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Recasting Ethics of Face and Hiya (Shame) in the Light of Cybersexual Violence Against Women

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Abstract: This paper explores how Philippine/East Asian discourses on ethics of face and shame can be relevant in light of cyber-sexual violence against women. It argues that lowland Philippine concept of hiya (shame) in its moral and internal sense, should be retrieved as virtue in the context of cyber-sexual violence against women. This can however be complemented by Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the face of the Other and its reception especially in the cyber-context. Hiya (shame) as sensitivity to a loss of face of the excluded kapwa (other), leads to actions that not only helps to "gain face" but also reveal the God who enfaces.

Keywords: Cybersexual violence, Levinas, shame, face, hiya

Zusammenfassung: Dieser Aufsatz erörtert, was Konzepte von Scham und Gesichtswahrung, die im philippinischen bzw. ostasiatischen Kulturraum gebräuchlich sind, für den Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Frauen im digitalen Raum („cyber-sexual violence") austragen können. Er bringt hierzu das Konzept von „hiya" (Scham) mit dem Theorem des Antlitzes des Anderen nach Emmanuel Levinas ins Gespräch. „Hiya" kann als Sensibilität für den Verlust des Antlitzes des (sozial) ausgeschlossenen Anderen verstanden werden. Dann kann dieses Konzept zu solchem Handeln motivieren, das sowohl dem Gesichts*gewinn* zuträglich ist und andererseits durchsichtig ist für Gott als den, der sein Angesicht zuwendet.

Stichwörter: Cybersexuelle Gewalt, Levinas, Schande, Gesicht, hiya

A significant feature of computer mediated communication such as email, chat, or tweet is the effacement or the wiping out of the concrete body in the Net. Some have thereby exalted the virtual being as "bodiless" and the internet as "an es-

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cape from the 'meat.'"[1] This notion has been used as an excuse for sexual harassment. An example is the case of Jake Baker who posted a message of his wish to molest and murder a female student. The lawyer countered that the internet message board where Baker "posted his fiction is in reality nothing more than words floating in space."[2]

John Suler, regarded as father of cyberpsychology, identifies six ingredients that enable either benign or toxic disinhibition online.[3] First, dissociative anonymity, ("You Don't Know Me"), making it easier to separate online behavior from the rest of one's life – that is not me at all! Second, invisibility ("You can't See Me"). While this may sound similar to anonymity, the added factor of invisibility means a person does not have to worry about looks or facial reactions that can put a brake on what one may wish to say. Third, solipsistic introjection ("It's All in my Head"). The online companion is imagined such that it begins to feel that the person is simply talking to one's self. This frees the person to say things they would normally not express to others. Fourth, dissociative imagination ("It's Just a Game"). The online persona and the online others are considered sheer fiction. Fifth, minimizing authority ("We're Equals"). With the absence of knowledge of people's status and the minimization of authority, people can speak more freely or even misbehave. Sixth, personality variables. Depending on their personalities, people would differ in their tendencies toward inhibition or expression. Some may be even more cautious or inhibited online. In many cases, these six factors interact and produce a synergistic effect.

Thomas Ploug, author of *Ethics in Cyberspace: How Cyberspace May Influence Interaction*,[4] points out that an important factor in ethical living, viz., the presence of a concrete face, is altered in cyberinteractions; this leads to a tendency to act differently:

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1 Caroline Bassett, "Cyberspace and Virtual Reality," in *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge*, vol. 1, ed. Chris Kramare and Dale Spender (New York: Routledge, 2000), 284.

2 Helen Birch, "Violation by Virtual Rape," Independent UK (website) accessed October 14, 2013, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/violation-by-virtual-rape-1574294.html

3 Online disinhibition occurs when a person loosens up or expresses the self more openly in the internet. It can either be benign as in an unusual expression of kindness or generosity to strangers, or toxic, as in the use of rude language or the exploration of hate and porn sites, that a person would not have done offline. See: John R. Suler, "The Online Disinhibition Effect," *Cyberpsychology and Behavior* 7 no.3 (2004): 321–326.

4 Thomas Ploug, *Ethics in Cyberspace: How Cyberspace may Influence Interaction* (London: Springer, 2009).

> [T]he face of another person is an important source of the evidence by means of which we form and trust in our beliefs concerning the reality of another person. Losing perceptual access to the face of another person—losing perceptual access to the physical presence of another person—is losing a crucial source of evidence of certain matters influencing the formation and strength of our belief in the reality of another person.[5]

Theological ethicists generally have not reflected on the role of the face and the correlative concept of shame in ethics.[6] Although almost all, if not all, cultures have a concept of shame, it assumes a great importance among honor cultures in Mediterranean societies and among Asians, especially those with strong Chinese influence, such as the Philippines.[7] This paper explores how Philippine/East Asian discourse concerning ethics of face and shame can be relevant in light of cyber-sexual violence against women.[8] It posits that the lowland Philippine concept of *hiya* (shame), which is the sensitivity to a loss of face, in its moral and internal sense, should be retrieved as virtue in the context of cyber-violence against women.[9] Shame can, however, be enriched or complemented by Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the face of the Other and its reinterpretations, especially in the cyber-context. The term "face" is employed here in both its concrete and symbolic senses. In its concrete sense, it does not refer solely to the frontal part of a person's head but the full physical body as well. The symbolic sense pertains to various meanings that the face represents beyond that of the physical.

The sub-questions the paper intends to answer are: What is the impact of the effacement of the concrete/physical body online in the context of cyber-svaw? How are the Philippine discourses on the ethics of face and shame relevant to the issue of cyber-svaw? How can this be enriched by Levinas' concept of the face of the Other and its reception, especially in the cyber-context? The methodology consists in gathering narrative and research studies on cyber-svaw and correlating these with theological-ethical discourses on face and *hiya* (shame). An intercultural approach is likewise adopted in suggesting a recast concept of the face of the other.

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5 Ibid., 204.

6 Stephen Pattison, *Saving Face: Enfacement, Shame and Theology* (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013).

7 Jin Li, Lianqin Wang, and Kurt W. Fischer, "The Organisation of Shame Concepts," *Cognition and Emotion* 18 no. 6 (2004): 768.

8 According to the World Health Organization statistics, the incidence of violence against women in Southeast Asia is the highest in the world, that is, at 37.7 percent. "Violence Against Women: Global Picture, Health Response," World Health Organization (website), accessed March 7, 2020, https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/VAW_infographic.pdf?ua=1 .

9 Henceforth referred to as "cyber-svaw".

In this essay, we shall employ the following definition of cyber-svaw: cyber-sexual violence against women covers sexual violence that has been committed, abetted, or aggravated through the employment of computer-mediated communication such as the internet and mobile phones. These acts include cyberstalking, revenge porn or the distribution online of sexually explicit images of another person without their consent, sextortion, cyberpornography, slut-shaming, and so on. As with offline sexual violence, cyber sexual violence is gender-based. The Network Intelligence for Development 2015 reports that women are twenty-seven times more prone to online violence than men, and that sixty-one percent of the perpetrators of online violence are men.[10]

Theoretical Presupposition: The Virtual Being is Embodied and Real

A basic conceptual muddle related to the issue of cyber sexual violence is whether the virtual is real and embodied. Since communication via computer-mediated technologies is virtual, "words without flesh," that is, characterized by anonymity and mobility, an illusion can be given that the virtual has no impact on real bodies.

An alternative perspective to the view of the Net as bodiless is found in the concept of the human as cyborg, which is a shortened form of the term "cybernetic organism."[11] A cyborg is an organism which improves its capacities through technology, as when one uses the computer or mobile phone to communicate, do research, shop, and so on. The technology is no longer just a tool but a part of one's self, an extension of the self. In the words of Donna Haraway, a pioneer in cyborg theory, "The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment."[12]

A corollary to this concept of the human as cyborg is that the virtual is real.[13] While the virtual has often been identified with digital technologies, it refers more

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10 "Cyber violence against Women and Girls: A Worldwide Wake-up Call," A Report of the UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development Working Group on Broadband and Gender, 15, accessed March 12, 2018, https://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/cyber_violence_gender%20report.pdf?v=1&d=20150924T154259

11 Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149–181.

12 Ibid., 180.

13 See Manuel Castells, "Virtual Reality," in *The Rise of the Network Society*: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, vol. 1, Second Edition (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 403f.

broadly to objects or activities that are not tangible such as a play or a digital file. Though not concrete material objects, the play and the e-file are nevertheless real. What is therefore effaced in online interactions is not the real body but the concrete body. The virtual being continues to be embodied, that is, as cyborg.

Effacement of the Concrete Body in Cyber-SVAW

There are three levels at which we shall now examine effacement and how it reinforces cyber sexual violence against women.[14]

First Level: Cyber-SVAW when a Concrete Body is Involved

At this level, the internet is used for non-virtual intentions offline (e.g. using the computer to recruit potential victims for sex trafficking). Though the perpetrator may be initially faceless or anonymous, the violence becomes relatively clearer when a concrete body is harmed offline, even as this too may be trivialized when regarded by law enforcers as a domestic quarrel and thus a private affair.

In cyberprostitution, however, even if there is facial visibility, the lack of skin to skin contact leads to a trivialization of its impact. Cyberprostitution has been defined as the system whereby clients pay performers by the minute to engage in masturbation and/or other sexual acts with other performers via live video streaming technology. In countries in Southeast Asia as the Philippines, Cambodia, and Indonesia, with the combination of massive poverty and an expanding internet infrastructure, cyberprostitution, especially of minors, is a growing industry. In the Philippines, with a simple laptop inside bamboo huts and brick homes in very poor villages, a family can start its own business and earn between 10 and 100 dollars per show, which is already a lot of money compared to the $2 earned by sixty percent of the population. Because this has become lucrative, some villagers have even abandoned their fishing or factory work.

It is estimated that tens of thousands of children are engaged in cybersex. Parents may not see any harm done because there is no physical contact and consequently, in their view, cybersex cannot be equated with real prostitution.[15] However, children's rights groups working with victim-survivors counter that this

14 See Geert Gooskens, "The Ethical Status of Virtual Actions," *Ethical Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2010): 59–78.

15 "The Philippines' Booming Cybersex Industry," DW (website) accessed February 15, 2018, http://www.dw.com/en/the-philippines-booming-cybersex-industry/a-19026632.

practice has long-term traumatic effects on children similar to those of physical abuse. The children suffer from anxiety and depression, sleeping troubles, as well as difficulties in relating with others, such as the inability to distinguish between "intimacy and distance," leading to drug use at a young age.[16]

Second Level: Cyber-SVAW as Purely Virtual Intentions toward an Other Offline

The second level of cyber-svaw is when the user utilizes technology to perform purely virtual intentions. Purely virtual sexual harassment includes cyberrape through the manipulation of a person's avatar, gender-based humiliating remarks (e.g. "Go to your natural place, the kitchen") and sexual threats and innuendos (e.g. "Nipples make this chat room more interesting"). While present in Facebook, these are more common in text-based media such as chat rooms or forums.

Without an apparent effect on the concrete body, cybersexual harrassment is often seen as unreal or trivial by the state, law enforcers, private sector, and civil society.[17] Case studies conducted by the Association of Progressive Communications in seven developing countries reveal that the impact of online violence on the victim includes self-censorship or opting out of the internet, stress, anxiety, panic attacks, and even suicidal thoughts. Kelly Holladay's research further provides empirical support to the contention that the psychological effect particularly of revenge porn mirrors that of sexual assault.[18]

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16 Katrin Kunt, "Curse of Cybersex: The Lost Children of Cebu," April 23, 2014, Preda Foundation (website), accessed February 15, 2018, https://www.preda.org/world/curse-of-cybersex-the-lost-children-of-cebu/.

17 Danielle Keats Citrone, "Law's Expressive Value in Combating Cyber-Gender Harrassment," *Michigan Law Review* 103, no. 3 (2009): 402–404; Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau, Inc. and APC, "End violence: Women's rights and safety online from impunity to justice: Domestic legal remedies for cases of technology-related violence against women," Gender IT (website), March 6, 2015, accessed February 15, 2018, https://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/flow_domestic_legal_remedies.pdf#page=20.

18 Kelly Holladay, "An Investigation of the Influence of Cyber-sexual Assault on the Experience of Emotional Dysregulation, Depression, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and Trauma Guilt," (Phd diss., University of Florida, 2016). On informal narratives of impact of cyber-svaw, see the bibliography listed by Azy Barak, "Sexual Harrassment on the Internet," *Social Science Computer Review* 23, no. 1 (2005): 84.

Third Level: "Cyberporn" and Cyberrape in Video Games: Victimless and Faceless?

Gender-based violence is the central theme of anime video games, particularly the *bishōjo* sub-genre of pornographic video games. In the West, these are referred to as *hentai* games which literally means "perverted" in Japanese, but in Japan they are called *eroge* or erotic games.

Hitomi my Stepsister, is an adult game with warnings about its high and explicit violent content but very accessible online. It is an interactive simulation visual novel/erotic game (SIM) about the narrator assumed by the player, who has a beautiful stepsister whom he misinterprets as seducing him. When rebuffed, he rapes her and the player is given several options in the menu as to how to rape Hitomi: vaginal penetration, anal or oral sex, masturbation and *Bukake*, Japanese expression for ejaculation, in particular, ejaculation on her face.[19]

From the United Nations (UN) definition of cyber-svaw, it is not apparent whether cyberporn and cyberrape in video games can be considered a form of gender-based violence. The UN defines violence against women as "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (Article 1).[20]

A critical appropriation of feminist perspectives can provide a useful framework to assess harm that may be caused by *bishōjo* games. It is important to maintain the feminist distinction between erotica and pornography. Erotic sex is "a mutually pleasurable, sexual expression between people who have enough power to be there by positive choice."[21] We may add that erotica also represents sexuality in a way that makes one appreciate its beauty. Pornography, in contrast, is any degrading representation of sexuality or sexual behavior, whether explicit, simulated, cartoon, verbal, filmed or video-taped, that reinforces attitudes of domination and

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19 See Jeane Peracullo, "Resistance/Collusion with Masculinist-Capitalist Fantasies? Japanese and Filipino Women in the Cyber-Terrain," in *Feminist Cyberethics in Asia*, ed. Agnes M. Brazal and Kochurani Abraham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 19.

20 "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women," United Nations (website), accessed February 15, 2018, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf.

21 Gloria Steinem, "Erotica and Pornography: A Clear and Present Difference," in *Take Back the Night: Women on Pornography*, ed. Laura Lederer (New York: William Morrow, 1980), 37.

violence against women.[22] Feminists also underline that what is pornographic depends upon the context of the presentation.

Along this line, the women who appear in cyberporn and cyberrape in video games are not faceless or victimless as women are degraded in pornography.[23] The players, including children who access these video games, contribute to the weakening of the social fabric of society as this violence is a form of hate propaganda against women and children that endorses violence against them.[24] Relatively recent studies support these contentions. Research published in 2013 shows that while not necessarily leading to commission of rape, rape in video games significantly increases supportive attitudes toward rape in male but not female players.[25]

Both narrative and empirical studies point to the real impact of cyberviolence on victims, which is at the very least similar to if not equal with that of offline violence. Empirical studies since the 1980s have generally established that online communication reinforces greater hostility on the part of perpetrators and negative interactions in a variety of settings when compared with concrete face-to-face communications.[26]

22 Kathleen Mahoney, "Obscenity, Morals and the Law: A Feminist Critique," 42, accessed February 15, 2018, https://rdo-olr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/olr_17.1_mahoney.pdf. Mahoney combines the definitions of pornography of feminist philosopher Helen Longino, feminist criminologist Debra Lewis, and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Unfortunately, Mahoney added, in line with the definition of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, that the aim of pornography is to sexually stimulate the viewer. This is highly contentious. See Michael C. Rea, "What is Pornography?" *Noûs* 35, no. 1 (2001): 133.

23 Mahoney, "Obscenity," 51–55.

24 Cf. Stephanie L. Patridge, "Pornography, Ethics, and Video Games," *Ethics and Information Technology*, 33, (2013): 33.

25 Victoria Simpson Beck et al, "Violence Against Women in Video Games: A Prequel or Sequel to Rape Myth Acceptance," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2012): 3016–3031; Guy Porter and Vladan Starcervic, "Are Violent Video Games Harmful?" *Australasian Psychiatry* 15 (2007): 422–426. In his article, Gooskens does not deal with empirical studies showing a correlation between virtual violence and attitudes offline. Solely from a philosophical perspective, he argues that purely virtual actions "escape ethical judgement" as they do not harm anyone. However, the seeming discomfort we feel about a player raping a computer-simulated person lies in the dissolution of the distinction between the actual person and their image-world-I. Unlike in a theater where the actor performs for the public, this is not so in a video game. "We suspect them, in other words, of not only *depicting* a rapist in a game but of *feeling like one* when performing acts of virtual rape." Gooskens, "The Ethical Status of Virtual Actions" (n. 14), 59, 61f, 73.

26 Karen M. Douglas and Craig McGarty, "Identifiability and Self-presentation: Computer-Mediated Communication and Intergroup Interaction," *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40 (2001): 399–416; Jenna Chang, "The Role of Anonymity in Deindividuated Behavior: A Comparison of Deindividuation Theory and the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE)," Baylor

Ethics of Face and Shame in the Light of Cyber-SVAW

The disinhibiting effect of the internet has brought about a sea change in cultural attitudes even among Filipinos online. From a traditional, predominantly Christian, Asian society with a great value for the face and also shame and where people generally do not criticize each other openly, curse words and personal attacks on others suddenly have become normal on Facebook posts, most especially during the campaign leading to the election of President Rodrigo Duterte. Women activists and journalists who question the President's policies have become the targets of trolls and bots and of slut-shaming and other forms of sexual harassment online.

Does the virtue of *hiya* (shame) and value for the face, (in the absence of the concrete face online), hold relevance in this context of cyberviolence against women? Can this ethics of face and shame be enriched by Levinas' face of the Other?

Shame is connected to the concrete face, which expresses this emotion literally (as in blushing), as well as metaphorically, such as when one loses face through the loss of honor and respect.

From the 1960s to the 1980's, many Western theorists and their local disciples developed a negative valuation of shame, that is, as an infantile emotion suppressing self-expression, or as a negative energy that needs to be expelled.[27] This idea has been challenged and an alternative perspective has been proposed by psychologists and philosophers who have highlighted shame as a "self-conscious moral emotion" and a virtue, especially in non-Western societies.[28]

In Confucianism, shame is both a moral feeling and a capacity to examine one's self toward transformation according to social and moral ideals.[29] It is con-

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(website), accessed February 15, 2018, http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php?id=77099.

27 David W. Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 114. It was Ruth Benedict who first made a distinction between shame and guilt cultures in her book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964; 2005). Filipino psychologist Jaime Bulatao describes *hiya* as "a painful emotion" preventing self-assertion in relation to an authority figure, in view of protecting the "unindividuated ego." "Hiya," *Philippine Studies Journal,* 12 (January 1964): 424, 428, 435.

28 See for example, Olwen Bedford and Kwang-Kuo Hwang, "Guilt and Shame in Chinese Culture: A Cross-Cultural Framework from the Perspective of Morality and Identity," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour,* 33, no. 2 (2003), 127–44.

29 Heidi Fung, "Affect and Early Moral Socialization: Some Insights and Contributions from Indigenous Psychological Studies in Taiwan," in *Indigenous and Cultural Psychology. International and*

sidered a major virtue, an ability that should be possessed by Confucian bureaucrats (Analects 13.20),[30] and one of the four foundations of a good moral disposition (Mencius, 2A6, 6A6).[31] The ideal person in early Confucian philosophy is marked by a sense of shame. Though shame is strongly felt in front of others, the Confucian perspective presents shame as more of a reflexive awareness of failing in front of one's moral ideal which drives a desire toward moral growth. A person without a sense of shame is considered "beyond moral reach." More than just a positive ideal, shame is a virtuous sensibility that needs to be nurtured.[32]

Hiya (Shame) as Sensitivity to the Face

In the Philippine context, various discourses on *mukha* (face) reveal the following definitions: to look like; countenance; looks or appearance; and reputation. As with Chinese concepts, the face as reputation is linked to two dimensions—the social and moral.[33] On the one hand, the face pertains to self-image or sense of dignity in the light of social expectations. On the other hand it mirrors character[34] (e.g. *mukhang demonyo* or looks like the devil) or a self-assessment vis-à-vis moral standards or one's conscience. The two are not a binary opposition and they become intertwined at times. We say *walang mukhang ihaharap* or "no face to show" when one has done something shameful morally or socially.

These two dimensions correspond to the external/internal dimensions of *hiya* (shame). In the past, *hiya* (shame) has been viewed largely as timidity or embarrassment and thus regarded negatively. A person with *hiya* (shame) is seen as less individuated or more easily swayed by what others would dictate than by what their conscience would say is right. *Hiya* (shame) however involves not only an external dimension, (embarrassment before others), but an internal dimension as well. One can feel shame before one's self (*mahiya sa sarili*) or before God (*mahiya sa Diyos*). One's "face" need not be seen by another online while engaging in cyber harassment to feel a sense of shame before one's self and before God. Some would associ-

Cultural Psychology, ed. Uichol Kim, Kuo-Shu Yang, Kwang-Kuo Hwang (Boston, MA: Springer, 2006).

30 Confucius, *Analects with Selection from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing, 2003).

31 *Mencius*, trans. Irene Bloom, ed. Philip J. Ivanhoe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

32 Fung, "Affect."

33 Hsien Chin Hu, "The Chinese Concepts of Face," *The American Anthropologist* 46 (1944): 45–64.

34 G. Prospero Covar, *Kaalamang Bayang Dalumat ng Pagkataong Pilipino* (Quezon City: Dr. Jose Cuyegkeng Memorial Library and Information Center, 1993), 6f.

ate this feeling with guilt. *Nahihiya ako* ("I feel shame") is sometimes used interchangeably with "My conscience is bothering me." *Nahihiya ako* can lead to acting responsibly, which in the East Asian context is a means to recovering one's face.[35]

Filipino philosopher Jeremiah Reyes argues that *hiya* (shame) is a virtue by distinguishing between two discourses:[36] 1) the *hiya* that is suffered (a passion) similar to embarrassment or shyness and, 2) the *hiya* that is expressed in an "active and sacrificial self-control" (a virtue). He correlates these with Thomas Aquinas' differentiation between shame as *verecundia* (shame) and *temperantia* (temperance).

Like *verecundia*[37] which is "fear of disgrace," the *hiya* that is suffered prevents a person from committing something disgraceful or unacceptable. As with *temperantia*, *hiya* as a virtue restrains. This said, *hiya* and *temperantia* are different in the sense that *temperantia* creates self-control of bodily appetites like food, drink, and sex, all of which can be exercised by an individual,[38] while *hiya* seeks self-restraint in intra-personal, inter-personal, and social relations.

Hiya as sacrificial self-control is a manifestation of a feeling for the "face" either of one's self or the other. *Hiya* underlies expressions such as *kahihiyan* (has a sense of shame), *marunong mahiya* (knows how to feel shame), and *hindi marunong mahiya* (unable to feel shame). Those who are able to feel shame have greater sensitivity to the need for help and caring of those who have lost their face in society.[39]

Hiya can be simultaneously understood as timidity or embarrassment and as self-control. The "painful emotion" acts as barometer of the violation of a person's dignity or face and signals a person toward self-restraint. A person who has no shame or *hiya* is considered morally deficient or *makapal ang mukha* (thick-faced), meaning impervious to moral and social demands.[40] "Losing face" means being unmasked in one's uncaring attitude not only before others but also in front of one's inner self (one's conscience). Thus, those whose crimes or wickedness have been exposed oftentimes literally cover or hide their faces from the public to conceal their identities.

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35 Xiaoying Qi, "Face: A Chinese Concept in Global Sociology," *Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (2011): 289.

36 Jeremiah Reyes, "In Defense of Hiya as a Virtue," *Asian Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2016) 66–78.

37 *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 144, a. 2.

38 *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 66, a. 4.

39 Ferdinand Dagmang, "Hiya: Daan at Kakayahan sa Pakikipagkapwa," *MST Review* 1, no. 1 (1996): 66–90. Psychologist Carl D. Schneider refers to a "mature sense of shame" as alertness to the other's need for privacy that is "fitting, proper." "A Mature Sense of Shame," in *The Many Faces of Shame*, ed. Donald L. Nathanson (New York: Guilford Press, 1987), 200.

40 Cf. Hu, "The Chinese Concepts of Face" (n. 33), 56.

Hiya is not just a virtue on the inter-personal level but is also a societal virtue linked to ideal citizenship. A Philippine Revolutionary Constitution written in 1902 during American colonization underlines the importance of *hiya* to ensure mutual caring.[41] Furthermore, *hiya* in this discourse is associated with being true to one's word or the virtues of truthfulness, fidelity, honesty and integrity, which is necessary to maintain harmony not only within one's self but within the collective self as well, such as within one's family and within society. In such discourse, *hiya* is far from reinforcing passivity and is assumed to have a counter-hegemonic import in the Philippine struggle against the American colonizing forces.

The *Kapwa* (Other) and Levinas' Face of the Other: An Intercultural Enrichment

Hiya as a virtue stands on two pillars: the *loob* (the inner self or heart) and *kapwa* (the other). Being shameless or devoid of *hiya* means that the person's *loob* (heart) has hardened and is thus lacking in compassion for the other. *Hiya* is thus related to another Filipino virtue, *pakikipagkapwa* (relating to another justly).

Hiya (Shame) and the Excluded Other

In Philippine discourse, the *kapwa* (other) has been understood from an exclusivist and inclusivist perspective. The exclusivist in-group discourse sees the *kapwa* as referring to those considered "kin" or "one-of-us" while the inclusivist discourse uses *kapwa* to encompass both the insider and the outsider, with particular emphasis on the shared *loob* (inner self). Unlike the English term "other" which is the opposite of "the same," and in Levinas where the other is "radically Other," *kapwa* in the inclusivist discourse combines both elements of sameness and difference.

Care and concern for the other emanates from a recognition of a shared *loob*. A shameless person is characterized as *walang utang-na-loob* or lacking in debt of solidarity in responding to the needs of the other. While the similarity of the self and the other here does not erase their difference, the danger exists with the emphasis on sameness of subsuming the other to one's own agenda.

In this regard, the concept of *kapwa* (other) can be enriched or complemented by Levinas' stress on the alterity of the Other, which can serve to question and

41 Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines*, 1840–1910 (Metro-Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 181.

provoke the I to be transformed by the encounter with otherness.[42] According to Levinas, the moral "ought" emerges on the level of intersubjective encounter, where sensibility operates prior to reason. The self wants to possess the Other, make it a part of itself or reduce to the Same, but cannot because the other pushes back by saying, "I am absolutely Other." The fundamental ethical imperative starting from this face-to-face encounter is the prohibition on reducing the other to my own selfhood, or in Levinas' words, "thou shalt not kill."[43] In the face of the Other, we are invited to listen to the Other's voice. Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel further expands on Levinas' Other by referring to a concrete historical group which has been marginalized and excluded by totalizing systems: "The face of the other, primarily as poor and oppressed, reveals a people before it reveals an individual person."[44]By appropriating Dussel's re-reading of Levinas, the *kapwa* (other) can take on an embodiment in the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized.

The Philippine inclusivist concept of *kapwa* likewise poses a challenge to Levinas' view of the Other as totally different. For as the philosopher Jacques Derrida asked, "how can one recognize the Other if there is no ground of similarity between the I and the Other?"[45] Sensitivity to the face of the Other can simultaneously stem from an awareness of a common humanity and an alterity that challenges the I to respect the Other.

The Face of the Other in Cyber-Interactions

In Philippine media, one often sees those caught doing shameful acts covering their faces. But even in "invisibility", or the absence of witnesses to such deeds, a person can lose face or feel shame before one's self and before God.

Even as Levinas' concept of face is slippery,[46] it certainly points toward more than physical representation. Levinas speaks of the face through which one encounters the Other in a tangible way. The physical face is important for him, re-

42 Cf. Roland Tuazon, "Pakikipagkapwa and its Transformative Potential: An Anadialectical Interpretation" *Asian Christian Review* 5, no. 1 (2011): 11–29.
43 Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, First Ed, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburg: Duqusne University Press, 1995), 89.
44 Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1985), 44.
45 Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001).
46 Laurie Johnson, "Face-interface or the Prospect of a Virtual Ethics," *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics* 4, no. 1/2 (2007): 49–56.

ferring to it as "this chaste of bit skin, with brow, eyes, nose, and mouth."[47] The face is not, however, fully confined to the countenance. As early as Levinas' first major philosophical book, *Totality and Infinity*, the face is the "speaking face" whose main feature is the "expression," a non-speech that communicates "in the sense that implements, clothing and gestures do."[48] In this notion, the whole body and its expression represent the face.

And yet face for Levinas even goes beyond gestures or physical appearance. It does not correspond to its representation in an image or photograph, which always falls short of capturing or reproducing the other. In this sense, Levinas speaks of the "invisibility" of the Other.[49] It is through this face that the Infinite is revealed; the Infinite that not only indicts our concern only for ourselves but also the "possibility of being otherwise." This face of the Other, the trace of the Infinite which is also the Good within, has been imprinted within us and precedes us,[50] even as it can be encountered only through an externality, that is, the face's representation.

For Lucas Introna, the virtualization of our encounters is eroding our moral fiber for the digitized face is removed of its power to appeal or critique the self-centered being's attempts at domination.[51] Richard Cohen disagrees with him and underlines that the term "proximity" in Levinas—at times referred to as "face-to-face encounters"—does not refer to geographical distance but to a figurative closeness coupled with a moral imperative.[52] He rightly notes that "[o]ne can lose sight of the ethical face in the very flesh and blood face that faces."[53]

For Laurie Johnson, that Levinas can identify the face with "implements, clothing, and gestures" shows that for him, the face can be anything that is linked

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47 Emmanuel Levinas, "The Ego and the Totality," in *Collected Philosophical Papers,* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 25–46, 41.

48 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), 182.

49 Ibid., 34; see also Roger Buurgraeve, "Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and our Responsibility," *Social Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 29.

50 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1991).

51 Lucas D. Introna, "Virtuality and Morality: On (Not) Being Disturbed by the Other," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8, no. 1 (2001): 11–19.

52 Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity* (n. 43), 96.

53 Richard A. Cohen, "Ethics and Cybernetics: Levinasian Reflections," *Ethics and Information Technology* 2, no. 1 (2000): 31. Speaking in relation to video games, Cohen, in contrast to our position, opposes the virtual from the real, arguing that the former is not real enough to require ethical norms. Thus a person can do whatever they wish in the context of a video game. See: ibid., 29.

to the body but "need not be human itself, so long as it expresses itself and enjoins one to respond."[54] The face is that through which one becomes conscious of the Other's alterity and through which I am impelled to respond to the Other. In this sense, Johnson argues, the computer (e.g. with the use of an avatar) functions as an interface that through "implements, clothing, and gestures" expresses the face. "The interface calls the subject forth in the entry into language, and in this regard the interface generates a necessarily proximal relation".[55]

Precisely because the face for Levinas can transcend all representations, it can be revealed in ways "beyond what is seen or understood." The face can make its appeal whether one is online or offline, or represented as a photograph, an avatar. In her article "Is Facebook Effacing the Face?" Benda Hofmeyr writes,

> The face can be effaced in actual social encounters as much as in mediated or virtual encounters..... It is not dependent upon the means through which Being is revealed; its force comes from beyond Being. ..... When I "connect" with another—whether in place or in space —it is not a meeting between physical faces or "interfaces" but a community founded on the pre-ontological fraternity between the Other and the other-in-the-Self.[56]

By further extension, the face of the other can be represented by video-game characters, since the face-to-face encounter need not be an empirical one and that proximity refers not to geographical but a symbolic closeness attached to a moral imperative. We have already noted, though, that not all types of video games have been perceived as generating an ethical relation between the gamer and the characters involved. The ethical relation emerges, it seems, in an encounter with the face of an Other in violent pornographic videogames where one is encouraged and rewarded for cruelty toward a particular social group represented by a character. In the process, such engagement reinforces discrimination against the social group in offline life. The necessary transition here from Levinas' focus on individual face-to-face encounter to the "face" as representing a collectivity has been paved for us by Dussel, who reinterpreted Levinas' Other to refer to marginalized and excluded groups.[57] This face can be encountered offline but also online mediated by a character in particular types of videogames.

54 Johnson, "Face-Interface" (n. 46), 52.

55 Ibid., 54.

56 Benda Hofmeyr, "Is Facebook Effacing the Face: Reassessing Levinas's Ethics in the Age of Social Connectivity," *Filozofia*, 69, no. 2 (2014): 128.

57 Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation* (n. 44), 44.

Hiya (Shame), Gaining Face, and Making Visible the God who Enfaces

The face of the other in both Philippine and Levinasian discourse goes beyond physical representation, possessing an internal and moral dimension. *Hiya* as sensitivity to the face of the other can be made more relevant in the cyber-context when enriched by Levinasian discourses as follows: 1) The *kapwa* (other) while underlining the shared inner self, can be complemented by Levinas' concept of the alterity of the Other that highlights how difference can challenge one's perspective. 2) The face, as has been argued, can be encountered online mediated by words, an avatar, or even a character in particular types of video games. 3) In appropriating Dussel's re-reading of Levinas, shame as sensitivity to the face of the other must be especially attentive to the marginalized and oppressed *kapwa*.

While in both discourses, the other in some ways reflects the Divine, Levinas stresses the radical otherness of the Divine, whose trace can only be evoked in the encounter with the Other. The Other is not God's incarnation; rather, the Infinite is now absent but has left a trace in the Other. The sense of responsibility for the Other is premised/grounded in God's alterity, albeit present as a Trace within us.

In comparison, contemporary Filipino Christian discourses underline our shared inner Self with God. Filipino theologian Edmundo Guzman, for instance, speaks of creation as God's *kaloob*.[58] *Ka* is a Filipino prefix that means "to share with." *Kaloob* (gift) when literally translated means shared inner self. The gift is an extension of the giver's self. Creation as God's *kaloob* (gift) suggests that creation shares in the inner self or depths of God.[59] Creation that includes humans, as gift of God is a sacrament of the divine, sharing in the divine self. The *kapwa* images God, bears the trace of the Infinite, insofar as they share the same *loob* (inner self) with God.

The appeal to the sense of responsibility for the other is predicated in the shared inner self with God, our being imago Dei, or God's face. In the East Asian/Philippine context, a person's face is a fruit of what one does for the good of other members of society.[60] Among Chinese, the "face" is a stock that can decrease or increase; exemplary actions or what a person provides for others in so-

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58 Edmundo Pacifico Guzman, "Creation as God's Kaloob: Towards an Ecological Theology of Creation in the Lowland Filipino Socio-cultural Context," Part II, (PhD dissertation, Catholic University of Louvain, 1995), 394–448.

59 Leo Scheffcyck, *Creation and Providence*, trans. Richard Strachan (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 47–64.

60 Qi, "Face" (n. 35), 289.

ciety (e.g. caring for others) can be a means to "gaining face." Efforts to enface others or restore their name can be viewed as means as well to gain face and from a Christian perspective image the God who enfaces.

The story of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1–21), powerfully describes this God who enfaces. Adam and Eve lost face before God and thus wanted to conceal themselves. God, however, drew them out and helped them to gradually admit what they had done. As a consequence of their sin, they were driven from paradise and its life of comfort. God, however, also enfaced them. Genesis 3:21 says, "And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them." God covered their shame with divine clothing. In the Bible, to be dressed with divine clothing implies restoration of one's name before God. In Revelation 3:5, Jesus says, "The one who conquers will be *clothed* in *white garments*, and I will never blot their *name* out of the book of life. I will *confess their name* before my Father and before his angels."

In the cyber-context, enfacing victims and perpetrators by helping "clean" their name or holding them accountable respectively, is vital to making visible the Divine presence. More often, in patriarchal societies, female victims feel the burden of shame or embarrassment. Trolls (paid or not) and others who engage in cyber-prostitution, and cyber-harrassment such as slut-shaming, revenge porn, and sextortion, are actually those who have lost *kahihiyan* (shame) or their sense of propriety. The situation of anonymity, invisibility, or facelessness enabled by the use of fake accounts has removed the sanction of shame. Shame in its internal dimension and as a virtue, sensitivity to the face of the excluded *kapwa*, is not, however, dependent on the presence or absence of a concrete face. One can and should feel shame regardless of whether witnesses are around or not.

In early Confucian philosophy, there is no sense that shame can be harmful to a person. It is fine to cause a person to experience shame for the sake of the common good.[61] Shaming as part of truth exposition may serve the good of the person to prevent them from repeating the misdeed or crime and is a way of enfacing or ultimately redeeming not only the face of the victim but also the perpetrator. It is thus important to expose the face of culprits; shaming for the common good can be a way to shake trolls from their complacency. An example of this is from 2016 when conscientious Filipino netizens exposed the real identities of slut-shamers and a group of lawyers offered free legal aid to victims of slut-shaming.[62]

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61 Fung, "Affect" (n. 29), 175–96.

62 F. Valencia, "Can Online Violence against Women and Girls be Stopped?" Cosmopolitan, December 5, 2016 (website), accessed February 15, 2018, https://www.cosmo.ph/entertainment/stop-online-violence-against-women-and-girls-a00175-20161205 .

Shame as sensitivity to the face of the excluded *kapwa* is not just an individual but a community and social virtue. It should lead to collective efforts to identify and sue perpetrators. Social endeavours can likewise include addressing policy vacuums created by the new cyberculture: What are the responsibilities of institutional providers such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. in relation to abuse committed in their platforms? What are the needed policies that should be promulgated and what security tools should be installed? On the part of governments, what new laws have to be legislated? How can law enforcement and the general public be educated?

Concluding Remarks

The effacement or wiping out of the concrete body in online communication has fostered the occurrence of cyber-svaw. Even as this happens in the virtual space, its impact is comparable if not continuous to violence offline. Notwithstanding the various levels of effacement online, ethics of face and shame remain relevant in this cyber-context. We have focused in particular in retrieving as a virtue the Philippine concept of shame and face in the light of Levinasian discourses: the alterity of the Other that challenges perspectives of sameness, Dussel's concretization of the Other in the excluded, and how this face can be encountered in the cybercontext. Shame as sensitivity to the face of the excluded *kapwa* (other) is an individual and social virtue that needs to be fostered in cyber-relations. It leads to individual and collective actions that are not only means to "gain face" but help to reveal the God who enfaces.