INTRODUCTION

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*P*hilosophy is the discipline of thinking things twice. For one to simply think, philosophy as a rational investigation of truths and principles of knowledge, being, and conduct, that is, philosophy as a "science," is not required. For thinking, what requisite is a reason, a human endowment constitutive of one's intelligence. One only needs a mind to be able to think. But something more is exigent for one to think *twice*, is to think again, to reconsider and see something from a different perspective. To think things twice, one needs a conscious apprehension of the notion of truth, a deliberate and critical engagement with principles, and a learned competency of habits of thinking that discloses the eternal freshness of reality. These are the elements that constitute philosophy not simply as a way of life, but as an academic discipline with methods and theories. Here lies philosophy's vocational relevance. Thinking things twice is not the mental disorder of indecisiveness or the unfortunate product of capriciousness. To think things twice is the stubborn instinct of human intelligence which remains restless in entrenched patterns of thought. The apprehension of the possibility of thinking things twice is the initial promise of liberation, the first step towards unshackling the mind and its powers from mental scripts that do not give birth to creativity.

This explains why it is said that in the domain of philosophical discourses, questions always outlive their answers. Indeed, though philosophy, in its many faces and guises, has offered opinions, beliefs and sometimes divergent truths to the fundamental questions of life. The more important are the questions asked than the answers proffered. The convoluted transformations and shifting grounds in the history of ideas show to us how, philosophically considered, answers have no finality. This is not to suggest that the answers are not important. They are.

It is just that in philosophy, answers often lead to more questions, or that answers invite questions to be re-asked. The philosophical journey is an adventure of ideas, ideas that are witnesses to the transformative and transforming power that they bear.[1] Answers are not meant to be conversation-stoppers.[2] Epochs take shape and are defined by the many, sometimes divergent answers, to life's fundamental questions like, "*who am I?*," "*why is there being rather than nothing?*," "*what is the meaning of life?*," "*what constitutes the good life?*" These questions remain perennial, and each generation stands out as unique and definable on the basis of its answers to these. What may appear "final" or at the least "feasible" in our current mode of thinking may be deemed as such, but only because social consensus does judge these sufficient and tenable. The faculty of reason is oriented towards the apprehension of Truth yet thinking as an operation is always a process that at best can only be truthful, especially amongst a community of truth-seekers. The journey to truth is a genuine epistemological pilgrimage guided by the aim but has yet to be reached. Part of the itinerary is the creative production of concepts that function as road signs for other pilgrims. Here lies the unique place philosophers have, for as Deleuze and Guattari wrote, "philosophy is the discipline that involves *creating* concepts" and that only philosophy does this singularly.[3] The stones with which we use in the production of ideas to make sense of our world today may end up being reused, discarded, set aside or even continue to be important in later thoughts. As Georges Bataille would remind speaking of religion, "Philosophy is never a house; it is construction site.... [A]t every point, at each point, there is the impossibility of the final state."[4]

Thinking things twice, then, is not just an act; it is an intellectual posture. It entails the consideration of a subject as such

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[1] See Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Free Press, 1933).

[2] Borrowing a concept applied to religion by Rorty. See Richard Rorty, "Religion as a Conversation Stopper," in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 168-74.

[3] Gilles Deleuze et al., *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.

[4] Georges Bataille, *Theory of Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 11.

yet offers a deferment of meaning in order to give birth to a new or nuanced understanding. It is a posture that grants a space, a lacuna, so that that which is being considered, through reconsideration, applying new mental lens, canalizes the ingression of novelty into the actual. This phenomenological approach highlights the importance of bracketing, but only so that deeper essences may be disclosed in philosophical reflection. This is the common methodology that defines the articles presented in this volume. Taking one particular subject, the authors endeavor to rethink the thinking that underlies such thought-concept, to disclose a perspective that is liberatingly fresh.

To think things twice grants not just a deferment of meaning. It also offers the gratitude of time. Although factors do come into play in the "delayed" release of this volume, it is not without merit that deferment of publication does speak of a "taking leave to reflect further" on issues involved. Seeking no apology, philosophical thinking never matures overnight. Indeed, as one contemporary author famously comments, "[P]hilosophy is thinking in slow motion."[5] Unlike mathematics whose formulas, mediated by technology, provide quick answers, or science whose experimental procedures may be shortened by controlled and observed correlations, philosophical reflection is patently organic, developmental, evolving through time. In philosophy, time is more a *kairos* than a *chronos*. Indeed, philosophy done as jump at the chance is bound to result in more re-thinking than is usually necessary.

Thirdly, to think things twice is an invitation for further conversations, not in the antagonistic spirit of dispute, but in the congenial atmosphere of journeying as friends to the truth, or at least as lovers of wisdom. Philosophy as the oldest "science" (read: systematic body of knowledge as a result of formal thinking) has greatly evolved seeking its relevance in the specialization and professionalization of other, experimental and mathematical, sciences. Effective knowledge is professionalized knowledge, yet this can engender a danger of individualism in scholarly pursuits. The trend of specialization in education can produce "minds in a

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[5] Attributed to John Campbell, professor of philosophy at UC Berkeley.

groove. Each profession makes progress, but it is progress in its own groove."[6] Hence, the attendant needs to be multi- or interdisciplinary in one's approach. Philosophy, on this regard, has a strategic advantage. Its formalism and attention to abstraction enable philosophy to lay hands on everything under the sun, even philosophy as such (i.e. "metaphilosophy" and such litany of other subjects prefaced by "Philosophy of ..."). Without subscribing to the idea that philosophy stands as the highest of all sciences because of its material object, the nature of philosophical enterprise enables it to have a word or two on all subjects existing and conceivable. To think things twice entails one "to think with" (*penser avec*)[7] other personages whose ideas are seminal in the re-thinking of key concepts in the history of ideas. To think with recognizes that thinking, as a first-order act, is never in a vacuum. We stand on the shoulders of giants, and rethink ideas on the basis of other's contributions in the hope that one's re-thinking affords a new *vista* to contemplate reality with a deeper understanding and a bolder framework of action towards the re-creation of reality.

The authors of this edited volume are mostly connected with the Philosophy Department of St. Vincent School of Theology of Adamson University. The collection of their articles presented in this volume of *Hapág: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Theological Research* is the first issue that predominantly falls under the category of philosophical discourses. But philosophy here is not an exercise of navel-gazing. What the articles presented here show is an application of philosophy precisely understood as a "discipline of thinking things twice" elaborated above. The collection provides a broad spectrum of interest (e.g. hospitality, argumentation, the Big Bang, etc.) of subjects (e.g. ethics, politics, religion, metaphysics, etc.) and even a philosophical re-thinking of the Filipino concept of *kapwa* and modes of communication (*nagtatalo*, *nag-aaway*, and *nag-uusap*).

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[6] Alfred North Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World*, 197.
[7] The idea of *penser avec* ("to think with") as a method of philosophical reflection was put forward by the contemporary philosopher of science Isabell Stenger, especially in her book *Penser avec Whitehead*. See Isabelle Stengers, *Penser Avec Whitehead: Une Libre et Sauvage Création de Concepts* (Paris: Seuil, 2002).

If there is one concept in the history of ideas that has been the subject to countless "thinking twice" across ages and has never died out to irrelevance in the process, it's the concept of "God." Indeed, every epoch seems to require a rethinking of God on the basis of each generation's epistemic deliverances. Georges De Schrijver in his article "God after the Big Bang: Toward a Revision of Classical Theism" argues that classical theism, an intellectual justification of a notion of creator-God understood as an order giver through God's preconceived plan needs to be abandoned. Drawing contemporary insights from science (George Coyne's appropriation of the Darwinian theory of evolution) and philosophy (Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy), De Schrijver articulates the notion of a God in an evolutionary and creative universe, where finite entities are allowed to participate in God's creative power, and at the same time maintain this notion of God as available for religious discourses.

Sometimes to think things twice entails not so much on the creative birth of a new essential meaning but a retrieval of that which has been forgotten, the rebirth of something that lies beneath which may have been buried by successive mental accretions. Kenneth Masong's essay "Recuperating the Concept of Event in the Early Whitehead" seeks to recover a metaphysically fertile concept of event, the building block of reality, in the early works that make up Whitehead's process philosophy. Taking his cue from the contemporary philosopher Isabelle Stenger, Masong argues that a rethinking of the evental character discerned in reality provides a more dynamic metaphysics explicative of extending over, or passing into, of one event to another eschewing the discerned atomistic turn that Whitehead takes in the distinction he established between events and objects in his process philosophy.

Peace is not just a concept to be understood, but an aim that needs to be achieved. Both religion and society seek to contribute towards peace, but despite the passage of time, peace, though a commonly understood concept, still appears to be an elusive aim. Taking his cue from literature, Charles R. Strain, utilizing the ethical lenses of the Jesuit Daniel Berrigan and the Buddhist Thich Nhat Hahn, rethinks the images of the Prophet and the Bodhisattva to charter a possible way out of violence and

what Strain calls "moral devolution" by means of the cultivation of virtue after the example of the prophet and the bodhisattva.

Adding his voice to political discourses aforementioned, Georges de Schrijver, in his second article in this collection entitled "The Political Ethics of Jean-François Lyotard" echoes the French philosopher's critique of modernity's "grand narratives" and its inherent tendency to espouse universalizing absolutes that mute the voices of the multiple. What De Schrijver offers in this article is a rethinking of the notion of universality, via Kant's ethics, a kind of universality that debunks its false instantiations, and offers a space for the voice of the "silent minority" in political realities through the activation of what Lyotard calls the "differend."

Still in the context of a discourse on political realities, what Dominador Bombongan Jr. offers in his article "Jacques Derrida and the Paradox of Hospitality" is a rethinking of the very notion of hospitality itself following the seminal insights of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. For Derrida, hospitality needs to be rethought beyond the host-guest relations to which such a concept is generally understood. In a logic of pure excess, to welcome the other entails a re-evaluation of one's posture as host, and the radical acceptance of the other, beyond tolerance, as a guest. This is a dangerous yet necessary path that one has to take, at least intellectually, in order to affirm a notion of pure unconditional hospitality which the current political scene of migration seems to be in need of.

The last two articles in this volume provide a way of thinking things twice that is closer to home because they provide a rethinking of some Filipino (Eastern) concepts in the light of other (Western) philosophical systems. In a true sense, what we have in these two articles are a bridging of cultures through philosophical rethinking, an exercise of "thinking with…" In her original work of appropriating Jürgen Habermas' notion of argumentative discourse with its alleged incompatibility with the Filipino concept of *kapwa*, Maria Lovelyn Corpuz Paclibar argues in her article "Habermas and Argumentation in the Philippine Context" that there's no incommensurability of lifeworlds on this regard. The hermeneutic key is to identify potential rationalization processes within the Filipino modes of communication (namely *nagtatalo*, *nag-aaway*,

and *nag-uusap*). Paclibar concludes that *kwentuhan* contains enabling components for reflexivity that makes possible a Habermasian rational argumentation as a procedure for resolving conflicts within the Filipino lifeworld.

In the last article in this volume, Kenneth Centeno's "Levinasian 'Barbarism' and the Challenge of Reinterpreting *Pakikipagkapwa* from Dussel's Liberation Ethics," the author seeks to engage himself philosophically with contemporary political issues in the Philippines by offering the perspective of liberation based on the thoughts of two contemporary philosophers: Emmanuel Levinas and Enrique Dussel. Centeno aims to achieve a rethinking of the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*, in the lens of Levinasian-Dusselian philosophy, that can be used as "a powerful instrument in bringing real change and liberation in a country where the vast majority suffer different forms of exclusion and marginalization."

If there is one attribute that may be affirmed of philosophy, it is that philosophy can never be a conversation-stopper. Though addressing pertinent and perennial questions and proffering myriad answers to these, philosophy's response to questions are never walls, but always bridges. There's an inherent value in philosophical discourses that stimulates more conversations than putting an end to these. It is the hope that this collection of essays stimulates that intellectual need to "think things twice" not only on the multifarious concepts that populate our mind, but on the very thinking itself that informs our thinking. Philosophy's vocation speaks not only of its task to continue the conversation towards the pursuit of the "Harmony of harmonies"[8] by thinking things twice, but it is also tasked to invite others to join in in this conversation of "thinking with". It is our hope that this collection achieves its purpose of allowing us to see things from a different—and fresher—perspective.

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[8] Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 285 and 292.