they will be postponed or cancelled. The decision of whether to postpone or cancel an activity/event, especially in view of the uncertain development of the pandemic, is therefore not just a decision about a more convenient date, it is in fact a decision about the nature and value of the activity/event, and the role it is playing in the context of the educational experience being offered.

That is why discussions about “the formulation of a ‘new normality’ in higher education” (Mok et. al., 2021, p. 1) involve the immediate issue of maximizing e-learning in different disciplines, but also related issues such as the cognitive and emotional behavior of students in various learning environments, and more fundamentally the overall wellbeing of students when they are adjusting to the changed social environment and learning practices. A change in the mode of interaction among people in the educational setting affects not only the volume, but also the quality and value of the interaction. It has a knock-on effect on many other aspects of the higher education experience, and over time, global educators come to realise that the change of teaching and learning mode is in fact a starting point to “re-think and even re-design higher education” (Mok et. al., 2021, p. 1).

One of the student learning activities that has been suspended by the pandemic is overseas exchange. Mok and his team did a study about the effects of the pandemic on Hong Kong and Mainland university’s internationalization endeavor, as well as students’ decisions about overseas exchange opportunities, and found that both had been hugely impacted. The massive reduction in international travel means that both in-bound and out-bound student movement is minimal, and it is not just a matter of lower numbers during the pandemic. In the student survey with Hong Kong and Mainland students, it was discovered that “whether the university can provide sufficient support to students’ security and wellbeing will become an increasingly important factor for prospective international students for their decision in studying abroad” (Mok et. al., 2021, p. 3). While the prestigiousness of the academic programme or institution had been the priority for students seeking international learning experience in the past, the pandemic has induced a change in the sequence of consideration factors, and international institutions’ investment in student wellbeing has become a key consideration.

In 2000, the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated the Mental Health Atlas project,¹ to fill the gap in global information on mental health resources and services. Since then, mental health issues have been more visible and are discussed globally but the actual government policies and resources input vary with different places. While it is generally recognized that mental health is closely related to physical health, and that mental health issues have directly and indirectly accounted for loss in productivity in the global economy, its impact on life's different dimensions has never been more obvious than now. In the world's new normal where people are cut off from their usual support system, "mental health implications of COVID-19 has identified a heightened prevalence of moderate-to-severe self-reported depressive and anxious symptomatology among the general public" (Grubic et. al., 2020, p. 517).

While it is easy to understand that loss of jobs or unequal access to medical and social support are factors leading to the heightened prevalence of anxiety overall, the pandemic as a stressor to young people and school children needs more attention. Grubic et. al. quoted one survey by YoungMinds UK which "reported that 83% of young respondents agreed that the pandemic worsened pre-existing mental health conditions, mainly due to school closures, loss of routine, and restricted social connections" (Grubic et. al., 2020, p. 517). It is not only changes in daily educational routines that causes anxiety, but also decisions in major educational events that affect cohorts of students. In Hong Kong, for example, the university entrance examination (i.e. Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education) in 2020 was postponed for a month, and some of the papers were shortened and marks were redistributed. The same examination in 2021 had also adjusted the marks allocation to different papers of a subject.

It was also observed by many students and educators alike that the overall teaching and learning quality had suffered during the pandemic. In Hong Kong, those who entered the university in September 2019 as freshmen hardly had any face-to-face interaction with the professors or their fellow classmates in these three years, and for those who joined the university as senior year students in September 2019, not only did they not have much chance to make use of campus facilities, they might also have had a virtual graduation ceremony, or one in hybrid mode and much reduced attendance. Here I am not criticizing any decisions made by the authorities, but merely pointing out the kind and extent of disruptions caused to university students (in Hong Kong) even though they did not face the kind of economic and social stresses that adults faced during this time. Educators in other parts of the world also call for more action and research about mental wellbeing in students, to prioritize "the disturbances to educational progress, adaptations of habitual coping strategies, and approaches academic institutions have taken to reduce adverse academic and psychosocial outcomes" (Grubic et. al., 2020, p. 517). In fact, the importance of mental wellbeing in students is not something new in the new normal.

Art and Aesthetic Wellness: The Museum, Stories, and Everyday Life

Same as the fact that mental wellbeing is not a new issue in the current new normality, the possible contribution that art can make to establishing mental wellness has also been a topic of discussion and research for a long time. While it has long been claimed that experiencing art can relieve stress, development in neuroscience research has made concrete connections

¹ A second edition of the Mental Health Atlas was published in 2005. It was found that there was not a great improvement in the provision of mental health services between 2001 and 2004.

between the aesthetic experience and areas in the brain that send positive feelings to the person (Chatterjee, 2004; Chatterjee & Vartanian, 2014; Mastandrea et. al., 2019). Researchers have been trying to look into various kinds of aesthetic experience, such as that of static visual arts, visual experience with a duration, or other kinds of aesthetic experiences, to understand how they may have a direct or indirect impact on the subjects' emotions. Mastandrea's team was one of many that studied the effects of viewing art in the museum on one's moods, and confirmed that the aesthetic experience "affects mood, therefore promoting health and well-being" (Mastandrea et. al., 2019, p. 2).

The range of studies on art and its effect on people's wellbeing have implications about the role of art in everyday life, as well as a more specific function in education. It was suggested that the "[m]useum environment and artifacts offer an extraordinary aesthetic experience that allows the recollection of positive memories" (Mastandrea et al., 2019, p. 2), and therefore museums and art galleries have much to offer in terms of enhancing mental health for the general public. The location, which in most cases are open to the public and easy to access, becomes a site where memories are made and shared. Individuals of different age groups and circumstances may find the site (together with the exhibitions) a place where pleasant feelings collide and have positive meanings that are personal, especially for the elderly if the museum-related experience is part of their daily life practices.

Various studies about the role of museums and art galleries have given educators much to think about in terms of eliciting their help in community well-being and for educational purposes. One study with a group of young women visiting an art gallery focused on the kind of artwork that yields the most fulfilling aesthetic experience revealed that figurative art provides better relaxation/restorative effects than abstract art (Mastandrea et. al., 2019, p. 2). This may be useful information as to how art-based learning (ABL) can be conducted either using the museum as a site with its art display, or creating an aesthetic experience in other educational settings for healthcare education specifically to enhance wellbeing. In fact, "studies reviewed so far demonstrated that the aesthetic value of artwork and their use in educational programs may affect psychological and physiological states, thus promoting well-being and enhancing learning" (Mastandrea et. al., 2019, p. 3).

Camic & Chatterjee observed that in the past decades, museums have changed a lot in the role they play in the community. They are "more aware of the needs and interests of their local communities while also expanding the types of activities offered, including the development of in-house programmes and outreach activities to those who are often socially excluded from participation due to a range of exclusionary practices and circumstances" (Camic & Chatterjee, 2013, p. 66). This is important not only in attracting patronage, but also in how museums are ready to play a more proactive role in addressing public health issues such as mental health problems for different age groups, and health education in general. Camic & Chatterjee commented that they have become "agents to increase social inclusion and reduce socially excluding practices across communities, by providing environments and processes to re-examine behavior, attitude and beliefs" (p. 67).

How are they increasing social inclusion and enhancing wellbeing? Museums are locations accessible to the general public, and modern museums have interactive exhibitions which involve object-handling and mutual sharing of experiences among viewers. The investment in a more personal approach in the display, such as making use of narratives, has also made the overall museum experience more intimate and relational, and therefore facilitating a reflective response towards the experience. Studies have also confirmed that the best positive

emotional enhancement activities in the museum are “object-handling” and “viewing paintings” (Camic & Chatterjee, 2013, p. 67) because they provide a link to personal stories and experiences, while offering a pleasant aesthetic encounter. In fact, the pleasant feeling of viewing aesthetically pleasing objects is not limited to artwork in museums, but is found in encountering beautiful objects in daily life (Yeh et. al., 2015).

The story is a key component in our daily communication, in both external communication with other people and internal communication with our own self. The function of narratives as a bonding mechanism for groups of people is already well-established in academic studies, and telling or sharing stories have generally been accepted as having a therapeutic effect on individuals. In a study with a group of elderly men, it was found that regular opportunity to talk and share personal stories – to reminisce – “is highly associated with pleasure, security, health, and a feeling of belonging to a place” (Chiang et. al, 2010, p. 381). Over the 5-month period of the study, reminiscence “successfully improved the participants’ depressive symptoms” (Chiang et. al., 2010, p. 386). It was concluded that “reminiscence can help ease the pain of isolation and loneliness. Memory is used as a therapeutic intervention to help validate a sense of self” (Chiang et. al., 2010, p. 387). Indeed, we make connections with people and places by sharing our stories, and we feel we belong if we have common experiences. In this respect, human beings are unique beings like no other because we get through our lives using stories.

Taking Care of Oneself through Sharing Stories: Playback Theater on Campus

With reference to the above discussions about the current mental health challenges to university students, and various findings about the role of aesthetic experiences on wellbeing, I am going to report on co-curricular activities that I and my team have conducted with university students in Hong Kong. In response to the pandemic situation, and the fact that students (among others) are feeling isolated and lost because of the suspension of many co-curricular activities, I applied for a grant to conduct creative learning activities for students of Hong Kong Metropolitan University. Our project, entitled *Pandora’s Box: A Multimedia Creative Project on the Gendered Self* (<https://www.instagram.com/pandorasbox.plus/>) started in August 2021. Now we are in the middle of the project, and despite the many challenges, we feel that the experience has been a positive one for our participants and ourselves.

The overarching theme of the project is sharing stories, in particular stories relating to one’s experience of gender. We designed three main artistic learning experiences for the student participants (around 15), i.e. a 30-hour Playback Theatre core training workshop, an installation art workshop, and a song and lyric writing workshop. Each of these artistic learning experiences results in a piece of artwork created by the students, which will be items on display in a final grand exhibition. Members of the university as well as the community are invited to attend the interactive and personal final exhibition on campus. Although Playback Theatre already has more than 40 years of history, in Hong Kong it is still not a widely known practice, and also not an event happening in the university regularly, therefore we also conducted a few story-sharing activities, as well as inviting a professional group to present a Playback Theatre showcase as student recruitment preparation.

The workshops were organized in October 2021. At the time, the pandemic situation in Hong Kong was relatively stable, and the semester actually started with hybrid mode teaching and learning, and on-campus activities were allowed if precautionary measures were observed.

We held a body-exploration workshop (15 October), a women stories workshop (21 October), and the Playback Theatre Performance by a professional group (22 October). The recruitment process was much harder than we expected, ironically not because of the pandemic, but because students were not used to sharing stories – especially when we say that we are focusing on stories about gender. I believe that this difficulty has to do partly with the theme (i.e. gender), but also because of the extended period of isolation that (university) students have lived through. Being face-to-face with other people, and sharing stories, in an educational context, is either a thing of the past, or something they may not have experienced at all. This is exactly the reason why we feel that the project is necessary.

The following are some observations about the story-sharing workshops.

The body exploration workshop was to facilitate participants' connection with their own body. Very simple body movements and exercises were used to draw attention to the way we move and carry ourselves in everyday life. This workshop was a standalone session to remind participants the bond between the mind and the body, and how emotions are manifested in different ways through the body. Getting familiar with communicating with our body is also an important preparation for students to receive the Playback Theatre training. The instructor commented that most of the participants had not thought about the body and mind connection in their daily life practices, and they were also not very sensitive to the body's movements and behaviour in details. When the instructor invited sharings from participants about their relationship with the body, they were also not very forthcoming. We assume that because the group is a mixed gender group, and with students ranging from 18 to 60+ years old, they were not accustomed to this kind of personal sharing.

The women stories workshop was the occasion to share gendered sensitive personal experiences. We hope that this will arouse attention to gender expectations in our society, participants' own responses to these expectations, as well as cultivate an interest in different personal stories and awareness of the values these stories carry. Participants were encouraged to select and share their own experiences verbally in a group setting. The instructor observed that the ability to choose and share personal stories varied greatly among the group. It was assumed that academic background had played a part (e.g. the creative writing students were better at telling stories and finding interesting contents, and other students could hardly compose a structured narrative). We also saw a difference among students in their sensitivity, how they understood the meaning of the experience, and how much the experience could be used to reflect certain values in our society.

A playback theatre performance by a local professional theatre group was arranged on campus. Despite the reputation of the theatre group, only 25 participants registered for the event and finally 13 students turned up for the interaction. After this series of workshops and the performance, participants were given a 5-question google feedback form to complete, so that we have some idea about how they view these story-sharing experiences. The 5 questions refer to their experience in the activity, whether these events (i) enhance their interest/knowledge in Playback Theatre, and (ii) enhance their awareness in gender issues, whether they (iii) increase their interest in artistic expression, and finally whether participants (iv) feel connected with themselves after the event, and whether they (v) feel connected with others after the event.

The feedback from participants on these five issues are very positive. The body exploration workshop received ratings of 93% to 98% fulfilment, the women stories workshop received

ratings of 100% fulfilment, and the Playback Theatre Performance received 91% to 98% fulfilment across the 5 issues of the project's concern. The google form also included a section where participants could add any other comments they had about the experience. A sample of these comments include:

- i. "feeling touched by family stories"
- ii. "realise the need to face one's own experience"
- iii. "aware of the body and the need to cooperate with it"
- iv. "feel more relaxed"
- v. "learn to have a conversation with oneself"

These remarks reflect a generally positive response from participants, in the sense that the experience touches on something that is not normally discussed in regular classroom learning, and may not be covered even in general education courses. The fact that these participants invested their time outside classroom to engage in the series of activities is the best indicator that the sharing of personal stories, and the artistic experiences are meaningful journeys for them beyond their academic pursuit.

Connection, Confidence, Courage: Resilience against Isolation and Helplessness

Playback Theatre is founded by Jonathan Fox, after his attendance at a psychodrama in New York in 1973, watching Zerka Moreno in action. In his words, he witnessed "a true community theatre. Here was theatre that made a difference. Here was emotion. Here was often stunning beauty" (Fox, 1999, p. 10). Inspired by this, he created the Playback Theatre, "a theatre of a very particular kind – without scripts, personal, informal. [He] directed groups in enactments. [He] worked eagerly with all sorts of groups, including very young children, the handicapped, the elderly, and people on the street" (Fox, 1999, p. 9). This theatre for everyone is led by a conductor, who is like a master of ceremony. The conductor interacts with the audience, invites them to tell their personal stories, and guides the actors to enact those shared stories with the help of the musicians. After each enactment, the teller comments on the performance, and then another audience comes forward to tell his or her story.

Playback Theatre has all the important features of making connections, which we felt were ideal to university students because of their being at an important gateway in life. While they are acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to establish themselves in the professional world, there are no parallel training in terms of understanding themselves and their relationship with the greater society. The playback theatre experience emphasizes empathetic and non-judgmental listening, respect, and authenticity, which is a transformative and educational experience for young people who are still finding themselves and seeking a place in the world. We hope that the elementary training in playback theatre skills could cultivate the skills of deep listening, self-expression, mutual respect and social awareness among them. As Fox remarked, he wanted "to investigate the relationship between the personal story enacted in a social setting and the "stories" of the culture, including its history. [His] hope is that the playback ritual could play a part in healing some of the injustices and upheavals of the past that fester not only in individuals, but in whole societies" (Fox, 1999, pp. 14-15). We believe these are values and skills that young people need in order to live a good life.

Here I would like to share a few observations about the students' engagement with the playback theatre training, and their subsequent showcase. I believe these are obvious indicators of the value and meaning of such a teaching and learning intervention for university students.

Connection is one of the key takeaways participants revealed to us. They were pleasantly surprised by how the activities put them in a situation where they had to connect with themselves and other people. Some participants said that they used to be very isolated and kept themselves to themselves. Although they were not used to making connections at first, through the intensive training, they had learned ways to connect (e.g. deep listening) with other people, and more importantly they had cultivated a willingness and intention to connect with other people, to listen to their stories, and to become fellows with each other.

Confidence is another feedback mentioned by most participants. In the training process, they had to pay attention to what everyone was saying, as well as their body language. The complete communication approach allowed participants to have 3-dimensional information about the others, and this made everyone more willing to share what was in their minds. The “transparency” in turn made everyone feel more confident because they knew what was going on in the setting, and the non-judgemental approach emphasised by Playback Theatre training relieved them of anxiety about their own inadequacies. They felt much easier to accept themselves and accept others.

Courage is another quality quite a number of participants revealed that they had acquired. Among the group, only two had some regular theatre experience – most of the participants had absolutely no idea what Playback Theatre is about. In fact, even the instructor applauded their courage, for signing up to such an intensive and intimate experience. Their initial courage in joining the programme rewarded them with even greater courage to face themselves and the readiness to learn more about themselves in the future. For a few of the participants, the change after the training and showcase experience were quite remarkable.

Conclusion: Making Art Part of the New Normal Life

Numerous studies have pointed out the value of the aesthetic experience. It is “an exceptional state of mind which is qualitatively different from ‘normal’ everyday mental states. In this mental state, a person is fascinated with a particular object, whereas the surrounding environment is shadowed, self-awareness is reduced, and the sense of time is distorted” (Marković, 2012, p. 12). The experience of art is not only a cognitive interaction between the individual and a piece of work, but “a self-rewarding activity, irrespective of the emotional content of the artwork” (Mastandrea et. al., 2019, p. 4). Although the exact operation of the emotional mechanism is still to be determined, many researchers have already confirmed a relationship between the aesthetic experience and indicators of a range of positive emotions. As a result of such findings, there have been proposals to involve museums, art galleries and other related venues in the overall project of enhancing mental health and wellbeing across different age groups.

In the two years of global experience with the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health once again comes to our attention as a core component of quality of life. Ironically, it is while the world is struggling to cope with the new normal that we realize that one of the essential foundations of a good life has always been emotional wellbeing (Stoewen, 2017, p. 861). From my experience with a group of university students in Hong Kong, the enhancement of emotional wellbeing can be achieved through an interactive aesthetic experience. The Playback Theatre training and performance experience they went through gave them the opportunity to share their personal stories, in the form of standardized artistic theatre language, to recognize their shared challenges and feelings, and to consolidate a sense of identity within themselves and in relation to others. This aesthetic experiment confirms much

of what researchers have found, that “aesthetic experience comes to full fruition by inducing emotions in the individual and by prompting an evaluative judgment” (Yeh et. al., 2015, p. 152). Students have come to learn not only to reflect upon themselves, their connection with fellow human beings, but also the social and cultural contexts in which their life is situated. I have every reason to propose making aesthetic experience such as the Playback Theatre to be a part of normal educational life of students. As suggested by Stoewen, forming a new habit does not require much brain energy, it is only “self-awareness and strategies” that we need (2017, p. 862). The education sector should be able to facilitate this in the new normal, to address an eternal core of need.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Hong Kong Metropolitan University for its funding support to my project, *Pandora’s Box: A Multimedia Creative Project on the Gendered Self (2021/004)*. The project team was awarded more than 400,000HKD by the Research Matching Grant Scheme of HKMU, 2021-2022. The data presented in this paper comes partly from the student learning experience funded by the grant.

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The Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in The Formation of Faith, Morals, and Resiliency of Filipino Christian Character

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The research analyzed the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on the formation of faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino Christian character. Descriptive approach was used for 600 student and parent respondents at the University of Perpetual Help System. The results of the study showed that respondents' behavioral responses to Integration, Manifestation, and Recognition were contributory factors to Filipino Christian character formation. Likewise, those factors influenced the faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino Christian character and their value formation. A major finding showed that pandemic had no great impact on the integration of Filipino Christian value formation. Another major finding was Covid-19 pandemic had a considerable impact on faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino Christians in forming a stronger character. However, weakened Filipino Christian values and character building were identified as low negative impression of Covid-19 pandemic, that it could be transformed to a positive outlook in the light of virtues and values integrated in the formation of Filipino Christian character. The researcher recommends to integrate good manners and right conduct and Filipino Christian values in science and technology and to encourage parents to intensify the inculcation of Filipino Christian values at home. Likewise, there is a need to preserve and develop the Filipino culture, tradition, and beliefs which serve as strong foundation in building Filipino Christian communities.

Keywords: Integration, Manifestation, Recognition

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Introduction

In the beginning, there was no God, no man, and no anything on this earth. On the first day of creation, God said, “Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. 1:3), the very word “light” became very significant in the world of religion, science, and technology. Light produced another formation, from the light that separated day from night and these were signs which lasted for seasons and for days, and for years (Gen. 1:14). With this, He made the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night. On the sixth day, God made man both male and female according to His image and likeness, and God blessed them and said “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.” (Genesis 1:27-28) Therefore, the role of man is to be a steward of the entire creation according to God’s will. But since the first man committed sin due to disobedience of eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he and his family began to suffer from generation to generation. On this context, God did not forsake the entire humanity in the midst of disaster or any pandemic because God is love and good at all times, despite man’s iniquities.

The researcher believes everyone is taught science and technology and its significance in one’s faith. Does everyone believe in the existence of air, earth, water, and even fire? God used those four elements in the account of creation in the book of Genesis. Based on this account, the researcher believes that one needs to preserve the value of resilience, as a notable Filipino Christian character in the midst of crisis or disaster, like Covid-19 pandemic. At present, it contradicts our faith, morals and resiliency, triggering the formation of Filipino Christian character that might lead to wrong perception of God’s plan. “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; (Genesis 1:28), therefore, we are the caretaker of God’s creation to cultivate and to nurture them. But Albert Einstein quoted; “I fear the day when the technology overlaps with our humanity. The world will only have a generation of idiots.” Indeed, we now become dependent only on science and technology as a source of information in living in this world which leads us in committing sin because we set aside our faith in God over science and technology. In addition, morality is also our responsibility to promote the common good. “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. If one member is honored, all the members share its joy” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

The researcher believes that through Christian character formation, man builds a strong foundation of faith, morals, and resilience in accordance with existing Filipino culture and good traditions. Pope Benedict XVI issued the Apostolic Letter “*Porta Fidei*” (the “door of faith”) in which he convoked a Year of Faith launched on October 11, 2012 and ended on October 24, 2013, the Feast of Christ the King. The Year of Faith was a great opportunity to communicate with God, and to show and to share our love by reaching and helping one another. Likewise, Pope Francis declared from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021 as the year of Saint Joseph in celebration of 500 years of Christianity and 500 years of Christian Faith-Community dedicated to Saint Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. He sacrificed for the sake of faith, morals, and resiliency to value the plan of God to multiply and to take care of the entire creation by sharing faith experiences and sacrifices for the Glory of God.

The researcher believes that the character formators’ task is not easy because they need to move forward with resilience to face new challenges in developing the physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual formation in line with Christian morality during this Covid-19 pandemic. “The Lord is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my hearth exults, and with my song, I give thanks to Him.” (Psalms 28:7). Therefore, why be worried about Covid-19 pandemic?

The researcher believes that Covid-19 Pandemic can broke the faith-community in relation to innovation in science and technology which caused conflicts of interest among some experts and authorities that resulted to the weakening of faith, morals, and resiliency of individuals.

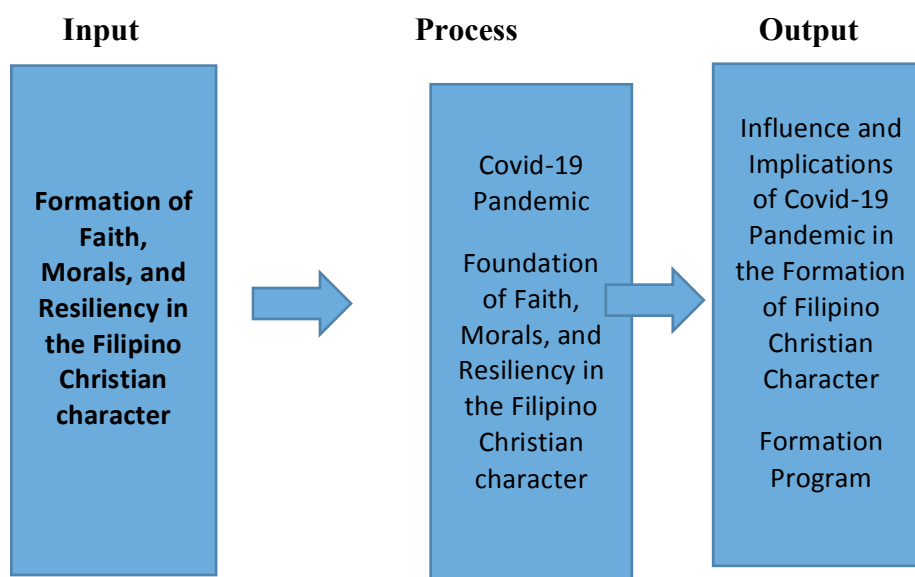
Theoretical Framework

There were several theories that supported this research on the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on the formation of faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino character. The researcher found these theories important in pursuing the research for these would be the basis for the evaluation of the study.

The Value of Love of God is the main subject of the research and is directed towards to formation of Filipino Christian character on how they feel the presence of God during this pandemic or crisis. “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and truly you shall be fed.” (Psalm 37:3). Relative to this is the very heart of Jesus’ moral teaching: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mk 12:30) Therefore, to show love and faith to God is the ultimate standpoint in the formation of Filipino Christian character.

The Value of Love of Self, Family, Neighbor, Country, and Good Governance is important in this study. The researcher believed that these values should be integrated and manifested in the formation of the Filipino Christian character. Furthermore, Jesus said, “You must love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk 12:31). Therefore, people should strive to respect the dignity and worth of the human beings and their resources. Moreover, God commanded the people that “Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s goods,” which means that everyone should respect other’s properties, opinions, and the like as a sign of love and veneration. Likewise, Jesus said,” Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 19-20). In this context, Jesus remind us on how to be a good disciple or a Christian leader by obeying his commandment in order to lead a faith-community in the midst of crisis.

Nowadays, Filipino societies are exposed to different platform and situations that cause conflict between man’s faith, morals, and resiliency, science and technology. The researcher saw the great need for a program that would address the problems on the formation of Filipino Christian character during Covid-19 pandemic. Its influences and implications were also considered in order to build a Filipino Christian faith-community.

Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm

The undertaking made use of the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model. The input of the study that dealt with the formation of faith, morals, and resiliency in the Filipino Christian formation. The process used were the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and their influence in the foundations of faith, and morals of the Filipino Christian character, at the same time, the implications of Covid-19 in their formation. From the process, the researcher had gotten the effects of Covid-19 pandemic in the formation faith, morals, and resiliency of the Filipino Christian character. Strong Filipino Christian Faith and values, good morals and right conducts, and related formation program would be expected output of the study that would help the entire faith-community during and after pandemic or crisis.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to analyze the Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic on the formation of Faith, Morals, and Resiliency of Filipino Christian character.

Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, religion, and role in institution?
2. How did Covid-19 pandemic influence one's faith and morals on the foundation of Filipino Christian character?
3. What are the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino Christian character?
4. What formation program can be developed from Covid-19 pandemic in developing the Filipino Christian character?

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The researcher focused on the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on the formation of faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino character in the context of Filipino Christian values, culture, and traditions. There were 300 student respondents with different courses and levels

and 300 Parent/Guardian respondents respectively from the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA in Las Pinas campus.

Importance of the Study

The results of the study were significant to the following:

Filipino Youth

The result of this study would be beneficial to young Filipino people to preserve and strengthen their moral fiber, as well as their faith in God, morals, and resiliency in the context of Filipino culture and traditions in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic.

Parent / Guardian

The findings of this study would be a great help to the parent / guardian in directing young people on how to handle the effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

Character Formator

The findings of this study might serve as guide for character formators to enhance purposively their programs and activities for character building in the context of Filipino culture and traditions. They could also provide a venue for Filipino character development while building a faith-community during pandemic or crisis.

Future Researchers

The study in general might serve as a venue for other researchers to undertake research by providing valuable information regarding internet technology and their implications on faith and morals on the formation of Filipino character.

Definition of Terms

The following terminologies were contextually and operationally defined:

Character Formation - This refers to the positive values, attitudes, and virtues in their totality, imbibed by the individual.

Christian Faith Community - This refers to a Christian community sharing of singular belief, culture, and tradition towards the formation of Filipino Christian character.

Covid-19 Pandemic - This refers to a Corona virus which is a current health crisis that started in China in 2019 and spread all over the world.

Filipino Christian Character - This refers to value integration integrated in the student's school curriculum at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA.

Resiliency - This refers to the way any individual easily recovers from any conflict or problem at present.

Strong Character Building – This refers to the strong foundation of ones’ character through the integration of Filipino Christian values in building a faith community.

Research Design

The descriptive method of research was used in this study. According to Best (1993), “A descriptive study describes and interprets what it is.” It is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing.

The researcher utilized the system of online survey for manifestation of the study on the Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Formation of faith, morals and resiliency of Filipino Christian Character.

Research Locale

The researcher had chosen students and parents from the University of Perpetual Help System in Las Pinas City to be the participants / respondents and place of the study.

Respondents of the Study

The researcher chose 300 students and 300 Parents/ Guardians from the University of Perpetual Help System in Las Pinas City.

Instrumentation

The researcher used the online survey for gathering the data in determining the implications of faith, morals and resiliency on the formation of Filipino Christian Character. The online survey as designed by the researcher.

Part 1 Includes the personal data of the respondents such as name, gender, religion and profession.

Part 2 Foundation of faith and morals of Filipino Christian Character in the midst of Covid-19 Pandemic.

The following questions try to determine the faith, morals, and resiliency foundations on the formation of Filipino Christian character in terms of the value of recognition; manifestation; and integration.

Direction: The following are some of your behaviours in relation to Covid-19 Pandemic in terms of faith, morals, and resiliency foundations; such as Love of God, Love of Self, Family, Neighbor, Country, and Good Governance.

In the column below, please check the degree that describes said behavior in you.

Scale	Statistical Limit	Verbal Description	Interpretation
3	2.50-3.00	Strongly Agree	Integration You are aware; you are acting out the positive values and internalizing them.
2	1.50-2.49	Agree	Manifestation You are aware and acting out the positive values.
1	1.00-1.49	Disagree	Recognition You are aware of the positive values.

The three-point scale of the behavioral responses of the respondents on the faith, moral, and resiliency foundations form part of their character formation as Filipino Christian. The said scale was interpreted as 3 with Strongly Agree which is interpreted as Integration where the respondents are aware; acting out and internalizing the positive values learned from Covid-19 Pandemic; 2 with Agree as interpreted as Manifestation where the respondents are aware and acting out the positive values; and 1 with Disagree as interpreted as Recognition where the respondents are only aware of the positive values.

A. LOVE OF GOD			
BEHAVIOR	1	2	3
1. I believe that God is all-powerful, all knowing and perfectly good even in the midst of Covid -19 pandemic.			
2. I recognize that God is the beginning and source of life and innovation towards perfection.			
3. I recognize that God is with me in times of trouble.			
4. I believe that God is lovable and merciful even in time of crisis.			
5. I believe that God is good at all times.			

B. LOVE OF SELF, FAMILY, NEIGHBOR, AND COUNTRY BEHAVIOR			
BEHAVIOR	1	2	3
1. I have the right to protect my own dignity.			
2. I recognize that parents and elders must be respected.			
3. I love myself as I love my neighbour.			
4. I acknowledged that doing good to others is the same way of doing good to my country.			
5. I affirm that the laws of the land must be obeyed.			

Part 3 What are the implications of Covid-19 Pandemic on faith, morals, and resiliency of Filipino character?

The three-point scale of the behavioral responses of the respondents on the faith, moral, and resiliency on the foundation of Filipino Christian character. The said scale was interpreted as 3 with Strongly Agree where the respondents are very strong in Filipino Christian character in the midst of pandemic; 2 with Agree where the respondents are strong; and 1 with Disagree where the respondents are weak Filipino Christian character in times of crisis.

1. Disagree 2. Agree 3. Strongly Agree

FAITH

1. I am not disappointed to God despite the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. I do believe that God is always on my side.
3. Because of pandemic, I feel closer to God and my family.
4. I thank God despite of Covid-19 pandemic.
5. I do believe that God is all powerful, all knowing, and perfectly good.

MORALS

1. I have no source of income due to lockdown, but I still do what is right for the common good.
2. Despite the pandemic, I see to it that I take care of my health.
3. I recognize the value of self-discipline in response to Covid-19 Pandemic.
4. I have more time bonding with my family during lockdown.
5. I follow the health and safety protocol imposed by our government.

RESILIENCY

1. I am still eager to pursue my studies despite the Covid-19 Pandemic.
2. I try my best to do some positive ways of living in the midst of pandemic
3. It is my opportunity to share my knowledge and skills to others in time of disaster.
4. I apply strategies in recovering difficulties and challenges.
5. I do realize that disaster is a wakeup call to Filipino Christian way of living.

Part 4 What formation program can be developed from the influences of Covid-19 Pandemic in developing of Filipino Christian character?

4.1 Sustainable Mental and Spiritual Health Program for Youth Today

- 4.2 Sustainable Mental Health Program for Youth Today
- 4.3 Sustainable Health and Ecological Program for Youth Today
- 4.4 Sustainable Physical Health Program for Youth Today
- 4.5 Sustainable Spiritual Health Program for Youth Today

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presented the results of the study that answer the specific problems presented in Chapter 1.

Profile of respondents in terms of Gender, Religion, and Role in Institutions

1. Gender

Table 1
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	213	35.5%
Female	387	64.5%
Total	600	100%

As revealed in Table 1, Out of 600 total respondents, they were 64.5% percent were female respondents, while 35.5% percent were male. This showed that there were more female respondents than male.

2. Religion

Table 2
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF RELIGION

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Catholic	492	82%
Non-Catholic	108	18%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 showed that 492 or 82 percent of the respondents were Catholics. There were 108 or 18 percent Non-Catholics. This was relative to the study of Agapay (cited in Rances, 2003) whose study revealed that in terms of religion, Catholics were dominant than Non-Catholics or those who belonged to other religious sect.

3. Role in Institutions

Table 3
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF Role in Institutions

Role	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	300	50%
Parents / Guardians	300	50%
TOTAL	600	100%

Table 3 showed that in terms of role in institution, both student and parents were equally represented with 50 percent per each role, with 600 total respondents both student and parent from the institution of UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus.

Table 4

The Behavioral Scale of the Influence of Covid-19 Pandemic in Terms of Foundations of Faith With the Value of Love of God as Contributory to Their Filipino Christian Character Formation are Recognition, Manifestation, and Integration.

N=600

A. Faith with value of Love of God						
Category		Mean	Rank	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1.	I believe that God is powerful, all knowing and perfectly good even in the midst of Covid-19 Pandemic.	2.89	2	0.36	Strongly Agree	Integration
2.	I recognize that God is the beginning and source of life and innovation towards perfection.	2.85	5	0.39	Strongly Agree	Integration
3.	I recognize that God is with me in times of trouble.	2.87	4	0.37	Strongly Agree	Integration

4.	I believe that God is lovable and merciful even in time of crisis.	2.88	3	0.36	Strongly Agree	Integration
5.	I believe that God is good at all times.	2.9	1	0.32	Strongly Agree	Integration
Overall		2.9		0.36	Strongly Agree	Integration

Assessing their Filipino Christian character formation as having reached the integration means: **Rank 1** with the mean of 2.90 which was the highest under the value of Love of God, namely: Item no. 5, “I believe that God is good at all times.” Item no. 1, “I believe that God is powerful, all knowing and perfectly good even in the midst of Covid-19 Pandemic.” Item no. 4, “I believe that God is lovable and merciful even in time of crisis.” Item no. 3, “I recognize that God is with me in times of trouble.” And lastly, Item no. 2, “I recognize that God is the beginning and source of life and innovation towards perfection.” It means all items are with the same Integration mode.

World Health Organization recognizes this integral role and is working together with the faith community to support national governments to achieve joint health goals. In another words, WHO recognizes the importance of physical, mental, and spiritual health of the entire humanity in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic all over the world.

In general, it was indicated that the Integration mode showing that Filipino Christian Character has strong faith in God and their religion, and has the ability to survive. This is manifested in his capacity to endure pain and problems even on difficult times. They recognized supernatural God whom they trust and thank, called upon mercy and compassion for whatever wrong doing they had. Thus, the average of 2.90 understood that items under faith foundation were in the integration stage. Meaning, they are aware in acting out these faith foundations and internalizing the positive values.

Table 5

The Behavioral Scale of the Influence of Covid-19 Pandemic in Terms of Moral Foundations of with the Value of Love of Self, Family, Neighbor, Country, and Good Governance as Contributory to Their Filipino Christian Character Formation are Recognition, Manifestation, and Integration.

N=600

B. Morals with value of Love of Self, Family, Neighbor, Country and Good Governance					
Category	Mean	Rank	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1. I have the right to protect my own dignity	2.91	1	0.28	Strongly Agree	Integration
2. I recognize that parents and elders must be respected.	2.84	2	0.38	Strongly Agree	Integration
3. I love my self as I love my neighbor.	2.69	4	0.50	Strongly Agree	Integration
4. I acknowledge that doing good to others is the same way as doing good to my country.	2.84	2	0.37	Strongly Agree	Integration
5. I affirm that the laws of the land must be obeyed.	2.82	3	0.40	Strongly Agree	Integration
Overall	2.82			Strongly Agree	Integration

The table shows that Rank 1 with the average mean of 2.91 is item no. 1, "I have the right to protect my own dignity." Relative to this item, from Filipino values, the Filipino concept of justice has evolved from inequality to quality and to human dignity; from the tribe to the family and to the nation. While items no. 2, "I recognize that parents and elders must be respected.", and item no. 4, "I acknowledge that doing good to others is the same way as doing good to my country." with the same Rank 2 with both same average mean of 2.84 it shows that the strengths of the Filipino character is known to be loving, caring, respecting to elderly, and to his family. Hence, doing good to others is likewise doing good to country as well is one of the core value of the University of Perpetual Help System in the Philippines which is Love of Self, Family, Neighbor, and Love of Country and Good Governance. Rank 3, item no. 5, "I affirm that the laws of the land must be obeyed." with an average mean of 2.82, showing that they were respected the laws of the land and must be observed the constitutions of the Republic of the Philippines for the common good. Lastly, item no. 3, "I love my self as I love my neighbor." With an average mean of 2.69 with Rank 4. Thus the overall mean is 2.82 showing that items under moral foundations were in the integration stage. Meaning, they are aware in acting out these moral foundations and internalizing them the positive values.

Table 6

The Behavioral Scale of The Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in Term of Faith Foundation as Contributory to Their Filipino Christian Character Formation are Recognition, Manifestation, and Integration.

N=600

A. Faith Foundation					
Category	Mean	Rank	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1. I am not disappointed with God despite the Covid-19 pandemic.	2.76	4	0.50	Strongly Agree	Integration
2. I believe that God is always on my side.	2.85	2	0.41	Strongly Agree	Integration
3. Because of the pandemic, I feel closer to God and my family.	2.72	5	0.53	Strongly Agree	Integration
4. I thank God despite the Covid-19 pandemic.	2.78	3	0.47	Strongly Agree	Integration
5. I believe that God is all powerful, all knowing, and perfectly good.	2.87	1	0.37	Strongly Agree	Integration
Overall	2.80			Strongly Agree	Integration

The table reveals that Rank 1, item no. 5 with an average mean of 2.87, “I believe that God is all powerful, all knowing, and perfectly good.” It shows that despite of crisis and difficulties they were believed that God is over and above of all things on this earth. Likewise, showing deep faith in God and religiosity was indicated and that is one of the strengths of the Filipino character. Rank 2, item no. 2, with an average mean of 2.85 “I believe that God is always on my side.” This item showing that they believed that God always protect them from all troubles in life. “Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6). In this context, they recognized that God is with them at all times. Rank no. 3, item no. 4, “I thank God despite the Covid-19 pandemic.” with an average mean of 2.78, showing that they thank God whatever crisis or difficulties in life like experiencing Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, Rank 4, with an average mean of 2.76, item no. 1, “I am not disappointed with God despite the Covid-19 pandemic.” Thus, they ascribed human traits to God whom they believed, hope and thank despite of crisis they experienced.

Rank 5, with an average mean of 2.72, item no. 3, “Because of the pandemic, I feel closer to God and my family.” It was shown on this stage that faith-community still intact and firm in faith in God and become closer to their family even in time of difficulties or pandemic.

As a whole assessment, it was indicated that the faith foundation under the influences of Covid-19 pandemic were substantiated on the Filipino Christian character. Thus, the average

of 2.80 implied that the items under the category of faith foundation were in the integration level. It shows, they are aware in acting out these Filipino Christian faith foundations and internalizing the positive values.

Table 7

The Behavioral Scale of the Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in Term of Moral Foundation as Contributory to Their Filipino Christian Character Formation are Recognition, Manifestation, and Integration.

N=600

B. Moral Foundation					
Category	Mean	Rank	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1. I have no source of income due to lock-down, but I still do what is right for the common good.	2.69	4	0.51	Strongly Agree	Integration
2. Despite the pandemic, I see to it that I take care my health.	2.79	3	0.44	Strongly Agree	Integration
3. I recognize the value of self-discipline in response to Covid-19 pandemic.	2.85	2	0.36	Strongly Agree	Integration
4. I have more time bonding with my family during lock-down.	2.68	5	0.56	Strongly Agree	Integration
5. I follow the health and safety protocols imposed by our government.	2.88	1	0.33	Strongly Agree	Integration
Overall	2.78			Strongly Agree	Integration

The table show that Rank 1, item 5, "I follow the health and safety protocols imposed by our government." With an average mean 2.88 under the level of integration. Thus, they were morally follows and obey the law of the land for the betterment of the society. Rank 2, item no. 3, "*I recognize the value of self-discipline in response to Covid-19 pandemic.*" With an average mean of 2.85 and under integration level. Rank 3, item no. 2, "*Despite the pandemic, I see to it that I take care my health.*" With an average mean of 2.79 still integration level. Rank 4, item no. 1, "*I have no source of income due to lock-down, but I still do what is right for the common good.*" With an average mean of 2.69 unmoving integration stage. Rank 5, item no. 4, "*I have more time bonding with my family during lock-down.*" With an average mean of 2.68, likewise, under integration level. It was shown that the moral values were well integrated and founded on the formation of Filipino Christian character despite of crisis of

Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, they are aware in acting out these moral foundations and internalizing them the positive values.

Table 8

The Behavioral Scale of the Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in Term of Resiliency Foundation as Contributory to their Filipino Christian Character Formation are Recognition, Manifestation, and Integration

N=600

C. Resiliency Foundation					
Category	Mean	Rank	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1. I am still eager to pursue my studies despite the Covid-19 pandemic.	2.68	5	0.59	Strongly Agree	Integration
2. I try my best to do some positive ways of living in the midst of pandemic.	2.83	1	0.39	Strongly Agree	Integration
3. It is my opportunity to share my knowledge and skills to others in time of disaster.	2.77	3	0.43	Strongly Agree	Integration
4. I apply strategies in recovering amidst difficulties and challenges.	2.79	2	0.42	Strongly Agree	Integration
5. I realize that a disaster is a wake-up call to adopt the Filipino Christian way of living.	2.70	4	0.53	Strongly Agree	Integration
Overall	2.75			Strongly Agree	Integration

Assessing table 8, it reveals that Rank 1, item no. 2, *“I try my best to do some positive ways of living in the midst of pandemic.”* with an average mean of 2.83, showing that despite of crisis the respondents will do something good things in order to live and survive. Likewise, Rank 2, item no. 4, *“I apply strategies in recovering amidst difficulties and challenges.”* With an average mean of 2.79. Thus, they were move forward and face challenges with courage in the spirit of hope and charity. Relative to this, one of the strength of the Filipino character is the ability to survive and this is manifested in his capacity to overcome problems and difficulties in life. The results are adaptability, flexibility, and hard work.

Rank 3, item no. 3, *“It is my opportunity to share my knowledge and skills to others in time of disaster.”* With an average mean of 2.77, indications that they were a sense of voluntarism to contribute their knowledge and skills to their community in the spirit of love and compassion. Relative to this, according to Agapay (2001) “the integrity of a person is the totality of his being as composed of body and soul. Thus, moral duties are those pertaining to the development of the spirit, or character. Likewise, “Pakikipagkapwa-tao” or human fellowship manifested on the Filipino character. Yet, they were open to others and has the capacity to feel one with others. This is manifested through “utang ng loob,” or dept of gratitude, “pakikiramay,” or sympathy, and “bayanihan,” or cooperation. In other words, with interpersonal relationship and the results of this are unity and with a sense of social justice. Rank 4, item no. 5, *“I realize that a disaster is a wake-up call to adopt the Filipino Christian way of living.”* With an average mean of 2.70, At this point, they were aware that crisis is also calling to purification and sanctification through act of mercy either corporal or spiritual,

like Feed the hungry and pray for the living and the dead. Those things are manifested, integrated, and at the same time, moral duties of every Filipino Christian living to one another. “Love one another as I have love you” (John 13:34).

Rank 5, item no. 1, “*I am still eager to pursue my studies despite the Covid-19 pandemic.*” With an average mean of 2.68, They were shows that despite of crisis or pandemic, they were courage to continue their studies even though they parent were hard to find means of living in everyday life. As a whole, a total average mean of 2.75 implied that the items under the resiliency foundation were in the integration level. It means, they are aware in acting out and at the same time they internalizing the positive values.

Table 9

The developing formation program to be develop to sustain Filipino Christian character in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic or crisis.

N= 600

Developing Programs	Mean	Rank	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Sustainable Physical Health Program for Youth Today.	2.66	4	0.49	Strongly Agree
2. Sustainable Health and Ecological Program for Youth Today.	2.69	3	0.48	Strongly Agree
3. Sustainable Mental Health Program for Youth Today	2.72	2	0.51	Strongly Agree
4. Sustainable Spiritual Formation Program for Youth Today.	2.65	5	0.51	Strongly Agree
5. Sustainable Mental and Spiritual Health Program for Youth Today.	2.72	2	0.48	Strongly Agree
Overall	2.69			Strongly Agree

Assessing table 9, The developing program show that, item no. 3, “*Sustainable Mental Health Program for Youth Today.*” And item 5, “*Sustainable Mental and Spiritual Health Program for Youth Today.*” Are with the same average mean of 2.72. It shows that they were strongly agree on both mental and spiritual health program to be develop especially in the midst of crisis or difficulties. The second program is item no. 2, “*Sustainable Health and Ecological Program for Youth Today.*” with an average mean of 2.69. Thus, they were conscious to their health and to their environmental as well. Relative to this, on the second encyclical letter of Pope Francis with the subtitle “on care for our common home.” In it, the Pope Francis critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take “swift and unified global action” (Wikipedia). They were feel and experience the cause of industrial revolution in aid of science and technology through climate change all over the world. Third program, item no. 1, “*Sustainable Physical Health Program for Youth Today.*” with an average mean of 2.66. At this point, they were conscious the value of physical health program in the midst of pandemic. In relation to this, some of us take for granted the importance of physical health

for so many reasons like busy in some manner. Therefore, no time to do some physical exercise, like flexing, jogging, walking, dancing etc. Then balance food diet and drink water at least eight glasses in a day and make sleep at night with at least seven to eight hours at most. Those things are so important in our daily life in order to maintain strong physical health.

The fourth and last program is item no. 5, “*Sustainable Mental and Spiritual Health Program for Youth Today.*” With an average mean of 2.72. Showing that they were aware and strongly agree the value of spiritual health program in every individual, especially for those who believe in the existence of God and their creation. Likewise, spiritual wellness is an act of purification towards to holiness. “I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore, be holy, because I am holy” (Leviticus 11:45). Thus, they were aware and integrated the foundation of faith on their Filipino Christian formation. Likewise, the University of Perpetual Help System has Filipino Christian subjects from basic education up to tertiary level in line with our Philosophy, “Character Building, is Nation Building.” Thus, the Identity and Spirituality of Perpetualite is “Helper of God.” With the integration of Eight (8) Perpetualite Core Values, namely; 1. Love of God, Love of Self, Family, and Neighbor, 2. Love of Country and Good Governance, 3. Academic and Professional Excellence, 4. Health and Ecological Consciousness, 5. Peace and Global Solidarity, 6. Filipino Christian Leadership, 7. The UPHS and the Perpetualite, and 8. The Value of the Catholic Doctrines. Hence, they were formed and integrated the Filipino culture and Christian faith and values as real helper of God.

Conclusion

The profile of the respondents had no significance in the formation of Filipino Christian character. Granting, there were more female respondents and Catholic religion. The respondents were equally represented in terms of role in institution and were aware on the current crisis or pandemic yet, they were morally followed whatever protocol mandated by government and the church. The great contributory factor of foundation of faith and moral to their Filipino Christian character is Love of God, love of Self, Family, Neighbor, Country, and Good Governance in order to sustain the formation of their Filipino Christian character in midst of pandemic or crisis.

Based on the assessment of implications of Covid-19 pandemic to their Filipino Christian formation in terms of faith, morals, and resiliency there is no changes to their Filipino Christian character but instead there were more courage at all to phase the challenges of pandemic physically, mentally, socially and spiritually aware in acting out these foundations and internalizing the positive values despite of crisis. Therefore, they were morally and spiritually recognized, manifested, and well integrated the Filipino Christian values on their formation. The developing formation program should be proposed to endure their Filipino Christian character in the midst of crisis or pandemic are the Sustainable Mental and Spiritual Health Program for Youth Today, and Sustainable Health and Ecological Program for Youth Today.

Acknowledgement

The undertaking wishes to acknowledge with deepest gratitude and appreciation the help given by the following personalities and institutions who contributed much to this current study:

University of Perpetual Help System DALTA-Las Pinas Campus

Dr. Arnaldo S. De Guzman, School Director of UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus

Dr. Joven O. Sepino, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus

Dr. Belinda T. Conde, Research Director, UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus

Dr. Emerlyn E. Managuas, Dean, College of Education, UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus

Dr. Gina Lynn Salazar, Assistant Chair of Foreign Student, UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus

Dr. Josephine Dasig, C.O.P. Head, UPHSD-Las Pinas Campus

All student and parent respondents of the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA-Las Pinas Campus.

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***Rethinking the Principle of National Self-Determination:
Toward a New Approach for the Question of Palestine***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Several ideas have been proposed to solve the question of Palestine, but none have succeeded. Representative examples include the two-state solution for the separation and independence of Israel and Palestine and the one-state solution for the coexistence of two ethnic groups within one country. This study examined methodological problems common to these two central ideas to contribute to the development of viable and sustainable solutions in the future. Ultimately, the most significant problem is that these ideas, while tolerating to a certain extent the legitimacy of the nationalistic aspirations of the two ethnic groups, fail to respond effectively enough to either achieve sustainable segregation and stabilization or to adjust them within a country. To cope with this problem, this study discusses the possibility of introducing an individualistic governance system in which sovereignty overlaps within the same territory based on individualism, through the relativization of the principle of self-determination and the conventional nation-state system.

Keywords: The Question of Palestine, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Nationalism, Governance

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Introduction

In recent years, the pros and cons of the one- and two-state solutions have been debated as the central themes concerning the question of Palestine. Supporters of one-statism point out that the increase in Israeli settlements makes partition unrealistic and advocate coexistence within a single democratic state as an alternative (Abunimah, 2007; Faris, 2013; Farsakh, 2013, 2021a, 2021b; Ghanem, 2007; Habib, 2016; Hilal, 2007; Karmi, 2008; Tilley, 2010). According to Farsakh, the one-state solution can be further classified into singular democratic statism and binational statism. The former prioritizes individual over collective rights, leaving it to specific constitutional arrangements to sort out how collective rights can be protected. The latter envisions a federated or confederated state, along the lines of the Belgian or Swiss model, one that protects Israeli and Palestinian cultural and political institutions while giving them local autonomy within a democratic, binational state (Farsakh 2021a).

However, there are criticisms of the one-state solution and public support for it is not widespread. There is little advocacy for it, and its implementation is simply unrealistic. Moreover, there are concerns it could lead to a further escalation of clashes between the two groups (Arnaud 2003; Avnery 1999; Baraka 2005; Schenker 2014; Shikaki 2012; Roi 2013; Tamari 2000; Unger 2002, etc.). In addition, as will be described later, there are persistent objections on the Israeli side to the one-state solution in light of the “demographical threat” (Farsakh 2021a, Morris 2009).

As a result, there is now a consensus that there is no choice but for both sides to realize self-determination through the two-state solution as a compromise. The two-state solution has been seen as the only option in political negotiations. However, there has been no decisive debate over which plan is most appropriate since the beginning of the 2010s, and disputes over the one- and two-state solutions have reached a stalemate.

Nationalism as a Fundamental Challenge

Farsakh (2011), a prominent proponent of one-statism, has argued that Palestinians should seek a solution based on their rights rather than on the state itself and suggested the need for the one-state solution as a result. Given the unrealistic nature of two-statism and its deceptive current situation, it is highly persuasive as an alternative plan. Farsakh, however, argued that there are several obstacles to its realization. She pointed out that it is difficult to identify the actors who can take the initiative in implementing the one-state solution, and that the Palestinian side is preoccupied with internal divisions and is not at the stage of seriously considering the one-state solution.

The greatest obstacle which the conflict faces, however, seems to be the inherent exclusivity of the nation rather than the political reality. In short, it is difficult to say that the response to this obstacle has been sufficiently addressed in recent arguments for one-statism.

To revisit this deep-rooted challenge, let us briefly review Elie Kedourie’s argument, which is known for its unique approach to clarifying the nature of nationalism. Kedourie saw the origin of nationalism not so much in the French Revolution as in the tradition of German philosophy that originated in Kant and was followed by Fichte and Schlegel. This argument is known as a pioneering demonstration of the anthropological and philosophical implications of nationalism, starting with the philosophical notion of understanding human beings.

According to Kedourie (1993), Kant's concept of autonomy and self-determination became dominant in the moral and political discourse of the German philosophers that followed him. Then what is Kant's concept of autonomy and self-determination? According to Kant, human freedom is self-legislation in the sense that a man, who is a rational being, obeys the laws that he has assigned to him, otherwise known as freedom of self-determination. To Kant, a good human being is an autonomous human being. In other words, self-determination came to be considered the ultimate political good when it was assumed that one had to be free to be autonomous. This notion was developed by later German philosophers and combined with political discourses to produce a political ideology that made the existence of the state superior. Kedourie (1993, 30) argued:

From this metaphysics, the post-Kantians deduced a theory of the state. The end of man is freedom, freedom is self-realization, and self-realization is complete absorption in the universal consciousness. The state, therefore, is not a collection of individuals who have come together to protect their particular interests; the state is higher than the individual and comes before him. It is only when he and the state are one that the individual realizes his freedom.

As is well known, the concept of the self-determination of nations does not simply mean separatist independence in the Leninist context, but has various interpretations including autonomy within one country and cultural autonomy, notably typified by Austro-Marxist, Otto Bauer (1924). But, particularly in Israel and Palestine, the goal of national independence, based on separatism, is of particular importance in current political discourses (Khalidi 2010).

The importance of Kedourie's argument lies in his suggestion that nationalism and its exclusivity can arise as an essential aspect of human nature, beyond its manifestation as simply a modern phenomenon. These discussions are particularly relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because the ideology with the supreme goal of national independence that is currently shared by both Palestine and Israel is believed to be based on this nationalistic sentiment. In other words, it is a philosophically deep-rooted problem for human beings. It is therefore necessary to reaffirm that it is, in a sense, a fundamental human aspiration, rather than a realistic strategy for dealing with difficult situations at a particular moment or in current international politics.

Therefore, this disease of nationalism cannot be easily overcome by appealing to short-term interests and rationality. No matter how attractive a one-state solution may seem according to reason, it does not guarantee that it will be accepted in reality. The development of this nationalism — Zionism in Israel and Wataniya in Palestine — was, in a sense, an inevitable consequence of history and has deeply embedded in the identities of the Israelis and Palestinians the belief that they *can* and, more importantly, *should* maintain their distinct identities independently. This has resulted in ideological hegemony, in which the two-state solution is now the dominant framework for peace politically and both peoples expect an independent sovereign state based on the principle of national self-determination.

Original Issues

What is important here is what caused the conflict in the first place, what the original issue was. Of course, this point is very complex and ambiguous, and its scope can vary arbitrarily. For example, it is possible to say that the so-called “Jewish question” that had traditionally

existed in the West was the “essential” cause of the conflict, or that it was the birth of monotheistic religions dating back to before Christ. Based on the above understanding of the conflict, however, we view it as a conflict between Israel as a modern sovereign state and a group of people who recognize themselves as Palestinians. In this way, the origin of the conflict can be traced back to the point at which Palestinians were deprived of their right to live peacefully and be treated equally. This proposition seems to consider only the Palestinian point of view, but it can be explained as follows.

From the Palestinian point of view, the deprivation of these rights places them in a state in which “what originally existed” is “taken away” (a change from zero to a negative), and it can be said that asserting their rights is an act of “trying to bring the negative back to zero.” On the other hand, from the perspective of the Jewish people, the question of their disenfranchisement is a Western issue, separate from the context of the Palestinian issue discussed here. If we imagine an act of “bringing a negative to zero” for them, it would mean gaining the right to live peacefully and equally in Europe, where they have lived. In other words, the Jewish claim to rights in Palestine is interpreted as an act of “acquiring” something that did not exist originally, or “making zero into a positive,” and in this respect, both claims cannot be said to be symmetrical.

However, ignoring the reality that the Jewish community has been living in historical Palestine for several generations is hardly a productive approach to fair conflict resolution. Taken to the extreme, that understanding leads to the unrealistic argument that Jews should leave Palestine and return to Europe. Nevertheless, this point needs to be addressed separately from the origin of the conflict.

Based on the above understanding, the question of Palestinians arose because Palestinians were deprived of their right to live peacefully and be treated equally in the places where they originally lived. This is understood as the “most deep-rooted cause of disputes” in conflict resolution. In other words, when considering the “solution” to this question, the “total possibilities” is everything assumed as a countermeasure to the “cause” mentioned above. So there are countless possibilities, and every alternative can exist. International treaties and United Nations resolutions, national independence and self-determination, nationalism that enables or uses these theories, and the theories of two- and one-statism developed through these frameworks are just some of the possibilities. Even if there seems to be a consensus at the moment, we must be aware that it is only provisional.

In short, the national aspiration of Palestinians is the freedom of all Palestinians, including refugees, to reside anywhere in historical Palestine and to protect their culture, language, religion, and property. However, the same is true from the Israeli point of view. Future solutions should therefore be discussed only in the context of restructuring governance to coordinate these national aspirations.

Limitations of One-Statism

The biggest and most difficult challenge in promoting a one-state solution is the fact that it can only be achieved by partially ignoring or shelving the inevitable ethnic aspirations of both sides. In a single democratic state, democracy enables the intentions of the majority population to override other national aspirations. In the case of the federal (binational) system, which envisages the autonomy of two peoples within one country institutionally, the aim is to eliminate discrimination between peoples by establishing a single government.

However, since territorial freedom is restricted to a certain extent in the name of autonomy, the system fails to maintain and promote the essential elements of ethnic identity for Palestinians and Israelis, such as the return of refugees and ties to the land. More specifically, even if a federal system were to be adopted, it would present the same difficulties as those currently faced by the two-state solution in terms of which jurisdiction would include the holy sites such as Jerusalem, Hebron, and Bethlehem.

In particular, opinions expressed by the Zionist faction of the Israeli side on the one-state solution have been consistently negative. This negative view is based on the demographic reversal within historical Palestine, a situation the Zionists call a “demographic threat.” Of course, this is because they are concerned that the Palestinians will be able to democratically overtake their control of the future state. This is related to the fact that Zionism, a quasi-ethnic nationalism, has an inherently exclusive nature.

In sum, although active discussions are underway on how to ensure civil equality between the two ethnic groups under one-statism, the future state, which is supposed to have a single government, cannot essentially overcome the problems Zionists (or Palestinians) would face in becoming minorities, no matter how much institutional equality was guaranteed. Therefore, as long as the fundamental aim of current Zionism is to construct and maintain a state in which Jews are the majority (or there is no one other than Jews), the acceptance of liberal values and the realization of an institutionalized single state will be extremely difficult. Also, in the case of binational state theory, there is a *de facto* federal system. It aims to end the conflict through the realization of a unified government. However, even if there is an institutionally unified government, if it assumes that each ethnic group has its territorial division and autonomy is achieved there, then a zero-sum game of territory will occur just as in the two-state solution, and it will be difficult to find a compromise, especially in regard to the treatment of sacred sites and Israeli settlements.

After all, there is no difference between Palestinians and Israelis in their desire to achieve self-determination based on ethnic nationalism with a certain degree of exclusivity, and dealing with this point is the biggest obstacle to the one-state argument. No one wants to become a second-class citizen or ruled class, but the harsh reality of their differences lies before them. In other words, according to the civic nationalist argument, in various aspects, the gap between the two peoples is too wide to conceive of single Nation of free individuals who overcame differences in blood, language, and culture.

Based on these assumptions, it is somewhat optimistic to assume that Israelis and Palestinians will suddenly turn to liberal values, create a civic image of the nation, and bet on the possibility of embracing the one-state solution. It would be difficult for the identities of the two peoples to integrate, and even if such an outcome were possible, it would take at least a few hundred years. In other words, the one-state solution must realize this sort of situation from above through institutional reforms, which ultimately can be viewed as forcing the dissolution of the existing identities of both peoples to a certain extent. Of course, if it were to be achieved, its historical significance would be enormous, and it would be an important achievement in truly liberating humanity from war and conflict. Therefore, this paper does not disregard one-statism itself. However, whether such a great achievement should be a target in the present situation needs to be carefully considered.

Therefore, the one-state solution is almost as problematic as the two-state solution. The revival of one-statism, which emerged from the work of Edward Said (1999), even now, more than twenty years later, is still no more than an antithesis of two-statism. It may not have grown into a project with reality or actuality in itself.

Rather, in the current situation of the question of Palestine, the first thing that must be tackled is to dissolve oppression and inequality and release the oppressed, while quickly concluding the conflict at hand. Although the vision of one-statism should not be dismissed, if we think more realistically, gaining a perspective on how to envision a transitional era between complete separation and unification is important.

Relativization toward a New Paradigm

What is needed, therefore, is a perspective on how governance can be envisioned to enable the coexistence of the two ethnic groups without expecting a radical dissolution of their national identities or pursuing an impossible division. In other words, is there any form of governance that can embrace the conflicting aspirations of the two ethnic groups, rather than seeking to transform or transcend them?

Although there are already several proposals for alternatives to partition, it is considered problematic to apply governance systems of existing countries to Israel and Palestine as is (Farsakh 2021a). One reason for this is that the entire historical Palestine is inseparable from the national identity of both peoples. For example, there is the Swiss model of a federal system, which is often cited by the binational statist. However, if the federal government and autonomous states are based on a limited territorial demarcation, such a model is unlikely to be accepted.

Another reason is that for both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, the homogeneous identity of the nation is difficult to reconcile with their traditional values. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider the norms that they presuppose, to relativize the existing solution models and to create a new model of governance. Rather than raising the status of Israel and Palestine, which have “lagged,” to a “normal” state based on the standards of other countries, this conflict should be dealt with from the perspective of developing new futures.

We will now examine the relativization of the existing nation-state model. First, in the Western model of the nation-state, it is assumed that homogeneous groups of people have sovereignty. In a democracy, the people make laws based on the principle of majority rule and rule according to those laws. In this way, when the people, sovereignty, and the territory to which that sovereignty extends are combined, the minority's opinions within the same territory are effectively disregarded. As is well known, this basic fact forms the basis of the discourse of separatists who deny one-statism.

In this section, the example of an Islamic worldview is taken as the basis for relativizing modern norms in the West. Based on the traditional perspective of Islamic jurisprudence and theology, sovereignty exists only in God, not in the people. This is a unique communal tie in which one God is assumed to be a single sovereign and only hub. When God alone is the sovereign, the people under his sovereignty, the believers, whether they are ethnically in the majority or minority, are guided by a single source of norms, and their correctness is judged. In this case, theoretically being in the minority does not necessarily mean that one's rights are hindered or denied (It should be noted that what is being considered here is the ideal of

monotheistic governance. For example, in the historical Islamic state, the actual power of the caliphate and the agreement between Ulama (Ijma) exercised *de facto* authority, and this study does not take these as models). To conceptualize this, it is not the idea that being in the majority determines control, but that another universal factor, different from a group's position in the majority or minority, determines control.

These basic principles resulted in the creation of a historical form of governance. Al-Faruqi (1980), a Muslim scholar on comparative religions, discussed an Islamic solution to the question of Palestine. Al-Faruqi argued that the solution to the question of Palestine would be achieved by the establishment of an Islamic state and advocated for the dismantling of Middle Eastern countries and the incorporation of their populations into a single regime, rather than imitating Western nation-states. Such Islamic states should abolish all internal borders and individual defense mechanisms and have a single, comprehensive defense and diplomatic structure. This is similar to the recent concept of one-statism, but with the addition of the superiority of Islamic law. Al-Faruqi's argument also assumes that Jews would be subject to the rule of Islam. This would represent a political system similar to the Millet regime in the Ottoman Empire, and it is hard to imagine that Israel, which holds power in reality, would be incorporated into such a system. However, the model of autonomy by religion represented by the Millet regime has implications in the present day.

Islamic law, or Sharia, is not generally based on territorial principles but an individualistic legal system. As long as an individual is aware that he is a Muslim, Islamic law applies wherever he is. It can be said that the legal system of Judaism is the same. An extended interpretation of this model of the rule of law over people, rather than over land, would enable the realization of new governance. The autonomy model of each religion in the Millet regime can be regarded as a result of this individualistic governance.

Of course, the idea that either Islamic law or Jewish law is superior to other kinds of law is not realistic when considering the resolution of this conflict. In addition, this argument does not propose that Sharia and Halacha be the laws of a newly born state but simply refers to the conditions of these laws to be effective, as a model. Thus, regardless of religious values, at least two governments, two judicial systems, and two ethnic divisions would coexist in the same territory in a new state. This differs from the one-state solution because it does not assume a unified government. In addition, in the federal system, territorial divisions are often defined, but in this parallel state model, such divisions are not institutionally defined. This allows Jews to protect their language, Jewish culture, and religious beliefs institutionally and ensures that their rights are not threatened if they become a minority. The same is true of Palestinians. In addition, in the whole of historical Palestine, an arrangement between the two ethnic groups would make it impossible for either ethnic group to have exclusive control over a particular territory, but in return, each citizen would be free to move to and within, own property in, and reside in historical Palestine.

This discussion is similar to Mossberg's (2010) discussion of the condominium state and Witkin's (2011) notion of the "Interspersed Nation-State System," the idea of establishing a nation-state on a particular people rather than on exclusive territory. This would be a way for Israelis and Palestinians to live together on the same land while achieving self-determination through independent governments. In other words, there would be two states and governments, Israel and Palestine, on the same land of historical Palestine and both peoples would coexist.

Both the individualistic model derived from monotheistic governance and the model proposed by Witkin present a governance model in which multiple ethnic groups can exist on the same land. This can also be interpreted as enjoying ethnic autonomy without being bound by territory. The models make it possible to get out of the zero-sum game of exclusive competition for limited land, and by allowing all people to move freely, they can access and live on the land equally. For displaced Palestinians, it would be possible, of course, to return to anywhere in historical Palestine. Houses and villages that have already been destroyed cannot be restored, but, in reality, it is likely that compensation would be given.

Witkin's argument can be interpreted as a kind of thought experiment that strongly advocates for a completely new form of governance, but, as discussed in this paper, this form of governance can also be derived from the traditional relationship between humans and monotheistic laws, including Islam and Judaism. For example, the Millet regime in the Ottoman Empire can be considered similar to the model discussed in this paper, especially compared to the current nation-state model. This suggests that such a form of governance is worthy of consideration for reexamination in the future. In other words, individualistic governance can be seen as having a certain historical tradition, one that is not that far-removed from the traditions of today.

In contrast to the conventional binational state solution, the model discussed in this paper is based on the methodology of separating the state and territory, and the people and territory. As mentioned above, the biggest obstacle to both the theory of two states and the theory of one state is that it is difficult to fully respect the desire for free access to the entire land, which is fundamental to the two nations, while each nation maintains their ethnic identity. In this respect, individualistic governance seems to be an effective approach. At the very least, this approach would systematically avoid a one-state scenario in which people were forced to be part of a single nation and accept majority rule in the name of democracy. In theory, this would eliminate the possibility of a population becoming a minority and having its rights threatened or being arbitrarily controlled by another population. Compared with the alternative of the dissolution and transformation of ethnic identity, it is theoretically more realistic.

Also, while the existing two-statism envisaged the abandonment of about 78% of historically Palestinian land, this alternative could provide Palestinians with more. And it's not just about land or property. If some sort of integration between Israel and Palestine becomes possible, it could bring about positive changes both economically and in regional security. It is considered highly rational for both Israel and Palestine.

The importance of modifying or transforming Israel's colonialist character is often pointed out, but if an institutional change is understood to be capable of maintaining and promoting Israel's Jewish character without the assumption of exclusive territorial control, a shift in direction to create the reality that there is no need to maintain such a colonialist character and to disseminate such awareness is also possible. This is a relatively realistic approach considering that, until now, people could only expect voluntary changes to colonialism by demonstrating its folly and mistakes and could not bring any real pressure. At the same time, it could be an effective approach for Palestinians to reaffirm how unsustainable and unrealistic separatist and exclusionist ideologies are.

According to the modern nation-state model, in which a nation-state can be established only by building a homogeneous national image, the biggest obstacle is whether the Israelis and

Palestinians can forge a new identity as equal citizens. However, in the case of the principle of the rule of law based on individualism, such an obstacle does not exist. In the future, these ideas should be considered in parallel with one-statism.

Conclusion

It is only at this point that the alternative concept can be discussed in detail. This study began by looking at the fact that the deep-rooted challenges of nationalism, which is related to human nature, are making it difficult to find a solution to the question of Palestine. After that, a new governance model for the transitional period between separation and integration was proposed. In doing so, we reconsidered a governance model that relies on the traditional relationship between monotheistic law and human beings, and a model based on individualism and the separation of control and land, as represented by the interspersed nation-state system (Witkin 2011). This was considered a more feasible model because the two-state solution is no longer feasible, while the one-state solution is still seen as utopian. As discussed in this paper, it should be noted that the individualistic governance is actually realistic and a direction worth reexamining in the future if we are to squarely face the fundamental problem of two- and one-statism, namely the problem of the exclusivity inherent in ethnic nationalism.

To develop a more concrete alternative framework, it is necessary to carefully design it through detailed discussions from a wide variety of perspectives, including political, social, economic, and military perspectives.

To implement these ideas, it is essential to promote, through democratic means, support for such movements and political parties in both Israel and Palestine and to allow such movements to gain power. After that, to carry out the transition of the political system, there would need to be processes such as the formation of a consensus in the United Nations and the establishment of cooperative relations with neighboring Arab countries, followed by the transition to the actual operation of government in an experimental phase under the supervision of United Nations forces and the forces of neighboring countries and with cooperation in maintaining security; more specific discussions about this process will be required in the future.

The ideas presented in this paper are incomplete at this stage and need to be criticized, reinforced, and modified from various perspectives. Discussions must be held among researchers and experts with diverse expertise.

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***The Ethics of AUKUS:
Diplomatic Duplicity and Proliferation Perils***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The AUKUS trilateral security pact was announced between the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia on September 15, 2021. It pledged for the two larger allies to assist the development of nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), as well as broader cooperation in cybersecurity, and development of cruise and hypersonic missiles. AUKUS caused the immediate cancellation of a A\$90 billion contract signed by Australia in 2016 with the French government-owned Naval Group company, to design and deliver a new generation of conventionally powered submarines for the RAN. This contribution will analyse how ethical values came to play a significant role in escalating this diplomatic crisis, as President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Scott Morrison personally accused each other of deceptive conduct. The wider systemic implications for global security will also be examined. Concerns have been raised by arms control scholars and by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), that AUKUS could encourage other non-nuclear armed powers to pursue nuclear submarines, which threatens to erode the non-proliferation arms control regime. This policy decision has thus resulted in a security dilemma for Australia. By engaging in an arms race to deter the growing geopolitical assertiveness of the People's Republic of China, the conservative Morrison government has eroded its relations with traditional ally France, and complicated relations with their mutual US ally. As a national election was called for May 21, 2022, Morrison may also suffer a domestic political cost, due to his ethical mendacity.

Keywords: Australian Diplomacy; Australian Elections; Non-Proliferation

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Introduction

The sudden announcement of the AUKUS agreement in September 2021 was one of the most far-reaching shifts in Australian defence policy in recent times, principally due to its main purpose of acquiring nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). The decision generated highly significant foreign diplomatic and domestic political ramifications, which have had a negative impact overall for the Morrison Liberal-National Party (LNP) Coalition government.

This contribution will outline the strategic and political motivations which drove the Australian government to seek a replacement for its aging Collins-class conventional submarine fleet, first considering Japanese boats, before deciding on a French tender. The decision to abandon the French for a nuclear-powered fleet, as the core of the AUKUS agreement, will then be analysed.

The ethically questionable implications of pursuing AUKUS will then be considered; most immediate was the damage to the diplomatic relations between France and Australia. As Australia went into a national election set for May 21, 2022, the deception practiced around AUKUS contributed to the reputational damage of the Morrison government. Finally, the long-term ethical risks to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and potential strategic implications for the security of the Pacific region will be examined.

1.Replacing *Collins*

1.1 Submarine fleets of the RAN

The RAN's first submarine fleet comprised two E-class British submarines, both lost early in the First World War. British J-class and O-class fleets were briefly maintained in small numbers in the interwar period, before six British-built *Oberon*-class boats were commissioned between 1967 and 2000, reliant on maintenance and training by the Royal Navy (RN) (Schank et al, 2011: 3-5). To replace the Cold War era *Oberons*, six Swedish-designed *Collins*-class submarines were built by the government owned Australian Submarine Corporation (ASC) at its Adelaide shipyards between 1990 and 2003. They were the most expensive single Australian defence project at the time, as overcoming problems in construction, noise signature, propulsion and combat systems added to the original project costs, to reach around A\$5 billion (Woolner, 2009: 48-49).

Despite Australia's involvement in armed conflicts ranging from the Vietnam to the Iraq Wars, none of the RAN's diesel-electric submarines served in combat during or after the Cold War. Their purpose has instead been to defend the security of Australia's maritime approaches as a latent deterrent force, and more covertly participate in regional surveillance and intelligence-gathering (DoD, 2016: 90).

1.2 The *Soryu* saga

After a review commenced by the Labor government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2007, its 2009 Defence White Paper confirmed the *Collins*-class, in service since 1996, would be replaced; their projected retirement date of 2026 was extended into the 2030s (DoD, 2009: 70). The LNP government under Prime Minister Tony Abbott from 2013 initially favoured buying the highly-regarded Japanese *Soryu*-class boats, which would have had the advantage

of reinforcing the steadily growing security ties between Australia and Japan (Mark, 2015). However, in part to delay a potential leadership challenge, Abbott soon came under domestic political pressure to allow a wider tender process. The SEA 1000 Future Submarine Program (FSP) was therefore launched in February 2015, which aimed for local construction of the next generation of 12 conventional submarines, at an estimated cost of over \$50 billion (DoD, 2015).

1.3 The French connection

After considering a range of tenders, including from Japan (which modified the original tender by its consortium to include more Australian-based production), Germany, and Sweden, on April 26, 2016, Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (who replaced Abbott in a party room vote the previous September) announced the tender had been awarded to the French government-owned weapons manufacturer DCNS, to produce the new *Attack*-class submarines, a conventional version of the nuclear-powered *Barracuda*-class boats built by DCNS for the French Navy. Despite concerns over developing such a unique and untested design, instead of an ‘off-the-shelf’ model, the Turnbull government judged the *Attack*-class would meet the RAN’s requirements for stealth, range, and endurance (Turnbull, 2020: 339-344).

At least 90% of production would be completed in Adelaide, another major appealing factor for the Turnbull government to choose DCNS’s tender, that also involved a consortium with French defence manufacturing conglomerate Thales, which was already constructing military vehicles and equipment in Australia for the Australian Defence Forces (ADF). Turnbull opened an FSP office in Cherbourg in July 2017 (after DCNS had renamed to Naval Group), and a strategic partnership agreement was signed in 2019, for Naval Group to design and construct 12 submarines in Australia. Production was set to commence in 2023; delivery and commissioning was aimed for the early 2030s, although the out-turned cost was estimated to have risen to around A\$80 billion, far higher than the original tender (Brangwin, 2020: 17, 23, 28-33).

2. The AUKUS Deception

2.1 Enter Morrison

The main motivation to upgrade the RAN’s submarine fleet through the FSP was the growing geostrategic power of China, concern over which continued under the government of Liberal Prime Minister Scott Morrison (who replaced Turnbull in a leadership challenge in August 2018). This was reflected in the 2020 Defence Strategic Update, and 2020 Force Structure Plan; these policy documents outlined planned increases to the long-range strike capabilities of the ADF, including long-range missiles, in order to counter the rising strategic challenges to the security of the Indo-Pacific region (Graham, 2020).

The steadily deteriorating relations with China, Australia’s largest trading partner, only accelerated after Morrison demanded an international tribunal to investigate the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan. The Chinese government retaliated with an escalation of tariffs and quotas against Australian exports, and increasingly harsh diplomatic rhetoric (Walker, 2022). Driven by this deteriorating regional security environment, the Morrison government was already preparing to undermine the French tender. This followed increasing dissatisfaction with its delays, reduction in local content to under 60%, and continual

blowouts in the required budget for the FSP. A revised assessment considered the final cost for Naval Group's construction could even reach A\$90 billion; ongoing maintenance could lift the cost even further to A\$145 billion over the submarines' service life (Sheftalovich, 2021).

This more expensive design plan delivered by Naval Group drove the Department of Defence to consider a 'Plan B', revealed in Senate Estimates Committee hearings in June 2021 (Greene, 2021a). Exploratory moves to find an alternative were covertly underway, as the RAN Chief, Vice-Admiral Michael Noonan met the Royal Navy's First Sea Lord at Australia's London High Commission in March 2021. This secret negotiation process to gain assistance from the UK and US to acquire nuclear-powered submarines was termed 'Operation Hookless' by the UK Ministry of Defence (Bergmann, 2021).

Visiting France on the way to the G7 Summit in June, Morrison met with President Emmanuel Macron to raise Australia's concerns with the FSP; Macron reassured that France was fully committed to faster progress (Greene, 2021b). Unbeknownst to Macron, at the G7 Leaders' Summit at Cornwall, Morrison held a meeting with UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and US President Joe Biden, laying the preparations for the shock announcement soon to follow (Lewis, 2021). France was still left unaware though, since as late as August 30, the French and Australian foreign and defence ministers released a joint statement which reconfirmed the importance of the Naval Group FSP, as about A\$2.4 billion had already been spent (Payne, 2021).

2.2 AUKUS unleashed

It was then a profound surprise to nearly all when AUKUS was announced in a joint declaration by Australia, the UK and US on September 15. The central part of the agreement was for the UK and US to assist Australia in developing nuclear-powered submarines; this was a truly remarkable initiative, as this would be the first time a country not armed with nuclear weapons would come to operate nuclear-powered vessels. This would also be the first time for the US and UK to extend their mutually shared defence-related nuclear technology outside the 1958 US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement. Increased cooperation between the three countries would also proceed in areas of cybersecurity, such as artificial intelligence and quantum technology (White House, 2021).

By announcing AUKUS, Morrison simultaneously declared the Naval Group contract was to be cancelled, due to the changing strategic circumstances of the region (Graham, 2021). Replacing the conventional submarines was justified as giving the RAN greater operational flexibility, as nuclear-powered boats travel at faster speeds, and can have far longer time on station. Having a fleet of at least eight nuclear-powered boats would therefore grant far greater range and endurance, and hence potential striking power, which would enhance deterrence. While the rise of China's strategic power in the region was not overtly mentioned, it was clear that deterring its armed forces in the East China Sea was the motivation for the pact (Curran, 2021). AUKUS was swiftly condemned by China; its state media and foreign ministry accused the three allied member states of pursuing an 'obsolete Cold War mentality', which had now turned Australia into 'an adversary of China' (BBC, 2021a).

Morrison announced a taskforce would be established for at least 18 months of consultation to determine which model of submarine would be selected – widely considered to be a choice between either the US *Virginia*-class, or the UK's *Astute*-class (Nicholls, Dowie and Hellyer,

2021). Whichever is chosen, constructing nuclear-powered submarines will delay the delivery of the next generation of RAN submarines even further, into the 2040s at least; this will require the *Collins-class* boats to have their service life extended yet again, to reach around fifty years, with the refit expense estimated at twice their original cost (Hellyer, 2021).

The cost of building eight nuclear submarines in Australia has been estimated to be over \$170 billion, nearly twice the cost of the French tender. However, even after the future boat model is eventually decided, there is still no indication of how much construction will be carried out within Australia. The lack of nuclear production facilities means that most if not all essential construction, plus much of the future servicing and maintenance, will have to take place either in the US or UK, unlike the previous conventional submarine proposed tenders (Wood, 2021).

2.3 *J'Accuse*

France was understandably outraged by the sudden cancellation, which caused the worst diplomatic breach with Australia since the era of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific in the 1980s and 1990s (Firth, 1999:126-129). The French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian stated that AUKUS was a 'stab in the back', and the French ambassadors to Australia and the US were recalled in protest (Acosta, Atwood & Vazquez, 2021).

At the Rome G20 Summit in November, after an awkward brief meeting with Morrison, President Macron was asked by Australian media if he thought he was lied to by Morrison over the contract's cancellation; Macron replied, "I don't think, I know!" After this accusation by Macron, Morrison claimed the French contract had indeed been abandoned due to problems with delays, content and cost blowouts, which directly contradicted his government's stated position in September (Fathi, 2021). Former prime minister Turnbull (no doubt still nursing some resentment over his ouster by Morrison in 2018) fiercely criticised Morrison's handling of the dispute, backing up Macron's stunningly blunt claims that Morrison was a liar. Turnbull stated that national security had been damaged by Australia's breach of trust, making it an untrustworthy and unreliable partner, eroding its status with allies (Butler, 2021).

The US was inevitably drawn into the diplomatic dispute, with President Biden essentially backing Macron; Biden admitted that breaking the French submarine deal was 'clumsy', and thought France had been made aware earlier. Morrison's Prime Minister's Office (PMO) then leaked further documents purporting to show the Biden administration had been aware the French deal had to be abandoned. This shows how the PMO was even willing to contradict and potentially embarrass its US ally, in order to save face against France, and project strength to a domestic political audience in an election year (BBC 2021b).

Encouraged by the UK to support Australia's approach, the impetus for AUKUS was taken up by the Biden administration as it withdrew from Afghanistan, and sought to refocus its strategic direction against China (Howard and Earle, 2021). The AUKUS decision also showed that under the LNP government, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) had become ever more sidelined in Australia's foreign policy processes. The National Security Committee of cabinet, with Morrison at its head, now dominated Australia's strategic direction. The traditional expertise and opinion of the diplomatic corps was bypassed, leaving them surprised and dramatically isolated by the AUKUS decision (Barnes, 2022).

AUKUS also served the wider strategic purpose of reinforcing the traditional alliance with UK, as Macron aimed to lead the post-Brexit European Union towards a foreign policy and security direction less reliant on the US (Kempin, 2021). France officially downgraded Australia in its latest Indo-Pacific Strategy white paper, removing it from the list of strategic partners, with security cooperation now to occur only on a case-by-case basis (MEFA, 2022: 41). The decision of the Morrison government to abandon the *Attack*-class FSP therefore had a direct deleterious impact on Australia's strategic relations with a country that had been an ally in the First World War, and was still a significant world and regional power. Compensation for cancelling the Naval Group contract could end up costing taxpayers A\$5.5 billion, for no submarines delivered (Greene, 2022a).

3. AUKUS and the 2022 Election

3.1 Bipartisan for AUKUS

AUKUS was part of the Morrison government's attempt to project an image of foreign policy expertise for the LNP during an election year, backed up by announcements in the pre-election 2022 budget of record defence spending. However, this attempt to wedge the Opposition as weak on confronting China was largely undermined by Labor's generally bipartisan positions on foreign and defence policy. Labor Party leader Anthony Albanese and shadow foreign affairs minister Senator Penny Wong quickly and clearly stated their support for AUKUS, while criticising the diplomatically disruptive way it was brought about (Wong, 2021).

Of the minor parties, only the Australian Greens pledged to oppose AUKUS, reduce military spending, renegotiate the ANZUS alliance, and close all foreign bases, should they hold the balance of power in the Senate after the 2022 election (Steele-John, 2021). Given the bipartisan support for AUKUS and ANZUS from the two major parties, this stance by the Greens can only remain a symbolic ideal.

Morrison's pre-election national security address to the Lowy Institute foreign policy thinktank in March 2022 restated the necessity of AUKUS and its nuclear-powered submarines. Morrison stated that this was due to an 'arc of autocracy' confronting Australia with its worst security environment in 80 years, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine the previous month, as well as the relentless geopolitical ambitions of China. Any decision on whether to select a UK or US model for the submarines would be made after the election (contradicting earlier statements by his Defence Minister, Peter Dutton), and that A\$10 billion would be allocated for a new base for the submarines on the east coast, at a location also to be later determined (Bongiorno, 2022).

The move to acquire nuclear-powered submarines was part of another historic announcement of a massive expansion of the ADF planned by the Morrison government, as part of its pre-election positioning to boost its national security image. It will be the largest expansion of the ADF since the Vietnam War, aiming to add over 18,000 personnel across the three services (including the highly-trained submariners and nuclear-qualified support personnel that will be required to crew and service the future submarines), to around 80,000. The upgrade will include new units dedicated to cyber warfare, as part of the AUKUS agreement, and long-range cruise and hypersonic missiles (Greene, 2022b).

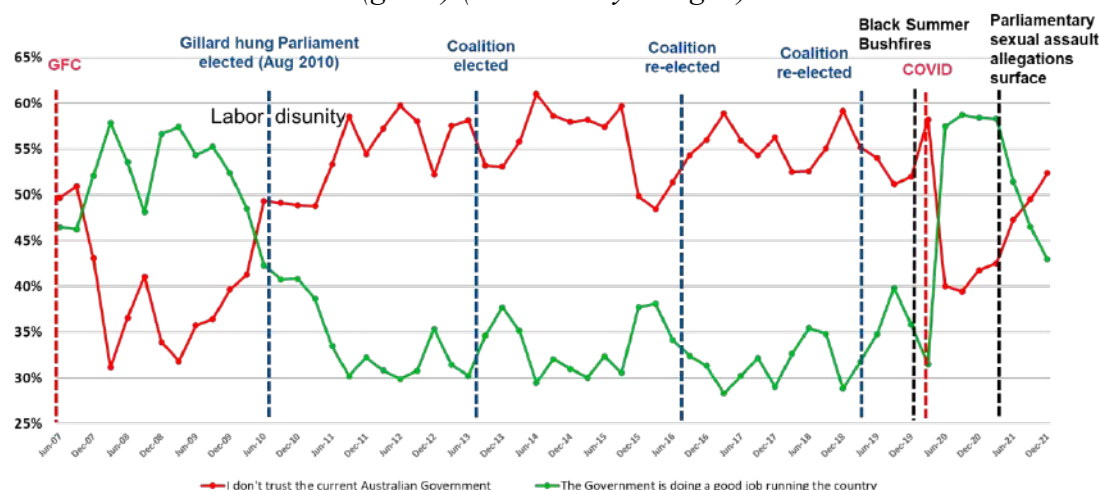
These plans were confirmed in the 2022 budget delivered on March 29, which announced an increased cybersecurity program (termed REDSPICE), costing nearly \$10 billion over the next ten years (although most of this spending will be redirected from already allocated funding). This will see the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) double in size; the budget did not offer any further details on nuclear submarine acquisition though (Haskell-Dowland, 2022).

In response, in his pre-election campaign foreign policy speech, Opposition Leader Albanese committed Labor to matching, and even possibly exceeding the LNP's plans for higher defence spending, with suggestions of even higher numbers for warship construction, and plans to equip the AUKUS-provided submarines with US-supplied Tomahawk cruise missiles (Albanese, 2022a). Meanwhile, Senator Wong indicated a diplomatic improvement of relations with China would be possible under Labor, should the LNP abandon its partisan attempts to manipulate national security and foreign policy issues (Murphy & Hurst, 2022).

3.2 Australian political malaise

Such manipulation of important issues for short-term political advantage had long been contributing to a sense of cynicism and disillusionment among the Australian electorate, in the leadup to the 2022 election. According to polling company Roy Morgan, levels of trust in Australian governments have been generally negative under both major parties, since the divisions of the Labor government in 2010 generated by the leadership rivalry between Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard. Despite winning election in 2013, and being re-elected in 2016 and 2019, the LNP also had negative levels of trust overall, also largely due to its own leadership turnovers, and broken policy promises (Roy Morgan, 2022).

Figure 1: Government distrust (red) vs Government doing a good job running the country (green) (Source: Roy Morgan)

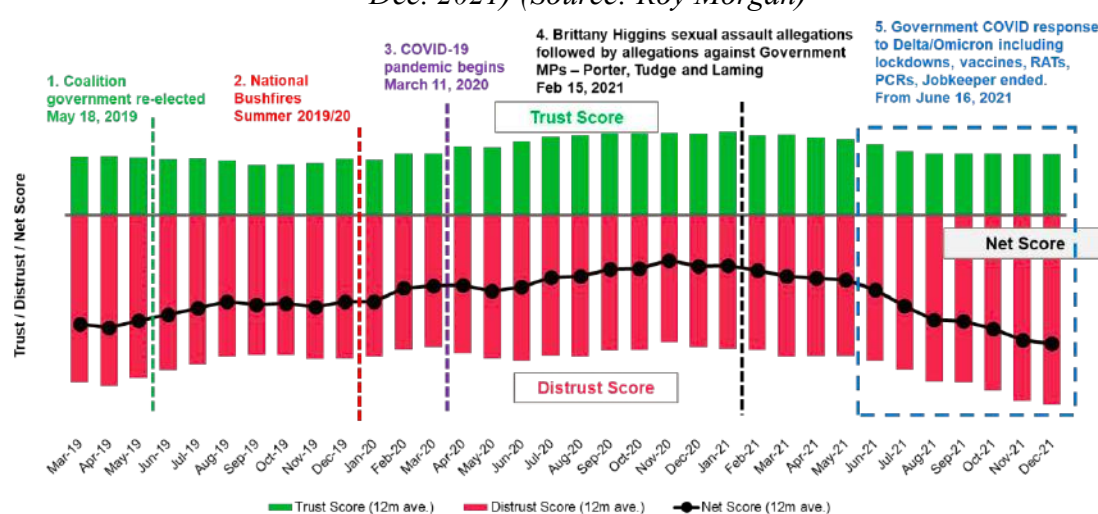


The Morrison government was able to temporarily reverse this trend in its initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but positive trust barely lasted a year, before falling back into overall distrust, after revelations of sexual assault allegations in Parliament against LNP staff, and by LNP ministers. The relatively poorer response by the Morrison government to the Delta and Omicron waves of the pandemic, frustration with ongoing lockdowns, and more recently, tardy emergency responses to floods in Northern NSW and Southeast Queensland have entrenched these low levels of distrust. This has compounded anxiety felt in much of the

electorate about the LNP's lack of action on climate change, which has even brought rebukes from the United Nations (Roy Morgan, 2022).

Ongoing, long-standing allegations of 'pork-barrel' spending of government grants to favour community and sporting projects in government-held or marginal electorates, and the consistent failure of the government to implement a long-promised Federal Integrity Commission have also badly damaged the LNP government's image. Morrison was thus ranked in the Roy Morgan poll as the most distrusted political leader in Australia, followed by Defence Minister Dutton, and Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce. By contrast, Albanese was ranked the second most trusted political leader, only behind Wong, Labor's leader in the Senate (Roy Morgan, 2022).

Figure 2: Government & Government services: Trust, Distrust, and Net Trust (March 2019 - Dec. 2021) (Source: Roy Morgan)



Prior to the election being called, media revelations of text messages by National Party leader Joyce calling Morrison a liar in 2021 (while temporarily on the backbench in between leadership stints, following a 2018 sex scandal), other leaked texts by former Liberal NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, plus similar criticism from former prime minister Turnbull, all added further damage to Morrison's image, as being profoundly untrustworthy (Grattan, 2022a). There were accusations against Morrison of bullying from former female members of parliament, and of racism, stemming from his preselection contest when entering parliament. These allegations were all denied by Morrison, but this intensifying criticism from his own side of politics in the lead-up to the election campaign only added to the negative public perception of Morrison as manipulative and deceptive (Murphy and Butler, 2022).

Once the election campaign was finally called by Morrison on April 10, to be held on May 21, trust in government and the character of political leaders were therefore primed to be major issues, along with economic management, decades-high inflation and cost of living pressures, provision of health care and social services, and dealing with climate change (Baker, 2022). Labor made the controversies over Morrison's character a key focus of their campaign, whereas the LNP and Morrison in response also sought to target Albanese as inauthentic, and inexperienced (despite his serving as Deputy Prime Minister in the previous Labor government). Highlighting the duplicity over the AUKUS deal also tied into the election issue of foreign policy and national security (Wallace, 2022).

Hence, Labor has continually endorsed the AUKUS agreement, but criticised the means through which it was achieved. While the deception perpetrated on the French government by the AUKUS deal is not likely to be primarily remembered by Australian voters as the major reason for distrusting Morrison and his government, it is yet another incremental incident which has contributed to the overall poor perception of the LNP government.

4. Proliferation Perils

4.1 AUKUS vs the NPT

China's opposition to AUKUS was expected, but wider fears were raised about its potentially adverse effect on the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, based around the 1967 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Morrison government has insisted AUKUS is compliant with the NPT, as Australia remains committed to never constructing or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons (Kapetas, 2021). Nevertheless, there are concerns over the precedent of a non-nuclear armed power like Australia developing nuclear-powered submarines.

Following the announcement of AUKUS, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency stated that a special team would be established to examine the legal implications and nuclear safeguards, as more countries building nuclear submarines could have serious proliferation and legal implications. (Findlay, 2021) It is feared by some arms control scholars that AUKUS will undermine the NPT by allowing aspiring proliferators to access highly enriched uranium, and thus allow diversion of fissile material intended to power submarines towards a covert weapons program. This could particularly apply to Iran, and potentially others such as Saudi Arabia, or Brazil, which also plans to build nuclear-powered submarines (Acton, 2021).

South Korea might also be the next non-nuclear armed country to pursue nuclear-powered submarines, inspired by AUKUS; this policy was advocated by the Democratic Party candidate for South Korea's 2022 presidential election, which could yet be taken up in future by the even more hawkish administration of President Yoon Suk Yeol (Shin & Kim, 2021). Japan is similarly concerned by the rising strategic power of China, and the belligerence of neighbouring Russia; given its own domestic submarine production capability and extensive nuclear power industry, it is certainly possible Japan could develop its own nuclear-powered submarines. While this has been so far discounted by current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, two of his previous rivals for the LDP leadership, former defence minister Taro Kono, and current LDP Policy Chief Sanae Takaichi are in favour of the Maritime Self Defense Forces (SDF) having nuclear-powered boats (Bell, 2022).

Australia and Japan recently concluded a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) between the ADF and SDF, and a similar RAA is being negotiated between Japan and the UK. Japan will therefore soon have a similar level of defence cooperation between two of the AUKUS partners, in addition to its core alliance with the US (Koga, 2022). As Japan is also a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the 'Quad', which includes India), these overlapping multilateral security partnerships, which already involve cooperation in joint forces training, intelligence, and research and development of hypersonic missiles, could well lead to Japan formally joining AUKUS in future (White House, 2022).

However, as the delivery of nuclear submarines to the RAN remains decades away, the more immediate objective of AUKUS is in the realms of cybersecurity, as Australia's ASD and

ADF cyber operations will now come under the coordination of US Cyber Command (ASD, 2022). As well as the eventual commercial benefits for either American or British weapons manufacturers, the main long-term strategic benefit for both the US Navy and Royal Navy will be to gain port access in Australia for their own nuclear-capable submarines (Sadler, 2021).

A 2011 assessment by the Department of Defence found Sydney Harbour to be the best choice for a new (conventional) submarine support base, but this has now been discounted. There is speculation that Port Kembla, at Wollongong on the New South Wales south coast is now the leading contender for a new nuclear submarine port and servicing facility, with other possible sites at either Newcastle or Brisbane (Fernandez, 2022). However, local opposition to potential safety risks could become a difficult political issue, whichever party forms government after the 2022 election (Tran & Khawaldeh, 2022).

4.2 Strategic surprise in the Solomons

Another consequence of AUKUS has been the countervailing strategic move by China to negotiate a security agreement with the Solomon Islands, some 2000 kms away from Australia. If the major purpose of AUKUS was to deliver nuclear-powered submarines that could operate at longer ranges with longer endurance to deter the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), through maintaining a presence in the East and South China Seas, this may have already been circumvented. The prospect of a PLAN presence being established so relatively close to the Australian mainland will require a response by the ADF well before the far-distant delivery of the RAN's planned nuclear-powered submarines (Greene, 2022c).

The signature of a security treaty between the Solomon Islands and China on April 19, despite tardy, last-minute diplomatic intervention by Australian intelligence officials and the junior Minister for International Development and the Pacific, was harshly condemned by Labor as the greatest foreign policy failure in the Pacific since the Second World War. Despite its much vaunted 'Pacific Step Up' policy, the LNP government's steady erosion of the foreign aid budget for the Pacific, and its patronising attitude towards the vulnerable Pacific Island states, due to a largely dismissive approach in tackling climate change were particularly highlighted as factors in the diplomatic neglect of the Solomon Islands, which Labor pledged to reverse (Hitch, 2022).

Other critics pointed out the major intelligence failure under the watch of the Morrison government, which had been informed of China's intentions to pursue an agreement with the Solomon Islands the previous August. This strategic surprise by China, so soon after the start of the election campaign, severely subverted one of the LNP's main hoped-for political advantages, of projecting an image of strength on national security (Keane & Fernandes, 2022). In typically bombastic rhetoric, Defence Minister Dutton again compared China and Russia's behaviour to the rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, which justified AUKUS and the Quad, and that Australia should 'prepare for war'. However, the speed of China's growing diplomatic infiltration into the South Pacific has only reminded of how the promise of delivery of nuclear submarines is so far and uncertain into the future (Dziedzic, 2022).

The Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry has denied that China will construct any military bases in the Solomons, and again condemned AUKUS, calling it a 'backroom deal' that lacked transparency (ABC, 2022), a criticism later echoed by Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare (Dziedzic & Jackson, 2022). Given that the PLAN has already surpassed

the US Navy as the world's largest, any future contribution by the RAN to the military balance of the region will remain relatively marginal (Shelbourne, 2021).

In the first leaders' debate of the election campaign, Morrison again attempted to wedge Labor, accusing Albanese of taking China's side on the Solomon Islands diplomatic crisis. Albanese strongly rebuked Morrison for again trying to politicise traditionally bipartisan security policy (Hurst, 2022). National security had been especially highlighted as an election issue by the Russian invasion of Ukraine; as well as imposing sanctions on Russia and providing humanitarian aid, the Morrison government has sent 20 Bushmaster armoured vehicles and six howitzers to the Ukrainian armed forces, all with bipartisan support (Levick, 2022). Labor further boosted its support for AUKUS with its policy to establish the Advanced Strategic Research Agency (ASRA), which would have a budget of A\$1.2 billion to develop defence-related technology, in conjunction with the AUKUS partners (Albanese, 2022b).

Conclusion

At the time of writing past midway through the election campaign, Labor remained ahead of the LNP in opinion polls (Grattan, 2022b). A group of independent candidates termed the 'Teal Independents', predominantly professional-class women campaigning on progressive issues such as climate change, threatened the Liberal Party in some of their traditionally safest urban-held seats. This brought about the possibility of the infrequent result of a hung parliament, and a range of cross-bench Independents and minor parties is also likely set to continue to hold the balance of power in the Senate (Napier-Raman, 2022).

Should the Morrison government be replaced by Labor following the May 21 election, the lies told by Scott Morrison to Emmanuel Macron over ending the submarine contract with France will have likely played an incremental part in eroding the electorate's trust in the LNP. After the domestic political contest of the election is settled, if Labor is returned to office with Anthony Albanese as prime minister, the bipartisan support for AUKUS will ensure acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines for the RAN will continue to proceed, despite the attendant risks to the NPT, and the danger of contributing to the regional arms race. The encroachment of Chinese influence into the Solomon Islands shows how AUKUS has failed to deter China; the nuclear submarines will be massively expensive, not arrive for decades, and will have a tokenistic geostrategic effect, at best.

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AI Ethics in Next Generation Wireless Networks: A Philosophical Outlook

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms are playing a great role in modern society nowadays. Developing AI-based algorithms more intelligent than humans, for example, it has beaten humans in many specific domains such as chess, and ensuring the use of their advanced intelligence for good rather than bad raises a lot of ethical issues including safety, security, privacy, human dignity, etc. Next-Generation Wireless Communication Networks (NGWNs) is one of the growing areas where new technologies are emerging, for example, 6G from 5G and deploys AI techniques such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for generating synthetic data in order to develop data-driven models, for example, real-time resource allocation, channel modelling, etc. Consequentialism decides that an action is good or bad depending on its outcome. To that end, this paper presents an overview of AI ethics in the context of wireless networks and investigates how AI ethics is related to AI from the philosophical perspective. It focuses on the ethical implications and moral questions that arise from the development and deployment of AI algorithms. Further, it verifies the claim that consequentialism drives AI, by addressing the possible impacts of deploying AI-based algorithms on society. It also verifies its ethical feasibility with the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who defines ethics as “act as you would want all other people to act towards all other people”. Several ethical initiatives taken by countries across the globe to address the ethical concerns and issues emerging in relation to AI-based algorithms are also reviewed.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Consequentialism, Ethics, Generative Adversarial Networks (Gans), Society

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Introduction

The rapid developments in artificial intelligence (AI) including machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) bring huge potential benefits. For example, helping people to acquire new skills and training, improving voice over internet protocol (VoIP) applications such as Microsoft Skype, Google Meet, Apple FaceTime to connect people across the world, providing real-time quality monitoring of air pollution, etc. However, it is susceptible to errors and bias when developed with the malicious intent and/or trained with the adversarial data inputs. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the ethical, and social aspects of AI systems to avoid unintended, negative consequences and risks arising from the implementation of AI techniques in the society. Moreover, AI has enormous potential to be weaponized in the ways which can threaten public safety, security, and quality of life.

The European Commission's Communication on Artificial Intelligence (European Commission, 2018) defines artificial intelligence as: "Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the systems that display intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and taking actions with some degree of autonomy to achieve specific goals. AI-based systems can be purely software-based, acting in the virtual world (e.g., voice assistant, image analysis software, search engine, speech and face recognition system, etc.) or AI can be embedded in the hardware devices (e.g., advanced robot, autonomous car, drone or internet of thing applications)."

A straightforward definition of "intelligence" is that intelligent behavior is "doing the right thing at the right time". Legg and Hunt (2007) identified three common features that defines intelligence: (a) property that an individual agent has, as it interacts with its environments; (b) agent's ability to succeed or profit with respect to some goal or objective; and (c) ability of that agent to adapt to different objectives and environments. They pointed out that intelligence involves adaptation, learning and understanding. In simplest form, intelligence is "the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills to manipulate one's environment".

In interpreting these definitions of intelligence, one needs to understand that for a *physical robot* its environment is the real world, which can be a human environment (for social robot), a city street (for an autonomous vehicle), a home care or hospital (for an assisted living robot), or a workplace (for a workmate robot). Similarly, the "environment" of a software AI is its context which might be clinical (for a medical diagnosis AI), or a public space for face recognition in airport, or virtual for face recognition in social media. But like the physical robots, software AIs almost always interact with humans, whether via question and answer interface (via text for chatbot) or via speech for digital assistants on mobile phones, that is, Siri or Alexa.

The long-term goal of AI is to explicitly develop AI systems that can learn incrementally, reason abstractly and act effectively over a wide range of domains just like the humans can, that is, AI systems should be comparable to the human intelligence. For example, a general-purpose "care robot" may be capable of preparing meals for an elderly person (and washing the dishes afterwards), helping them dress or undress, get into and out of bed or the bath, etc. In other words, AI systems may easily mimic human intelligence and may execute tasks from the most simplest to those that are even more complex.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 introduces the usages of AI in wireless networks and other real-world applications. Section 3 defines AI ethics from the

philosophical perspective. Section 4 describes the underlying impacts of AI on the society. Section 5 outlines the ethical initiatives governed for the ethical concerns in AI and its current progress. The concluding remarks are made in Section 6.

2. AI in Wireless Networks

In the era of exponentially increasing number of internet users and mobile devices, the fifth generation (5G) of wireless communication networks will be rolled out shortly. The Mobile Economy (ME, 2020) reported that by the end of year 2025, the growth in number of mobile subscribers and internet users is expected to be 5.8 billion (71% of global population). Therefore, the next generation wireless networks (NGWNs), starting with 5G, must embrace intelligent signal processing techniques such as AI including ML and DL to efficiently utilize available resources in the dimensions of time, frequency, code and space for achieving higher data-rates, low latency and high reliability in order to fulfil the desired human's quality of experience (QoE). Demand of end-to-end low latency, higher reliability, and higher per-user data-rate directs us to design more sophisticated software-oriented communication networks. The network should be able to support more flexible and on-demand network resources to meet user's expectations. The 5G (Fu et al., 2018), 6G technology (Letaief et al., 2019) and the next generation wireless networks are subjected to a range of non-linear factors due to which the classical theories and models lead to inaccurate results and sub-optimal performance. Therefore, novel intelligent techniques are necessary to design appropriate data-driven models which can perform real-time prediction of network resources and can make its efficient utilization to meet user's desired level of QoE. Using AI techniques, smart decision-making AI algorithms can be developed and introduced into the wireless infrastructure to improve the quality of service (QoS) and performance gains of the end-user device.

There are various problems which are associated in designing AI-based algorithms. For example, a data-driven AI-based communication model employs network data (Kibria et al., 2018) (e.g., channel gain maps, QoS-parameters such as delays, throughputs) to determine availability of resources based on user experience and environmental conditions. However, acquiring such real data in a cost-effective way for the fast-varying network conditions is a major challenge. Moreover, AI-based algorithms are data hungry and most real data are publicly unavailable. Therefore, it is important to address both the data scarcity (lack of data across some network domains and configurations) and the data sparsity (uneven distributions of data) challenges, by designing novel AI-based algorithms in order to generate rich and realistic data that can be used efficiently for building robust data-driven AI-based models in the next generation wireless networks.

In order to design AI-based algorithms, one approach is to obtain real data (e.g., channel gain maps, QoS-parameters such as delays, throughputs) from the network operators, which is very difficult due to data privacy, that is, general data protection regulations (GDPR) to protect citizen privacy. Another approach is to generate pseudo-real data from the testbed. However, getting such testbed (hardware device) is highly expensive. Besides this, it is also possible to generate rich synthetic data using various ML tools such as generative adversarial networks (GANs) (Goodfellow et al., 2014, Donahue et al., 2017).

2.1 Generative Adversarial Networks

Generative adversarial networks (GANs) (Goodfellow et al., 2014) is a new class of generative methods for data distribution learning, where the objective is to learn a model that can generate samples close to the target distribution. The intuition behind GANs is to exploit the potential of deep neural network (DNN) to model both nonlinear complex relationships as well as to classify complex signals. It is a two-player minimax game between a discriminator DNN and a generator DNN. The discriminator (D) learns to distinguish between the data generated by the generator (G) and the data from a real dataset, while the generator learns to generate synthetic samples. During the training, the generator maps an input noise (z) with prior distribution ($p_Z(z)$) to a synthetic data sample. Then, samples from the real data and those generated from the generator (e.g., channel gain maps, QoS-parameters such as delays, throughputs) are used to train the discriminator for maximizing its ability to distinguish between two categories, namely, real or fake/synthetic data. In theory, when the Nash equilibrium (Porter et al., 2008) is reached between the generator and the discriminator DNNs, then the pair of DNNs provide a generator (G) that can exactly duplicate or reproduce the distribution of real data so that the discriminator would not be able to identify whether a sample is synthetic, that is, whether it is generated by the generator DNN or whether it is from the real data. At this point, the synthetic data generated by the generator DNN are indistinguishable from the real data and thus are as realistic as possible. The performance of GANs, that is, the capability to distinguish between real samples and generated (synthetic) samples is usually evaluated by investigating whether the generated data actually follows the desired real data distribution. The structure of GANs is shown in Fig. 1.

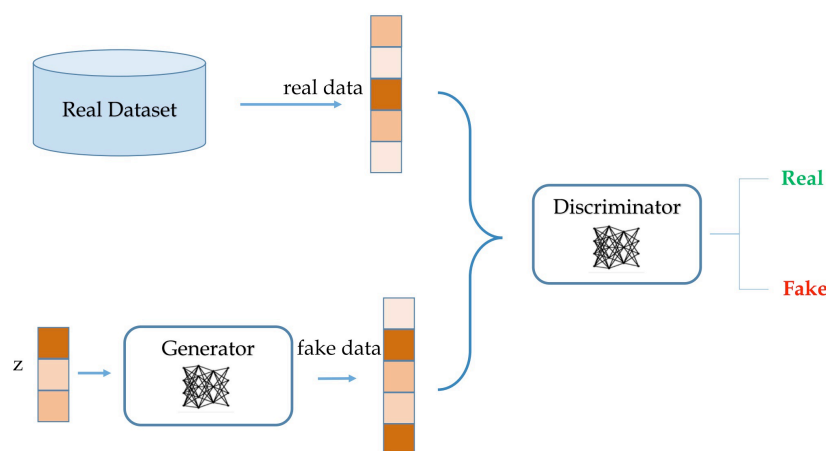


Figure 1: Structure of GANs (Ye et al., 2018).

Using the GAN-based data generation technique, one can meet the requirement of data hungry nature of AI-based algorithms in building robust AI-based framework. The expected impact will be enabling a paradigm shift from the traditional semi-manual sub-optimal operation of current wireless networks to the autonomous almost zero touch highly optimal operation in NGWNs, by providing new data generation AI-based algorithms for data-driven models.

Apart from the application of GANs in the field of wireless networks, there are other interesting applications of GANs in real-world. For example, generating image datasets, generating photographs of human faces, generating realistic photographs, generating cartoon

characters, image-to-image translation, text-to-image translation, generating new human poses, photos-to-emojis, face aging, anomaly detection in medical field, 3D object generation, music generation, video prediction, etc. Moreover, in the coming year, one can probably see high-quality videos generating from the GANs.

3. AI Ethics and Philosophical Aspects

Ethics are moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conduct of an activity. As a practical example, *one ethical principle is to treat everyone with respect*.

Philosophers have debated ethics for many centuries, and there are various well-known principles. One of the most famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant's (Kant, 2012) definition of ethics is: "act as you would want all other people to act towards all other people".

AI ethics is concerned with the important question of how human developers, manufacturers and operators should behave in order to minimize the ethical harms that can arise from AI in society, either arising from poor (unethical) design, inappropriate application or misuse. The scope of AI ethics spans immediate, medium-term and long-term concerns. For example, immediate concern includes data privacy and bias in current AI systems; near and medium-term concern includes impact of AI and robotics on jobs and workplaces; and long-term concern includes possibility of AI systems reaching or exceeding human-equivalent capabilities (so called super-intelligence).

In philosophy, "Consequentialism" is the view that normative properties depend only on the consequences. This embodies the basic intuition that what is best or right which makes the world best in the future. In other words, consequentialism suggests that an action is good or bad depending on its outcome. An action that brings more benefits than harms is good, while an action that causes more harms than benefits is bad. The most prominent example is "AI" and consequentialism drives AI. The next section discusses it by providing impacts of AI on the society.

4. Impacts of AI on Society

The deployment of AI systems brings positive as well as negative impacts on the society as these advanced technologies are used for the people and by the people. AI can also help in taking care of the planet by managing waste and pollution. For example, the adoption of autonomous vehicles can reduce greenhouse gas emissions as it can be programmed to follow the principle of eco-driving throughout a journey, reducing fuel consumptions and greenhouse gas emissions.

Since centuries, people concern about the displacement of workers due to the advancement in the technology. Automation, mechanization, and now more recently AI systems have been predicted to destroy jobs and create irreversible damage to the labor market, that is, people might be replaced by machines, just like the horses were made obsolete by the invention of internal combustion engines (Leontief, 1983). This may impact the economic growth and the productivity as well. The impact of these sizeable changes may be felt by all the members of society. Biavaschi et al., (2012) reported that the young people entering the labor market might be disproportionately affected, since they are at the beginning of their careers, and they may be the first generation to work alongside AI.

Since AI is created by humans that means it can be susceptible to *bias*. Systematic bias may arise as a result of the data used for training the AI systems. In the case of using GANs, there can be intended bias. For example, someone may generate fake data (e.g., channel gains) and may misuse the power spectrum for unethical usages. Similarly, someone may generate fake data e.g., images of an individual and may misuse it for face recognition or fingerprint verification. Unless model developers work to recognize and counteract these biases, AI applications and products may perpetuate unfairness and discrimination.

Data privacy is always important. AI applications need access to large amount of data, but data subjects do not know that how their data are used. There is a regulation, that is, GDPR to protect citizen privacy. However, the regulation only applies to the personal data, and not to the aggregated “anonymous” data that are usually used to train the AI models. This brings up a number of ethical issues. For example, what level of control subjects will have over the data that are collected about them? Should individuals have a right to use the model, or at least to know what it is used for, given their stake in training it? How to prevent the identity or personal information of an individual involved in training a model?

Further, AI machines and its uses in the society could have huge impact on the criminal law. The entire history of human laws has been built with the assumption that people make decisions, and not the AI machines. In a society in which complicated and important decisions are being handed over to the AI algorithms, there is the risk that the liable legal frameworks will be insufficient. The most important legal questions with AI machines are: *who or what should be liable for criminal, and contractual misconduct involving AI and under what conditions?* Pagallo (2018) questioned that what would happen, for example, if an AI program is chosen to predict successful investments and pick up on market trends, made a wrong evaluation that led to a lack of capital increase and hence, to the fraudulent bankruptcy of the corporation? Moreover, what should happen if someone commits banking fraud by forging a victim’s identity, including mimicking a person’s voice using AI models.

Our society relies on “*Trust*”. Therefore, for AI systems to take on tasks, such as surgery, people will need to trust the technology. Trust includes aspects such as fairness (i.e., AI will be impartial), transparency (i.e., our ability to understand how an AI system arrives at a particular decision), accountability (i.e., someone should be accountable for the mistakes made by AI system), and control (i.e., how one can shut down an AI system that becomes too powerful). Moreover, the increasing usages of AI systems come with large computational resources due to the training of huge amount of data, which necessitate substantial energy consumption and huge amount of carbon emissions (Strubell et al., 2020), affecting the natural environment.

With the definition of *ethics* by German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s (Kant, 2012) that “act as you would want all other people to act towards all other people”, it is feasible and important to the AI model developers that they should consider the various ethical aspects while designing and developing AI models such that the AI models should have minimal bias and very small chance of error. It should act as per the requirements (expectations) of the people for the benefit of the society.

5. Ethical Initiatives for AI and Current Progress

While AI technology may be used for good, potentially it may be misused. Hence, there is a need of ethical considerations accompanying the development and usages of AI. It can range

from the fundamental human rights of citizens within a society to the security and utilization of gathered data, from the bias and understanding about the consequences and usage of any given AI system, leading to wrong decisions and subsequent harms. A wide range of initiatives have been sprung up in response to the ethical concerns and issues emerging in relation to AI. For example, The Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence, Germany (IEAI, 2019); The Institute for Ethical AI & Machine Learning, United Kingdom (IEAML, 2018); AI4People, Belgium (AI4People, 2017); The Foundation for Responsible Robotics, Netherlands (FRR, 2017); Saidot: Enabling responsible AI ecosystems, Finland (Saidot, 2019); The Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence, Japan (JSAI, 2017); The Future of Life Institute, United States (FLI, 2017); The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), United States (IEEE, 2019), etc. These initiatives agree that the AI should be designed, developed, deployed, and monitored in ethical manner in their respective area. They aim to identify and form ethical frameworks and systems that establish human beneficence at the highest levels, prioritize benefits to both human society and the environment, and mitigate the risks and negative impacts associated with AI, with a focus on ensuring that AI is accountable and transparent.

In spite of these initiatives which adhere to the view that AI must not impinge on the basic and fundamental human rights, such as human dignity, security, privacy, freedom of information, and protection of personal data, there are still ethical dilemmas which concern that “How do we ensure that AI upholds such fundamental human rights and prioritizes human well-being? or AI does not disproportionately affect vulnerable areas of society, such as children, disabilities, or the elderly, or reduce quality of life across society?” Moreover, one of the main concerns about AI is: its transparency, accountability, security, reproducibility, and interpretability. “Is it possible to discover why and how an AI system made a specific decision or acted in a different way?” as it has direct safety consequences about physical harm, for example, medical diagnosis systems. Without transparency, users may struggle to understand the AI systems and its associated consequences and then it will be difficult to hold the relevant person accountable and responsible. In other words, wherever AI is used to supplement or replace human decision-making, there is consensus that it must be safe, trustworthy, reliable, and act with integrity.

At present only one standard, namely, “British standard BS8611” (BS, 2016) addresses ethical design of AI systems (specifically for robots). BS8611 provides guidance on how designers can identify potential ethical harms, undertake an ethical risk assessment of their robot or AI, and mitigate any ethical risks identified. However, BS8611 documentation is not available publicly. The IEEE (IEEE, 2019) is progressing towards developing a number of standards and regulations that affect AI in a range of contexts. Currently, 14 IEEE standards working groups are working on drafting so-called “human” standards that have implications for AI.

6. Conclusion and Future Work

This paper presents a review on the ethical issues surrounding AI in the context of wireless networks and related areas that highlights a wide range of potential impacts, including in the personal, social, financial, legal and environmental domains. It, further, presents various examples that can impact the society in either ways, good or bad. For example, how AI can benefit the society and how AI can harm public privacy, etc. In spite of several benefits, there are tremendous drawbacks of AI usages (good as well as bad consequences). It has been presented that how the current regulations are not sufficient to decide: who is responsible for

the actions of AI or unethical practices, that is, either the programmers, or the manufacturers or, the end-users. Finally, these many examples conclude that AI ethics is driven by the consequentialism either in good or bad manners, that is, consequentialism drives AI. Further investigation in this context is the part of future direction.

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***Profiting From Polytheism:
The Commodification of Mythical Beings During the Covid-19 Outbreak in Japan***

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

With their roots in animism and Shintōism, Japan's mythical creatures known as *yōkai* have been feared, revered, and used to explain calamities or inexplicable phenomena. Needless to say, in the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak and even now to some extent, very little was known about the origins of the virus, its potency, and how it could be prevented or treated effectively. Naturally, this threw most countries in the world into a state of confusion and Japan was no exception. However, as opposed to seeking answers from conspiracy theories to make sense of the unknown, Japan turned to アマビエ(Amabié)— a mermaid-like *yōkai* known for prophesizing either an impending epidemic or an abundant harvest. While Amabié offers no explanation, advice or immediate help, it is believed that by recreating manifestations of its image, people can defend themselves against illness. Whether it was wishful thinking or simply a trend is debatable, but countless artists, city councils, product manufacturers, and shrines around the country all jumped onto the bandwagon of producing and promoting products with images of Amabié in 2020. Although their motives varied and a sense of hope certainly inspired the production and consumption of Amabié, in this presentation I argue that the profit factor was a major incentive for shrines and businesses who invested in the trend. I will demonstrate this by drawing upon previous research on the commodification of religion while providing examples of the commodification of Amabié by local, corporate, and secular entities.

Keywords: Polytheism, Animism, Japan

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Introduction

Japan's mythical creatures known as *yōkai* have been feared, revered, and used to explain calamities or inexplicable phenomena. Since *yōkai* have roots in animism and Shintōism, we may regard them as unique deities of Japan. If, for example, a child drowned in a river for reasons known or unknown, those who believed in *yōkai* would say that it was the doing of *kappa*, the mischievous water god. Essentially, when facing unfamiliar, tragic or inexplicable phenomena, *yōkai* myths were used as didactic tales or as a means to ease the minds of those experiencing fear and confusion. Needless to say, in the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak and even now to some extent, the origins of the virus were shrouded in mystery, we knew very little about its potency, and how it could be prevented or treated effectively. Consequently, this threw most countries in the world into a state of confusion and Japan was no exception. However, as opposed to seeking answers from outrageous disinformation campaigns or conspiracy theories to make sense of the unknown, Japan turned to アマビエ (Amabié)— a mermaid-like *yōkai* known for prophesising either an impending epidemic or an abundant harvest. While Amabié offers no explanation, advice or immediate help regarding the nature of the disease, it is believed that by recreating its image and distributing it, people can somehow defend themselves against illness. Perhaps it was wishful thinking or simply a trend, but from early 2020 through to at least early 2022, countless artists, city councils, product manufacturers, and shrines across Japan all jumped onto the bandwagon of creating and promoting products with images of Amabié. Although their motives varied and a sense of hope certainly inspired the production and consumption of Amabié, I argue that the profit factor, achieved through the commodification of religion, was a major incentive for shrines, businesses, and public entities who invested in the Amabié boom. I will demonstrate this by drawing upon notions of the commodification of religion while providing examples of the commodification of Amabié by secular, corporate, and public entities in 2020 through to late 2021.

Historical Background – Who or what is Amabié?

Prior to discussing of the commodification of religion, I will briefly introduce and clarify some essential points about Japanese *yōkai*, Amabié, animism and Shintōism. As noted earlier, *yōkai* are Japanese mythical creatures which have roots in animism and Shintōism. They are feared, revered, and have been used to explain calamities or inexplicable phenomena such as mysterious drownings, earthquakes, or severe contagious diseases. Animism, although a complex idea, basically refers to “a range of different phenomena, entities, representations, beliefs, and practices, ranging from ideas of an animated nature [...] to accounts of different types of ‘spirits’ (*tama* 霊 or *tamashii* 魂)— often not clearly distinguished from gods (*kami* 神), ancestors (*senzo* 先祖), ghosts (*yūrei* 幽霊), and monsters (*yōkai* 妖怪)” (Rambelli, 2020, p.3). According to professor of Japanese religion and cultural history Fabio Rambelli, “these intangible entities belong to different, but partially overlapping, cultural spheres (religion, folklore, customs, the arts) and have different origins and cultural genealogies” (2020, p.3). Simply put, animism is the belief that there is a spirit within all material and immaterial phenomena. That is, anything from the toilet you sit on to the words printed in a conference booklet essentially has a spirit. As noted, *yōkai* are just one of the manifestations of these spirits. This belief of spirits in the natural world is also deeply rooted in Shintōism. Shintō, which literally translates to “The Way of the Gods,” is an indigenous religion of Japan with an “intense and comprehensive relationship with nature” (Kobayashi, 2001, p.94). What is more significant, in regards to Amabié and contagious diseases, is that “the awe and reverence that Japanese feel towards nature come from that fact

that the elements of nature have two aspects: destructive and protective” (Kobayashi, 2001, p.89).

As we have witnessed with its devastating effects and the dismal reports of deaths and daily new cases, if anything, Covid-19 illustrates the “destructive” element of nature. When little is known about destructive new phenomena, it is natural to search for answers, means to explain it or means to handle it— and that is how the *yōkai*, Amabié, came into fruition. According to specialist on Japanese folklore Kashiwagi Kyōsuke, there are four kinds of rituals related to contagious diseases or epidemics. Namely, rituals to either ward off, prevent, treat, or isolate the epidemic in case (Kashiwagi, 2021). Rituals or beliefs surrounding Amabié, for instance, lean more towards warding off or preventing the illness rather than treatment or total containment.

Amabié was first documented in May, 1846 in an early form of newspaper known as a 瓦版 (*kawaraban*). Accompanied by an account of an officer who spotted it, the image and story of Amabié describes a mermaid-like creature emerging from the sea and prophesising a good harvest yet at the same time, it added “Should an epidemic come, draw me and show me to the people” (Alt, 2020). By this it is simply suggested or implied that by replicating and reproducing images of Amabié, one can somehow avoid or prevent the illness at hand. While its efficacy is certainly something to speculate, it is not unlike the Shintō custom of carrying around domino tile-sized お守り (protection charms) that has been practised to this day. Much like this practice, the cultural resurgence of Amabié images from 2020 onwards became a modern reappropriation of the original Edo period custom.



Figure 1: Kawaraban featuring Amabié, May, 1846

Note: Image Courtesy of Kyoto University Library Archives, Japan

Theory – On the Commodification of Religion and Polytheism’s Role

While it is difficult to gauge whether purchasing and displaying protection charms or images of Amabié guarantees any protection, I argue that notions of hope, faith, and belief (or not refuting the existence of otherworldly creatures) are central to our understanding of the cultural appropriation of Amabié. This was acknowledged by the chief priest of Kyoto’s Byōdō-in temple who replicated 800 copies of an image of Amabié which he had found at the

temple. When asked why, he stated, “I want to alleviate people’s anxiety, even just a little” (Edo jidai no kawaraban, 2021). From this statement, it is clear that even the chief priest acknowledges that the efficacy of the practice is dubious, but giving hope and having faith is the least we can do. Although acts like this can be considered well-intended offerings, I argue that the majority of places of worship, as well as businesses and local governments exploited what they perceived was a trend and more or less capitalised on people’s anxieties or need for any manifestation of hope. This process is what is generally considered to be “the commodification of religion.” The commodification of religion simply refers to religious symbols becoming commodities. In greater detail, it can be understood as:

a process of recontextualisation of religious symbols, language, and ideas from their original religious context to the media and consumer culture. In this process, religious symbols become commodities, objects of consumption readily available in the supermarket of religion and the media landscape. The commodification of religion works on several levels. The two most obvious are the (often commercial) offers of blessings, prayers and so on through the purchase of religious artifacts, books and other material products. The second important – and obvious – level is the attachment of religious values through a religious aesthetic to consumer products. (Ornella, 2013)

In regards to images or products bearing images of Amabié, through my research, I have observed both levels of commodification. For instance, while some purchased protection charms at certain shrines, others bought a refreshing IPA or cider with Amabié-inspired logos. These are just a few of the immense variety of examples of the commodification of Amabié that I will discuss in the following section. However, the commodification of religious rituals and customs is nothing new in Japan. Indeed, the evolution of Christmas and Easter celebrations in Japan have often been a subject of intrigue for Western critics. Anthropologist Brian J. McVeigh, for example, described Christmas in Japan as a perfect example of a much-repeated cultural cliché:

the Japanese tendency of adopting foreign forms while dispensing with content, of appropriating appearances while ignoring cultural meaning. It is also a good example of the commercialisation of tradition. Shoppers and passers-by have their senses bombarded by a dizzying array of green and red store displays. (2013, p.136)

Furthermore, Malaysian academic and politician Syed Hussein Alatas also observed that in the south-east Asian context in general, “in the case of the great world religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism [...] one can suggest that in some places they are neutral, in some places they encourage, but nowhere do they hinder modernisation and economic development” (1970, p.270). Needless to say, as a G7 member and one of the top economies of the world, Japan is no stranger to modernisation and economic development. In a sense, one could argue that Japan is a breeding ground for the commodification of religion and especially religious rituals. Owing also to polytheism, the commodification of religion is perhaps less of an issue in Japan than in monotheistic cultures. Polytheism can loosely be described as “believing in multiple gods, often from distinct religious traditions” (Gries, Su, & Schak, 2012, p.623). In Japan’s case, it is said that its polytheist traditions are rooted in Shintōism as well as Ainu culture and its respective belief in myriads of deities (*kamui*) rather than a single divine power (Eto, 2015, p.229). The significance of this factor is that it allows for the worship of multiple and multitudes of deities, and therefore fosters an environment in which one can freely pray to a whichever god pertains to one’s particular wish. I argue that due to this lack of exclusive devotion to one god, when a spirit or divine creature is culturally

appropriated or commodified, one is less likely to be offended. I will exemplify how this has been done with the commodification of Amabié in the following section.

Findings: The Commodification of Amabié

To discuss the various manifestations of the commodification of Amabié, I divided the nature of commodification into three types: secular-based (related to religious institutions), corporate-based (related to businesses), and municipal-based (related to local towns, prefectures or councils). While some images of Amabié like rice paddy art were not available for purchase, since they inadvertently encouraged tourism and social media hype (in terms of access counts, clicks and likes), they can also be considered “profitable” ventures.

Corporate-based Commodification

If you type ‘アマビエ’ alone into Amazon Japan’s search bar, you will find that there are at least over 2000 different Amabié items available for purchase. The most commonly searched terms in my search bar in January 2022 included: Amabié, Amabié-candy, -sweets/snacks, -stickers, -merchandise, -labels, -ornaments, -T-shirts, -stamps, -protection charms. Naturally, this varies based one’s search history, but as well as images, it is clear that there are a range of consumable items too. Folklorist Akihiro Hatanaka also observed that the Twitter hashtag #アマビエチャレンジ (Amabié challenge) in February 2020 spurred an onslaught of different commercial products such as Japanese sweets, steamed buns, *dorayaki*, rice crackers, donuts, cookies, various types of alcohol, labels for soft drinks, key holders, straps, and masks. As a result, he suggests, Amabié invaded and penetrated the lives of Japanese people in the 21st century (Hatanaka, 2021). Aside from these consumables and everyday items, some companies went to great lengths to produce life-sized gold leaf statues of Amabié or a giant Amabié bouncy castle (see Figures 2 and 3). Much like being offered protection by seeing and distributing images of Amabié (and somewhat implying that the major incentive of producing the golden statue was to increase profit), one PR officer suggested that “One could reap profit just by looking at the statue’s golden glittering, and luxuriously powerful appearance” (PR Times, 2021a). From comfort food or accessories to giant inflatable castles or shimmering golden statues, it is evident that most companies had benefit, rather than benevolence in mind when exploiting the Amabié boom.



Figure 2: SGC Co.,Ltd’s
Golden Amabié
PR Times, March 1, 2021

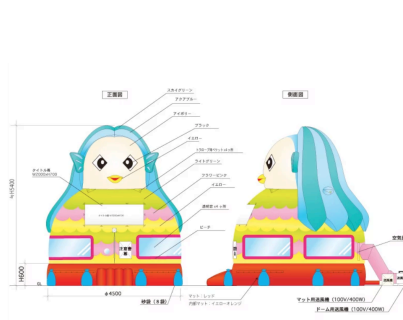


Figure 3: Yamaguchi Taiki’s Co.,Ltd’s
Amabié Bouncy Castle



Secular-based Commodification

In contrast to the corporate sector, at shrines, temples and other places of worship, anything from the coins tossed into the *saisen-bako* (donation box) to protection charms (as objects of worship) are considered “donations” and are therefore untaxed. Since Japanese corporate tax law classifies religious corporations as “public interest corporations,” they are regarded as organisations that benefit the public. Basically, a public interest corporation is established exclusively for the purpose of public interest and not for profit, and even if they reap profit from their activities, it does not belong to any particular individual (Miki, 2019). In legal discourse, it is difficult to argue that the secular-based commodification of Amabié is profitable. However, it cannot be denied that both benevolence and benefits are factors in the production and sales of Amabié-related religious paraphernalia. Anyone from avid shrine-hoppers or lifestyle bloggers to major travel websites in Japan have made countless posts about shrines and temples where they have found Amabié-related amulets, seals or protection charms (Jalan, 2020; Joy of Living, 2021; Myjinja, 2021). While some shrines’ amulets and seals were even featured on television (such as Tomita-Wakamiya shrine in Figure 4), other shrines went to even greater lengths to produce original non-purchasable items. For instance, Gosenhachimangu shrine in Niigata was decorated with Amabié wind chimes which, as a result, attracted both locals and tourists (Niigata Nippō, 2021). Other shrines decorated their traditional festival floats such as Fukuoka’s *hakata gion yamakasa* float which was displayed in the local shopping arcade (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2021) or Niigata’s Sasanomiya shrine’s festival float which was carted around town to pray for an end to the pandemic (Jōetsu Myoko Town Jōhō, 2021a). Although these activities do not explicitly involve monetary transactions, given that the location of the floats were around town or in shopping arcades, they have the potential to stimulate economic activity in the local community. One of the more ambitious ventures was Enoshima shrine and Space BD Co., Ltd’s “Space Delivery Project,” which essentially launched a blessed Amabié aluminum plate into space (PR Times, 2021b). Not only did this project attract media attention, but the collaboration between corporate and secular entities arguably reflects the openness of secular entities in Japan to promotional and even profitable activities.

アマビエ御朱印#ヨゲンノトリ御朱印#日野市#若宮神社#豊田

[Translate Tweet](#)



5:48 PM · Jun 21, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Figure 4: Tomita-Wakamiya Shrine’s Seal
Ito, June 21, 2020



Figure 5: Kikukawa City’s Rice Paddy
Artwork, NHK, June 13, 2021

Municipal-based Commodification

Although the allure of Amabié-related religious paraphernalia may have encouraged the commodification of religious tourism by drawing visitors to a limited number of shrines which offer unique Amabié items, municipalities also invested in attractions that were likely to attract media attention and tourists. Perhaps banking on the idea that attractions outdoors would be more Covid-safe, many towns decided to produce large-scale artwork in parks, rice paddies (see Figure 5), and snowy mountains. For instance, Tomioka city in Hyōgo prefecture arranged one million tulips to create a visual depiction of Amabié (Hyōgo Shimbun, 2021); Oota city in Gunma invested in LED winter illuminations which featured Amabié (47News, 2021); Nagaoka city in Niigata created a three-metre tall ice sculpture of Amabié (Niigata Nippō, 2021b); Niigata city created massive straw art sculptures of Amabié (Midorikawa, 2021); and Shizuoka's Kikukawa city similarly created rice paddy artwork featuring Amabié (NHK, 2021). Smaller scale projects such as Hyōgo's Fukuzaki city's Amabié bench (Itō, 2021) and Shiga prefecture's "Biwaichi Amabié Cycling Plan 2021" (Cycle Sports, 2021) both encouraged local citizens to get out and get some fresh air or purchase hotel and cycling tour packages which included limited edition Amabié-motif rice crackers and amulets. The significant point here is that the monetary transactions or revenue gained from such events or promotions is difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, in terms of public relations and putting one's town on the map, such activities undoubtedly draw media attention and possibly tourists or locals who inevitably spend money around town. For instance, when Zenkōji temple in Nagano city invested in winter illuminations in 2019, the economic ripple effect was estimated to be around 1.4 billion yen (Nikkei, 2019). This includes those who visited Nagano city and those who also stayed overnight. Evidently, by creating a spectacle, albeit commodifying religious deities in the process, local governments can stimulate economic activity both on-site or online. Furthermore, since such projects are not explicitly marketed as what we could consider "religious tourism," organising committees can arguably avoid criticism or complaints about exploiting religious figures for their benefit.

Conclusion

If we accept Ornella's idea that the commodification of religion involves the "recontextualisation of religious symbols, language, and ideas from their original religious context to the media and consumer culture" (2013), then it is blatant that not only secular, but private and public entities appropriated the symbol of Amabié as well as the flexibility and openness associated with polytheism. In this process, I argue that Amabié has been treated in a similar fashion to ゆるキャラ (mascot characters)—that is, it is dispensable and ephemeral yet indispensable for creating media hype, stimulating economic activity and revitalising local communities. Needless to say, it is doubtful whether replicating and distributing images of Amabié hindered any devastating impacts of the pandemic, but as both a product of hope and a source of it, perhaps this hope is its greatest benefit to Japan when trying to ride out the storm of turmoil and uncertainty.

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Zhuangzi and Plato: Language – World – Language

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

At the beginning of the 20th century language had become the focal point of Western philosophy, displacing epistemology and metaphysics, with which philosophy had traditionally dealt. Even as the philosophy of language has begun to lose its privileged status in the last few decades, it still remains a substantial branch of Western and world philosophy. However, a closer look at the early days of world philosophy reveals that the study of language was integral to philosophical investigations, and that language occupied a prominent place – whether explicitly or implicitly – in establishing comprehensive philosophical systems. Zhuangzi and Plato represent early stages in the evolution of world philosophy and, as is well-known, contributed, to a great extent, to the development of the Chinese and Western philosophy. These two philosophers come from two very different cultural contexts and differ in their philosophical orientation and views – which seem to stand in opposition, and, yet, for both language played a major role in the construction of their philosophies. In this paper I will therefore explore how Plato and Zhuangzi understood language, and how these understandings correlate with their worldview and their writing styles. Based on philosophical theories of language and thought, particularly those of Jacques Derrida and Chad Hansen, I will consider some possible explanations for the differences between the two philosophers, which relate to the specific cultural and linguistic background of the philosophical traditions which they helped to create and to which they belonged.

Keywords: Comparative Philosophy, Zhuangzi, Plato, Language, Realism, Conventionalism

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Introduction

At the start of the 20th century, language became central in Western philosophy, and the philosophy of language seemed to replace the previous big philosophies – those relying on metaphysical and epistemological foundations. Many considered this change to be revolutionary in the history of philosophy, however, its seeds, as I will show, were sown years before it occurred – in the early days of world philosophy.

Plato and Zhuangzi are two philosophers representing the early stages of the history of philosophy. They are differentiated not only by the traditions to which they belong – and whose foundations they helped to build – but also in their theories positioned, apparently, at the two ends of the philosophical scale, and both were also concerned with the study of language and its place in the world and worldview.

What was their approach to language, how did it correspond with their worldview and what is the association between these and how they presented their ideas – I will attempt to answer these questions in this paper. In the background to these questions lies the fact that both were scions of different philosophical and cultural traditions, which invites conjectures about their differing attitudes as a product of language and culture.

Plato and Zhuangzi: The Relation Between Language and the World

Plato: Language as a Picture of the World

Discussions about language take place mainly in two of Plato's dialogues: *Cratylus* and the *Sophist*. The perception of language and its relation to the world are not addressed at the same level in the two dialogues: In *Cratylus*, discussion focuses mainly on names in their basic meanings, i.e., nouns, whereas in the *Sophist* the focus is on sentences or statements, perceived as a composition of names and verbs.¹ However, I argue that the two dialogues reflect a similar view of language and its relation to the world, and that this view indeed expresses Plato's own position.

In *Cratylus*, Plato examines the theory of “natural language”. This theory maintains a resemblance between the names we call things and things themselves, and therefore, it implies that there are correct and incorrect names – depending on the degree of resemblance between them and the things in the world to which they point (Robinson, 1969).

What exactly is the nature of this resemblance – Plato does not explain, but (the Platonic) Socrates makes an attempt to describe how letters and syllables can mimic things through the way they are pronounced (*Cratylus*, 425b-427d). Therefore, we can assume that when Plato refers to the correctness of names this correctness derives from how they mimic things: they can mimic them well and thus are correct, or badly and thus are incorrect, similar to painting, which can describe its object well or badly (*Cratylus*, 430c-431c).

Facing the natural theory of language is the theory according to which names are arbitrary: every naming is a matter of convention, and therefore, there is no good or bad name, correct

¹ The issue of the relation between names and verbs is actually more complex, because in *Cratylus* names sometimes considered as including verbs. However, in the light of the *Sophist* (see below), I will treat them as different parts of statements (more on this see, Ademollo, 2015).

or incorrect. Every name is good to the same degree, provided it is acceptable to certain cultural group.

Does Plato accept the natural theory of language? The answer is not unequivocal: at the beginning of the dialog Socrates presents arguments in favor of the theory, such as the argument which can be rephrased as follows:

- When we talk to each other and call something by a name, we distinguish between things according to their nature.
- We do not determine the nature of actions, they have a nature of their own.
- Speech is an action.
- Calling names is part of the speaking act.
- An action is correct if it is performed according to its nature.
- Therefore, there is correct name calling – if it is performed according to its nature, and incorrect – if it is not so performed (*Cratylus*, 386d-388d).

However, later it appears that Socrates retreats from his initial position. He mentions that custom and convention add something to a thing about which we are thinking when speaking, and the requirement for full resemblance between things and names is unreasonable (*Cratylus*, 435b); and afterward he argues that we do not need words to learn what things are, and it is possible and even desirable to learn about things without the help of names (*Cratylus*, 438d-439b).

It appears, therefore, that at least according to *Cratylus*, Plato's position about natural language theory is unclear. Nonetheless, I maintain that even if he rejects it, from his discussion a characteristic line of thought emerges, which testifies to his view of the relationship between language and the world and underlies all his philosophy. To see this line, one must return to the initial premises presented above, which state that:

- a. The world is composed of things who have their own nature, and their existence does not dependent on their relationship to us.
- b. By calling it a name we signify something and separate things according to their nature.

In other words, Plato's position is that there are things in reality that do not depend on people or their recognition (simple realism), and that name-calling is signification of these things, according to the order in which they exist in the world. That is to say, names are linked to reality, because they signify things existing in it.

We learn that this is Plato's fundamental position from the first question he raises in *Cratylus*: Plato does not ask whether it is true that names represent things in the world or not, but whether there is a natural correspondence (that can be called imitative correspondence) between names and things they represent. Consequently, even if the answer to this question is negative, we still remain with the view that names represent things in the world, which exist independently of language. Only now we say that it is possible that the names given to things – the syllables from which they are built, the way they are pronounced, etc. – are arbitrary. Yet, using names means signifying things in the world, and distinguishing between names is carried out according to the state of things in the world.

This position of Plato is also apparent in his argument that the person who should supervise name-making is the one who best knows how to use language, he who "knows how to ask questions" (*Cratylus*, 390c) and answer them, that is, the dialectician or philosopher. It is

furthermore manifested in *Euthydemus* (284c; see, e.g., Scolnicov, 2006), where it is claimed that speaking falsehood means talking about things as they are not, and it arises again in the *Sophist*.

In the *Sophist*, Plato addresses various issues: defining the sophist, the problem of being and non-being, and the related problem of false statement. It is the latter which is relevant to the current discussion. To understand how a false statement is possible, Plato first analyses the general structure of sentences:

Stranger: For when he says that, he makes a statement about that which is or is becoming or has become or is to be; he does not merely give names, but he reaches a conclusion by combining verbs with nouns. (*Sophist*, 262d)

A sentence is verbs and nouns (or names) combined into a general statement about the world, and what are names and verbs?

Stranger: The indication which relates to action we may call a verb. . . . And the vocal sign applied to those who perform the actions in question we call a noun. (*Sophist*, 262a)

Names and verbs signify states of affairs in the world, and hence they get their meaning. How is a false statement possible and how does it differ from true statement? Two conditions must exist for false statement to have meaning:

1. The subject must be true (being in the world).
2. The predicate is also real in itself, but not applicable in relation to the subject. Hence, the sentence “Theaetetus flies” is false, because it connects a true subject, being in the world, with a true predicate – also being – although this connection does not exist in reality. In contrast, the statement “Theaetetus sits” is true because both its subject and predicate as well as the connection between them are true; they signify an existing state of affairs in the world (*Sophist*, 263a-d).

Therefore, we see that for Plato of the *Sophist*, like Plato of *Cratylus*, words (in the present context, names and verbs) get their meaning from the reality to which they are associated and which they signify (see e.g., Wiggins, 1971). Every meaningful discourse refers to the world and derives from it, because the words signify the same part of the world that exist separately from it.

And yet a puzzle remains: Platonic ontology, as usually understood (e.g., Hunt, 2003), espouses that the Material world is nothing but a constant flux. How, therefore, names signify the world while there is nothing to signify, if everything flows? The answer is found in Plato’s theory of ideas (or forms); Those abstract, perfect, and permanent beings, which are the cause of everything in the world, which exists by taking part in them. Plato can hold that names signify actual things, if he assumes that the names correspond with the ideas, as things in the world take part in them and hence, through their connection to the ideas, names can signify the Material world. Thus, as stated, Socrates points to the philosopher (who knows the ideas) as the one who should supervise the legislation of names, and so the existence of false statement is also possible: the parts of false discourse (verbs and nouns), are true in that they signify ideas and only their combination is false.²

² Mouzala (2019) points out that according to Ackrill (1971), for Plato any meaningful statement should include at least one universal (idea) as a predicate, while according to Hamlyn even proper names are “a disguised version of a collection of names of Forms” (Hamlyn, 1955, as cited in Mouzala, 2019, p. 39). This explains how statements like “Theaetetus flies”, which includes proper names, are still connected to the sphere of ideas.

Therefore, the Platonic position about the language-world relationship can be summarized as follows: The world and its diverse parts exist independently of human recognition, and the distinctions made in language are not random but reflect this world, which in itself reacts to the sphere of ideas. In other words, language is subject to the world and signifies its parts and the connections between them. Every meaningful discourse is about the world, and its meaning derives from its relationships with what there is in the world.

Zhuangzi: Language Creates the World

Zhuangzi is hardly certain that when we say something, our words contain meaning beyond mumbling:

Words are not just wind. Words have something to say. But if what they have to say is not fixed, then do they really say something? Or do they say nothing? People suppose that words are different from the peeps of baby birds, but is there any difference, or isn't there? (Zhuangzi, ch. 2, Watson, 1968, p. 39)

Birds' peeping and wind blowing are not language. They do not represent anything in the world. Is human language different? According to Zhuangzi:

Words have value; what is of value in words is meaning. (Zhuangzi, ch. 13, Watson, 1968, p. 152)

Here it appears that Zhuangzi indeed believes that words, contrary to nature's voices, have meaning, but he continues and says:

Meaning has something it is pursuing, but the thing that it is pursuing cannot be put into words and handed down. (Zhuangzi, ch. 2, Watson, 1968, p. 152)

Words seek meaning but are not capable of articulate it; language seems to be too narrow to contain and convey meaning. Perhaps, if words were simple representation of the world, then it would be easy to understand the meaning behind them. However, it appears that Zhuangzi does not accept the picture theory of language, the view according to which words stand for real things in the world:

A road is made by people walking on it; things are so because they are called so. (Zhuangzi, ch. 2, Watson, 1968, p. 40)

Zhuangzi holds that it is language that determines how the world appears to us, how we perceive and judge the world. This is a conventionalist theory of language and language-world relations, which espouses that knowledge is an outcome of a system of name-giving that is fundamentally random and does not necessarily correspond with reality. We learn to distinguish between things through a language learning process. Since we think with the help of language, it makes us feel, define, "and act in certain ways" (Yearley, 1983, p. 126), and hence people are governed by the language they employ and depend on what it allows them to think and do. To "know" does not mean to know something about the world, but to act and react according to a language system. There is no objective truth to which language corresponds, rather there are different languages by which different groups describe the world.

This is the ground of Zhuangzi's (language) skepticism: because many types of discourse are possible and what is conceived as correct or true in one is not necessarily correct or true in another; absolute discursive truth does not exist. "Truth", "false", "good", "bad", are judgments we make within a certain language framework, and they, like the division of the world into objects, actions, and qualities, are given to differences between different languages (Graham, 2001; Yearley, 1983).

From the outset, language places restrictions upon us, making us perceive the world in a certain way, which does not reflect it, but rather divides and limits it. Hence, for Zhuangzi, it is not only that language does not reflect the world as it is, but creates it for us, and a failure to understand this process of creation gives rise to a misleading picture of reality:

So, in fact, does he [the sage] still have a "this" and "that"? Or does he, in fact, no longer have a "this" and "that"? the Way (Dao) makes them all into one. (Zhuangzi, ch. 2, Watson, 1968, p. 40)

Chad Hansen and the Theory of Mass Nouns

If Zhuangzi is a conventionalist, then he is in opposition to Plato: while the latter, as argued above, sees language as reflecting the world, the former sees it as creating in it boundaries and distinctions. Chad Hansen (1983) presents some of the strongest arguments in favor of this view, basing his arguments on the differences between Chinese and Indo-European languages.

Hansen, who assumes there is a direct association between language and thought, language and worldview, argues that the Chinese language is built from nouns that are parallel to mass nouns in Western languages. Mass nouns are nouns such as 'water' and 'rice'. They are different from common nouns in Western languages – count nouns – in that they cannot be multiplied or counted, and are associated with the much-little dichotomy, in contrast to the one-many dichotomy that developed in Western culture against the background of count nouns (Hansen, 1983, pp. 30-54).

The mass nouns theory explains, according to Hansen, differences in Chinese and Western philosophical tendencies: In the former, an ontology of stuff-like developed according to which the world is a collection of elements penetrating one another, and "naming is just making the distinctions, and the distinctions themselves are merely conventional – socially agreed-on ways of dividing up the world" (Hansen, 1983, p. 62). This ontology is different from the ontology which has dominated Western thinking since Plato, in which the world is seen as made up of separate objects, with their own qualities. Consequently, according to Hansen (1983; see also, e.g., Moody, 2016) a conventionalist and nominalist view of language governed classic Chinese ontology, whereas Western ontology was dominated by a realist view of language, and mental and idealistic views developed, arising from the one/many dichotomy: How, for example, Plato asked himself, are all particulars we call 'dog' connected; and thus the road was paved for the creation of another world – a world of ideas, or abstract forms.

Hansen argues, therefore, that the difference between the languages led to a difference in worldview and language-world relationships. His argument reinforces the view according to which Zhuangzi was a conventionalist, for whom there are many possible ways to divide the world, which in itself cannot be divided in an absolute or correct way; and can be also seen as

reinforcing the claim about Plato's lingual realism, which postulated that the material world is made up of things – which represented by language – whose existence is possible owing to their connection to the ideas.

Writing, Writing Style, and Language

Plato and Zhuangzi write. Writing serves them to express their positions and passing them on to other people. One can always ask the Daoist, if presented as conventionalist and language skeptic: Why write at all, if words do not describe the world, if they are only an arbitrary social convention? In contrast, one can expect from Plato – as a language realist – to praise the word, written or spoken, as a tool to understanding the world. Nevertheless, in practice it is not so. Especially, Plato criticizes the written word (Dickinson, 1931):

Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. (*Phaedrus*, 275d)

The written, unlike the spoken, word allegedly produces a certain imperviousness; readers cannot ask an author what he meant, or argue with him, possibilities that only appear to exist in speech. It is possible that this is the reason for Plato's writing style, the dialogue, as a tool attempting to maintain the spirit of speech and, in general, the philosophical spirit. If philosophy is in search of the ultimate truth, raising questions and seeking answers, it appears that it can be best realised in the framework of dialogue.

For the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1967/1978), Plato's preference for speech over writing is a symptom of Western culture expressing simultaneously repression and hopeless aspiration. The repression is the suppression of death; death as the change and disappearance of all being, and the aspiration is for an absolute, unchanging permanent being. The immediacy of speech, the seeming continuity in every spoken act between talk and thought, create a sense of words having a single, correct meaning. In writing, in contrast, the absence of both writer and reader is revealed, and moreover, the absence of the signified to which words appear to refer. This absence, Derrida (1967/1978) argues, is inherent in every representative system and, in fact, enabling it. The aspiration for being, the attempt to correctly define things, means ignoring (or repressing) the lack of absolute meaning, lack of separation between the signified and the signifier; and they are what underlie, according to Derrida, Plato's writing and his preference for the spoken over the written (Jasper, 1988).

To a large extent, it appears that both Zhuangzi's writing style and content are close to Derrida's position. Regarding style, a mix of short stories, dialogues, allegories, and myths presented without any clear order. Regarding content, ambiguous themes, ideas that can be interpreted one way or another, such as the fragment presented above: Does Zhuangzi want to say that words have no other meaning than birds peeping or that they do? According to Zhuangzi's view of language presented here, it is just natural for him to present an argument and contradict it, to seek the meaning of words, but to play with the assumption that such meaning does not exist (Graham, 1989).

The understanding that words do not have an absolute meaning, that they do not describe reality itself, does not concern Zhuangzi. It is precisely the variety of possible interpretations and meanings, or, put it differently, the metaphoric level of language, which attracts him. Language is seen by Zhuangzi as a game, that change and flux are its rules and the pleasure

derived from it is not from winning an argument or reaching a final conclusion, but part of the game itself (Wu, 1990). It is exactly the aspiration for precise and clear-cut saying, for language absolutism – and therefore, moral and philosophical absolutism – which confuse and interrupt the flux of life:

Those at the next [historical] stage thought that things exist but recognized no boundaries among them. Those at the next stage thought there were boundaries but recognized no right and wrong. Because right and wrong appeared, the Way was injured, . . . (Zhuangzi, ch. 2, Watson, 1968, p. 41)

Conclusions

There are two conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of the above. First, that philosophical concern with the relationship between language and the world is not a characteristic feature of modern philosophy alone, but already existed in the early stages of world philosophy, or at least Chinese and Western philosophies. Second, language customarily used in a certain culture influences its philosophical discourse and the worldview of thinkers who are members of this culture.

The second conclusion indicates another important point, which arises also from Hansen's and Derrida's positions, according to which the effect of language and language structure on its speakers, and thus on the philosophy of a certain culture, is to a large extent unconscious. In this sense, one can argue that there is a symmetry between the philosophies of different cultures, and specifically, between Plato and Zhuangzi. Nonetheless, it appears to me that this claim is not accurate. Distinct from Plato, Zhuangzi discusses words with profound skepticism, and it appears that he seeks to neutralize the effect of language on our worldviews and the ways we act. It is not that Zhuangzi wishes to be silent, and Plato seeks to speak, but rather that Zhuangzi wishes to emphasize the limitations of words whereas Plato is asking to arrange the world through them. And perhaps this is the difference between the Platonic sage who searches for the "absolute constant" and the Daoist who follows the chaos.

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