

# The World, Language and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay on the Way of Experiencing Reality

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“The world was so recent that many things then did not have names and in order to mention them, they had to be pointed out with the finger.”

Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

“God is affirmed first of all not by philosophical thought, but by spontaneous thought. Mankind had myths and religions very early, but metaphysics only much later. This is evidence that the needs of life, of psychology, and of society precede, and by a long time, methodical awareness of ideas and their ordering and classification. Criticism is always a fruit of maturity.”

Henry Duméry, *The Problem of God in Philosophy of Religion*.

## 1. The Metaphysical Tradition

The role of the philosopher, for starters and only for starters, is to present to his fellowmen, to his fellow workers a model for comprehending reality. In order to accomplish this, he must teach his fellow citizens to read. So that there would be something to read, the philosopher should write. He should produce a text. The text is only a starting point. At first glance, it is the objectifying of the philosopher's or

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author's subjectivity. The text has to go beyond itself, beyond the limitations and circumstances of its author and even of its immediate audience, in order to fulfill itself as such. This depends on the reader and in his writing the philosopher should lead in the reading process. Above all a text must be viewed in terms of participation. It makes each and everyone participate in the greater reality. The text is key to and opening of participation. The text clarifies participation into something personal or integrative and always forges itself into a solid commitment wherein there is no room for mere compromises.

The text has to be viewed above all as schemes: a variety of schemes harmonized into a singular scheme. The philosopher in teaching his audience to read must not only guide them in the discovery of the discursive and metaphorical forces behind the text nor in the task of constructing contextualizations in order to highlight the self-understanding and value of the text *per se*. As already stated, the philosopher must accompany others in overcoming the text in itself. It is in this overcoming that the true nature of the text is unveiled, that its being a piece for execution is revealed. This philosophical enterprise aims to be an exposition of this process which is viewed as a way, a long and winding road that seems to lead to nowhere and at the same time familiar and, simply, homey.

Said enterprise presupposes a great amount of speculation. And this speculative activity deemed as academic, too theoretical or too detached or high faluting is that factor which has made philosophy distantiate itself from our fellowmen. Speculation as an end in itself accomplishes nothing at all. In itself it is winding along various concentric circles.

Metaphysics-the most speculative of all philosophical branches or treatises-has, for a variety of reasons all of which cannot be enumerated here, acquired a degrading reputation for the past years even in philosophical circles. In common parlance, most likely, people understand this term not anymore as a highly speculative treatise, but rather as something that has to do with extra-sensory perception or things of the occult. In my opinion, people establish frontiers or borderlines between things that they could grasp and things, although they are real, which they cannot comprehend. These incomprehensible things belong to the realm of the mysterious and thus they are labeled as mysteries. Men do not deny the existence of mysteries, they just exclude

them or place them altogether in a different category. In more conventional and blunt terms, mysteries are for the curious, the adventurous or those who have the luxury of time whose mental frameworks are somewhat devoid of pragmatic notions. In our secularized world, man does not allow himself to be dominated by mysteries or what is transcendent. Secularization, truly an ambivalent and polysemic phenomenon, is, for the sake of our present discussion, or rather can be understood as the triumph of Science in the form of technology. Thus, even the belief in God is put into question. Secularization does not seek to deny the reality of God, but rather to “control” God: control or limit his transcendence by not making Him or religiosity the predominant value in our technological dominated and laden lives. Sometimes this control has gone out of control, specially in the wake of the so called “new age” wherein there is a market plurality of deities, demons and esoteric formulas.

This conventional notion of the mysterious may have been influenced by the rejection of the metaphysical in certain philosophical circles. These circles (above all the Logical Positivists) would dismiss metaphysical terms as “senseless,” “meaningless.” In other words, they are beyond language and its tautological reach. Language has always been for them the limiting factor or is in itself the limit of the world. “World” is understood as that realm of meaning.

We live in a world plagued or blessed (depending on the point of view taken) with mysteries. These mysteries are not really there for us to solve, but rather they are there for mankind to discover. Upon discovering them it is for us to accept them and live with them or just simply neglect them altogether. We men have this choice. To be a man is to be confronted with choices. Manhood is a constant dilemma with only one decision: to be a man. This is what distinguishes us from all other living things. Men have the existential vocation of choice.

Immediately, the moral nuances of this statement come to mind. Morality, to my mind, is something posterior. It is that criteriological moment wherein we evaluate or measure our acts. Thus, we inevitably transform into their motivations, implications, consequences (whether far reaching or not) and eventually, conventional acceptance. Because of our natural and spontaneous criteriological tendencies, we tend to forget the act itself: the joy or the pain of performing an act for the act itself; or the *experience* of the act itself. In other words, the very

*spontaneity.* Experience is the key word in our philosophical task. Experience, at this point in our exposition, is spontaneity. Because it is spontaneity, it is inevitability. Everything in as much as it is, in as much as this isness is existence, experiences in one way or another. But it is man alone who truly experiences.

*Choice.* In the long run everything is a take it or leave it affair. Men take things or leave them following a certain criteria, i.e., the effective execution of choice: which is take it or leave it belongs to a criteriological moment which in its initial moment is axiological, but in the long run is inevitably moral. But as to experience, there is no choice. Like we said, it is spontaneity, pure spontaneity and thus it is pure inevitability. To exist is to experience. We understand existence as a finite mode, the finite mode of being. Existence is just being there. Nothing more. Nothing less. It is the innate openness to experience; it is the point of departure of experience. Thus to experience is to execute ones existence. Experience, because it pertains to existence, is a finite modality. The finitude of existence is determined by its capability to experience.

We do not choose to experience; it comes with the package deal of existence or of finitude. The latter is the inevitable condition for the former. However, not all finite beings experience. Only a chosen finitude could experience: and that is man. An author once called man, inspiring himself in Zubiri, "the animal of realities."<sup>1</sup> Following the Aristotelian scheme, man is indeed in part an animal; but I prefer to call him creature: to signify his finitude, in terms of a fallibility stained by guilt and redeemed by responsible commitment—this is the experiential package unwrapped above all by finitude, the finitude of existence.<sup>2</sup> To exist is to be outside of one's cause. It means to be caused and in some cases to be created. Thus I am postulating that there is a creator. Many would automatically think of what men commonly call God everytime the word "creator" is mentioned. But man in his own right is a creator (or especially in the reproductive act, "co-creator"); the history of mankind which has been a history of culture in its two main manifestations: science and art attests to this fact.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. X. Pikaza, *Experiencia religiosa y cristianismo*. (Salamanca, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> I have taken into account the reflections of P. Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*. (New York, 1986).

In as much as the creator is postulated, the creature or the created exists, i.e., in relation to the creator, the creature or the created exists. This signifies above all the real autonomy of the creature or the created from the creator. Existence then is primordial freedom. In relation to the creature or created, however, the creator does not exist, but simply "is." This is especially true of God. He simply "is." St. Thomas, in his rather over-used and over-commented *Quinque Viae* would say, "*Utrum Deus sit?*"; "*Ergo Deus est.*"<sup>3</sup> The power of simply being "is"; it is not a state. It is not existence. It could be termed as "being"... because it is the highest accessible way of expressing "being" or a "mode of being." But at the same time "isness" points out to something beyond the highest way of expressing being. From these shores, we can only intuit or contemplate the horizon. But we could sail from these shores. Though it is beautiful to see a ship at harbour, but ships are not meant to be bound to safe harbours. They were made to sail. So we could sail on not in order to reach the horizon, but to see it constantly disappear and being replaced as we go further. As we go further we come closer to that immense beauty. This sailing is the way of experience, the way of experiencing reality.

Experiencing means the constant disappearance of horizons by being constantly replaced by new ones with the "feeling" that we are getting nearer wherein in reality the nearness is more immense than the feeling or sensation. But the sensation is genuine. We have passed frontiers only to discover the immensity of it all. But as we sail along we somewhat embrace that immensity without necessarily having actually reached it. Then we realize that that immensity is not something to be captured or conquered, but something to be embraced, accepted with the realization that we too are embraced, we too are a part of that immensity which we seek to know. To know is not to conquer although at first it really needs capturing and grasping. To know is to let it be at the same time letting ourselves be. Knowledge is true freedom: respect for the inviolable autonomy, acknowledgement of limitations that are not endpoints or terms, but rather starting points.

Thus, I prefer the term "creature"; to be a creature means to exist and hence, to experience. Man, therefore, is better defined as a

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<sup>3</sup> In this manner, I express my disagreement with certain respectable commentators of St. Thomas who insist that "essere" and "existere" are the same.

“creature of experiences.” To experience is proper only to man: the beginning and end of all philosophical enterprise because it is he who protagonizes the event. His protagonism of philosophy is experiential in nature, i.e., his protagonism of the philosophical act is through his experiences (in the plural) which stem from the basic fact that to be man is to be an experience or to be man is to experience. He can only become an animal or better said, creature of realities only through the mediation of experience as concretized by his experiences. But in spite of being a creature, man himself is a creator. His life vocation consists in being a creator, a finite creator. Aristotle would call him “rational animal”; we prefer calling him “the creative creature.” Maybe this is an appropriate way of defining man who always seems to escape definition and prognostication. Perhaps, we could substitute the overused term of “rationality” for “creativity.” Creativity implies a bundle of possibilities which necessarily entails defying all kinds of prognostication.

To be creative necessarily involves daring challenge the mystery. This is the challenge of life by which mere existence is transformed to life. To exist, as already said, means just to be there. But to live is more than that. To live is to be there for somebody; it is being important for somebody. It is not just a matter of experiencing, but it is being experienced. Experiencing, as we have previously stated, is proper only to man. Anything under the sun and even beyond it could be experienced. God could be experienced; the same thing with animals, plants and inanimate objects. To be experienced is to be part of the life of somebody. Experiencing is the continuous way, process or struggle to transform one's being there into a being there for somebody which is tantamount to being important. Later on, the philosophical or to be more specific, metaphysical implications of experiencing will be discussed with more detail.

But what is this mystery? It is the mystery of existence in itself that seeks to be life. In its own seeking to be life, it becomes its own mediator in order to become its very end.<sup>4</sup> It unfolds itself into many moments, into various instances which are innumerable. These mo-

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<sup>4</sup> It is curious to note that the Greek word *Mysterion* has been translated into Latin as *Sacramentum*. A Sacrament in Catholic Theology is necessarily a means, a mediation. It is Christ continuously mediating between God and Man. Christ, of course, is the primordial sacrament. The Church is His Sacrament. The Seven Sacraments is

ments reveal the roles played whether it be origin, mediator and end, but these roles need not be exactly pinpointed in time although of course it takes place in time constantly being assimilated in order to be narrated as history. Philosophy comprehends existence as a constant unfolding of a principle into its moments, into its instances. *Experience* is the primary category of existence in as much as it is the way, process and struggle to be life. It unfolds itself into many instances or many moments which we could denominate as experiences or better yet, *experiential moments*.

This mystery is what metaphysics is all about. This mystery is the quid of philosophizing. Metaphysics literally means "beyond or what is after the Physics." Originally, it was a mode of classification generally attributed to Andronicus of Rhodes when he was cataloguing the works of the Peripatetic. Later on it acquired another meaning: a treatise which studies concepts or realities beyond the physical level such as being or universal notions that transcend the individualities or particularisms of physical objects such as substance, accidents, transcendental concepts, etc.

Metaphysics is man struggling like Jacob, who merited the name of Israel, with the mystery. It is not letting go of the mystery even when it is already daybreak. It is the desire to see the face of the mystery: not necessarily to unravel it, but to see its face, to discover it and dare ask for a blessing. This very blessing is the blessing of being man, the metaphysician, the struggler with the mystery, with the transcendental mystery in which his reality is unfolded in such a way that he finds himself deeply immersed in the mystery. Thus, the mystery has all along been familiar. It is that which makes man a reality capable of experiencing the reality that surrounds him in as much as it is real and at the same time, he experiences his own reality in as much as it is real.<sup>5</sup>

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Christ mediating in His Church after his particular historicity. I have especially taken into account the work of L-M Chauvet, *Symbole et Sacrament. Une relecture sacramentelle de l'existence chrétienne*. (Paris, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> The great theologian K. Rahner, using heideggerian terms, affirmed that "man's basic and original orientation towards absolute mystery, which constitutes his fundamental experience of God, is a permanent existential of man as a spiritual subject." *Foundations of Christian Faith*. (New York, 1994), 52. We could say at this outset that man is a spiritual subject, a spiritual reality for he tends to what transcends him, to

Perhaps it is time that we give a new meaning to the word “transcendental.” We usually understand this term as something that goes beyond, that crosses over or the sense given to it by Kant. Transcendental means what is important, what is worth considering. We all have many experiential moments, but we only pay attention to those moments which we consider important, significant, vital. We immortalize these moments with great technological innovations or inventions in works of plastic, performing and literary arts.

What is transcendental is indeed something that goes beyond our individualities, particularities, idiosyncrasies and the like. It is something that is common in the universal sense. We all have common character traits, defects, etc. But this commonality can truly become universal in the sense that these elements or features constitute mankind’s greatest aspirations, hopes, dreams in order to fulfill himself as truly man, as truly alive, as truly a finite creator, as truly a creative creature. This is what is truly transcendental. It elevates us. It makes us aspire to go higher or to go beyond our superficialities. By going up or beyond us which is tantamount to the cognizance that reality is something more than what we are or what we think. Thus it is truly beyond us, but also truly within us because as the Jesuit poet Gerald Manley Hopkins would say, it is an integral part of our “inscape.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, it opens up a profound space within our-

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what is profound. “Spirit” does not only mean what is immaterial. It is something more: it is that which unites making man whole, integral in the sense that it elevates him to what he really is in as much as he is real.

<sup>6</sup> We think that Hopkins’s beautiful poem “Pied Beauty” has not only captured the interiorizing process, but also affirms the autonomous value of realities. This autonomy that could be interiorized as “inscapes, is the foundation of the experientiability of realities. Said experientiability makes the realities real.

“Glory be to God for dappled things—  
 For skies of couple—colour as bridled cow;  
 For ros-moles all ins tipples upon trout that swim:  
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches wings;  
 Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough;  
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.  
 All things, counter, original, spare, strange;  
 Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
 He father s-forth whose beauty is past change:  
 Praise him.”

selves and it is within this profound space that we accept it, assimilate it and integrate it in our very own existence in its process to be life. But this transcendental and yet internal, immanent or profound mystery is like a bull that must be grasped, held at its horns in the great spectacle which is called life. Life is an event with witnesses, whereas existence is plain solitude because it does not matter. This same mystery can also be likened to a live, slippery fish when held by the hands. It is a mystery because it somewhat escapes us, it is like sand that passes through our hands, it slips from our grasp. This is the difficulty. Its reality is biting therefore we truly know it. We truly experience it.

A mystery is something experienced. It can be at first glance tremendous, fascinating, frightening, but at the same time it could be familiar, even playful.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it is not that unknown piece of rock under the Philippine Deep or that extraterrestrial alien or planet that we have never heard of. What we usually deem to be reality is something within our experiential reach. Somehow this attitude may diminish the dimension of mystery which our lives have to contend with.

Mystery is the fact that we experience. Mystery is the fact that we experience reality or realities in the unfolding of each moment. Thus, in general, it would be better to say: *All reality is real in as much as it is experientiable*. This, I believe, is the most precise formulation of the reality of the mystery in our lives. To be a metaphysician means to struggle with the mystery, the mystery of the experientiable. A mystery commences as a question then it slowly develops into something that involves our totality which could only be summed up by the word "experientiability."

To be experientiable means to be open to our experiential reach, i.e., to be effectively experienced in one way or the other. This, to my mind, is the true metaphysical tradition that must persist in every philosophy if philosophy will continue to make sense and will persists in being that activity that will be the basis of our making sense of our existence in this world. The process of making sense of our existence in this world (since the world interests us in as much as we find ourselves in it) is the task of converting existence into life. It is an experiential

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<sup>7</sup> Cfr. R. Ferriols, *Pilosopiya ng Relihiyon*. (Quezon City, 1995), 8ss.

way. Thus, nothing per se is nonsense or meaningless. Everything, including the most abstract notions and the totally separated realities from the world, are all open to meaning. They are all open to the constant possibility to be experienced. Metaphysics is the task of bridging this grasp via language, since language is the current of experience in as much as it inevitably flows to its expression. Metaphysics eliminates the notion of absurdity, the notion of meaninglessness or senselessness. But in order to carry this out it must liberate itself from the bias that it is in itself meaningless or senseless and therefore, impossible. The only way to undertake this task is experiential in nature.

The destiny of experience consists in being expressed in one way or the other in language. Experience, since it is mediation, will find ways to stretch the possibilities of language even to the point of challenging the conventionally imposed limits which reach only up to ineffability. Metaphysics could never accept solipsism. Experience is not a solipsistic event. It is a shared event because of its sheer universality. Even when ineffability proves to be undefeatable, then philosophy would at least point out the reality thus pointing out the way to experience it in as much as it is real and therefore still open to the possibility of being expressed-only at a later time.

To be a creator necessarily means having the capability of experiencing. Creativity consists in constantly confronting the mystery by making or drawing meaning out of the nothingness of meaninglessness. The drawn meaning may never be exhaustive in the sense of solving the mysteries, but at least it is significant, it is important, it can be integrated into life. Only problems are solved, mysteries are meant to be lived by and lived through. Life is, after all, a commentary to the Mystery we all have to live. Experience makes possible this commentary because it is the unfolding of the text of life.

## **2. From Ontology to Metaphysics**

Ontology, a term invented by Glocenius before the Dogmatic era of Wolff, has earned a respectable reputation. It is interchangeably used with the term Metaphysics and rightly so if Metaphysics is taken in the Greek or Aristotelian Sense of the word which runs probably from Parmenides passing through Plato then Aristotle then towards contemporary times. In our century, Heidegger reproached Western Metaphysics for its Ontotheology. He advocated a return to Ontology,

or the study of being as such, the logos or the discourse about the being of beings.

Is Metaphysics the same as Ontology? Yes and no. Yes, if we are to take what is truly metaphysical, or what is truly mysterious—in the sense we have already discussed it—as that which deals with being. In other words, if we equate the metaphysical with the question of ON or ENS then Metaphysics is the same as Ontology. Also in our century, Levinas opposed Ontology or the study of Being. He called Ontology “Totality” and opposed it with “Infinity.” Another title of his book is also as radical “Otherwise than Being.” He was clearly opposing heideggerian ontology. But, I consider Levinas as a very metaphysical thinker. He is a profound thinker who wanted to penetrate the mystery of reality. He tried to overcome Ontology with Ethics. But Levinasian Ethics, from whatever angle, is an Ethicized Ontology.

What about the orientals (in the conventional-geographical sense of the word) with their notion of *Atman-Brahman*, *Tao*, *Rta*, *Tien*, *El-Shadday*, *Yaweh*, *Ruah*, etc. Man, althroughout the ages, has been in search for the absolute. He called this absolute with different names. Plotinus would call it *hn* or *One*, John Scotus Eriugena calls it *Natura*, Spinoza terms it as *Monad*, Schelling calls it *Absolut*, Hegel would render the same as *Geist*, Schopenhauer is remembered for his *Will*, Bergson for his *Elan Vital*, Marx for his *Matter*<sup>8</sup>, etc. This very absolute is the most profound and fundamental mystery of reality.<sup>9</sup>

This is what metaphysics is all about: the search for that transcendental *grund* of our experiences given that experience makes possible that what is real is in effect a reality or a group of realities. Ontology is only the “scientification” of metaphysics, wherein experienced

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<sup>8</sup> Etymologically speaking Marx's notion of Matter is not metaphysical in the sense that it does not go beyond the physical level. But his thinking can be considered as metaphysical, because it seeks the absolute, it is in search of the profound mystery. Undoubtedly there are hegelian undertones here.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger with his notion of Ontotheology applied to Western Metaphysics from Plato to Nietzsche and especially thinking of Hegel would say that even the notion of absolute is identified with God who does not fall within the bounds of philosophical reflection. The heideggerian critique of the Ontotheological nature of Western Metaphysics is not just a critique of God, but rather a critique to an ontology of substance which is equivalent to a merely ontic philosophy. It falls short of a genuine ontological philosophy.

reality is made knowable, accessible to man's idiom by the very foundation of all idioms, which at the same time translates the very nature of reality: being. All idioms, in as much as they translate the linguistic nature and structure of reality, are grounded in being, in the affirmation of what is. This affirmation effectively constructs the symbol of what is.

Zubiri, for example and in my understanding, already went beyond the merely ontological when he posited "realitas," "realidad" or reality as that which is prior to being. Ontology can or is only a part of what is metaphysical. We consider the ontological traditions mainly the Greeks, Latins and that advocated by Heidegger as somewhat myopic. Being, perhaps, is the greatest discovery of humankind. But being is only a part of an even greater reality which is reality itself. And the only mode or mediation of access to this reality is experience. Experience effectively is the very same reality in its mediating process. Whatever is real is experientiable and vice-versa.

Ontology is only a moment, a privileged moment of an even greater spectrum which, for lack of a name since this is truly fresh, we can call the metaphysical. Being is that moment of reality in as much as it is known, in as much as it is accessible to idiomatic expression. Reality is its own language. Reality is language and this language becomes mediative through experience. It is only from this mediative mode that we can know reality and express it in our various idiomatic expressions whether it be in English, Spanish, French, German, Latin... or even Greek which is commonly held to be the originary language of being. Greece was the matrix of what was to become "western civilization."

Being is that first thing which is known. This is due to the fact that being is the most universal, comprehensible, indefinable and even ineffable concept. A concept is the intellectual grasp of reality in order to classify it with the intention of communicating it idiomatically. There is truly a big difference, to our mind, between language and idiom. Language is primordial. It is the very current of reality being and becoming its very own reality by being real. Within the latin scholastic tradition, the notion of transcendentals developed. Transcendental properties such as *res*, *aliquid*, *unum*, *bonum*, *verum*,<sup>10</sup> *pulchrum*, etc. are

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<sup>10</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q.1, a.1.

nothing else but concepts which are equivalent to the word *ens* or being, but express notions that the word being by itself does not express.

Ontology is truly a Philosophy of Knowledge which basically includes: the capacity to know (Gnoseology), the process of knowing (Noetics), the verification of knowing by means of a criteria of truth (Criteriology). In fact, the perfection of a Philosophy of Knowledge would be its realization into an Epistemology or a discourse on certain, verified and true knowledge. *Επιστημη* is translated as “scientia” or science: certain, verified and true knowledge. Philosophy of Science has really gone a long, long way but it is in certainty, verifiability and truthfulness does it have its foundation. Aristotle by starting his immortal treatise whose project he called: *Προτη φιλοσοφια* and *Θεολογια* (which we call Metaphysics) with the famous lines: “All men by nature desire to know”<sup>11</sup> was already announcing or systematizing for the first time the ontological nature of Greek Metaphysics. Better said, Greek Metaphysics was purely ontological.

But ontology is not everything. The totality of reality cannot be reduced to human knowledge. Reality is ever close and yet so distant; it is graspable and yet slippery just like a mystery that is known but not captured, understood but never solved. Ontology could be limiting. It could promise “Totality” because a thing is known in itself-though Kant with his sharp distinction between *Noumena* and Phenomena-would question this a little-but it could never promise “Infinity” or that boundless world of realities which is also the borderless realm of experience.<sup>12</sup> The key is openness and not limitation. Knowledge, following the “normal” noetic route of cognition, is only a stepping stone to experience. Experience, in the long run, is in itself knowledge but not in the “normal” noetic route or not in the ontological sense.

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<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, 980a. I am following the translation of W. D. Ross in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation. Vol. II Ed. by J. Barnes. (Princeton, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> Much as we appreciate this insistence of Levinas of overcoming Ontology, yet we cannot accept his ethical recourse. What is ethical is still the result or fruit of a knowledge of being though we disguise this being as an other. There is still a primacy of the notion of existence. Levinas' efforts are indeed laudable, but somewhat incomplete or still shortsighted for comfort.

Here in the Philippines, many of our elder philosophers have been fascinated with metaphysics, but in the ontological sense. Some scholars would dismiss that the Asian Psyche is bereft of a metaphysics; whereas others would be so euphemistic by affirming that there is at least an implicit metaphysics. But the fact is there is no developed, textualized metaphysics. This is due mainly to the fact that the metaphysical richness of our idioms have not yet been fully exploited.

Idioms (which we commonly call language) are “not simply... means of communicating information –about the weather or any other subject. (They) are also... very important means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people.”<sup>13</sup> Here, the key word is relationships. With what do we people normally relate? Usually concrete objects or things we have at hand (Zuhanden) or people who are also at hand. But, what is at hand is not all that is. Ontology or the study of being as being is in itself an invitation to relate ourselves with being since: it is the most universal (or is the most common factor that unites all things we have at hand), at the same time it is the most comprehensible in spite of its being undefinable. This is, we must concede, the origin of all analogies: both of attribution and proportionality.<sup>14</sup>

Filipino Scholars have discoursed on foreign metaphysical trends and have also proposed ingenious translations of being into our vernacular: “Mayroon” (there is in the sense of availability or having), “Bagay” (thing) or “Pagkanandiyan” (being there or presence or existence). Their attempts to render “being” in Filipino are indeed laudible for some. However, it can be noticed that such equivalents do not really spell or translate being in as much as it is understood in the Greek-Latin or Western Ontological Tradition. We Filipinos do not have any ontological tradition. Our psyche does not seek the knowledgeability of what is there or of reality. We are merely concerned with experiencing, with “karanasan” instead of dominating scientifically and techni-

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<sup>13</sup> P. Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics. An Introduction to Language and Society*. (Middlesex, 19839, 15.)

<sup>14</sup> From the Thomistic tradition we have taken into account: T. de Vio Cardinal Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and The Concept of Being*. E. A. Bushinski and H. Koren trans. (Pittsburgh, 1953); S. Ramirez, *De Analogia*. 4 Vols. (Madrid, 1970).

cally reality in ontological terms. We are devoid of innate facilities to ontologize and construct ontological systems of thought.

Thus, the proposed translations do fall short. Taken in themselves they do not express totally what the term “being” implies in itself. They cannot even be considered as transcendentals. “Mayroon”<sup>15</sup>, “Bagay” and “Pagkariyan” or “Pagkanandiyan”<sup>16</sup> speak of concrete objects, objects within reach or objects that are experientiable. Thus, we Filipinos speak in experientiable terms and yes, we are capable of metaphysics because we are capable of transcending of reaching out for the mystery or the “mahiwaga.” We are capable of speaking of what is true, of what is real “katotohanan,” of God “Diyos” or “Poong Maykapal.” Likewise, we are capable not really of ideas, but of “spirit” or ideals. Thus, we have the indigenous notion of “diwa.” “Diwa” can also be translated as ideas, but not the abstracted ones from the phantasm as described by Aristotle in *De Anima*. In the same manner, we also distinguish “utak” or brain from “isip” thinking, intelligent faculty; thus our indigenous vocabulary is enriched with words such as “kaisipan” or thought or product of the “isip,” “nag-iisip” or process of thinking, “palaisipan” or object of thought or thinking, etc. A Filipino Scholar also explored our notion of “bob” or interiority or the profound dimension of the person.<sup>17</sup> Allow me then to make this inquiry: were these translations or conceptualizations based on relationality-by their translators or conceptualizers? Only in relationality could there be mediation.

Metaphysics, since it reaches out to the transcendental mystery in order to experience it, has to be a mediating activity. It usually, and in a typical western fashion, starts with Ontology—in other words it begins in an analogical fashion. Being becomes the paradigm of similarity and beings that of difference. Being is ON, HEN is one: the one that underlies plurality. Beings is not one, but many the plurality, the

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<sup>15</sup> Cfr. R.J.Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*. (Quezon City, 1991); Various Authors, *Pagdiriwang sa Meron. A Festival of Thought Celebrating Roque J. Ferriols, S.J.* (Quezon City, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. E.S. Quito, “Ang Pilosopiya sa Diwang Pilipino” in *A Life of Philosophy. Festschrift in Honor of Emerita S. Quito*. (Manila, 1990), 200-264.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. A. Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* (Quezon City, 1991).

unfolding of the one. Analogy affirms: a) the participation of the many in the one or its causal and conceptual reduction to the one; and b) the autonomy of the many and the legitimacy of this autonomy wherein the one becomes just one of the many. Hence the axis of analogy is the antinomy: similarity-difference and could only be expressed metaphorically. Idioms are the metaphORIZATION (literally “crossing over”) of ideas or universals. These ideas or universals are the capability of reality in its unfolding in realities. These realities mediate themselves as something real in ideas or universals which could only be mediated through analogy.

We Filipinos are a mediating people or a people who mediate. We mediate or make experientially accessible what is transcendental through concrete objects, through particular instances, through “*karanasan*” or experience. I am convinced that the notion of experience is the key. It is the key to a genuine metaphysics, not that previous metaphysics are not genuine but we believe that the role and importance of experience has not been reflected upon sufficiently. It has not also been accorded its rightful place in metaphysical reflections.

Being may be the most universal concept. But concepts limit. Concepts are limited to what the greeks call  $\mu\mu\eta\sigma\iota\sigma$  or imitation, representation. By representing, we limit, we classify. This is the idiomatic starting point. Idioms categorize, speak about, or accuse whether orally or in writing.<sup>18</sup> Thus, there are limitations. Being is the manner by which things are known. It is the mode by which things *extra mentem* are accommodated into the knowing faculty in order to be expressed idiomatically if the need arises. Being is the modality by which things *extra mentem* are converted into *ideas*. Ideas are paradigms: Plato assigned them to a separate and transcendental world whereas Aristotle placed them in the mind, in the intellect, in the nons. *Mimesis* is indicative of a conformist way of knowing. Ultimately, its criteriology is based on conformity or accommodating ones self to what is *extra mentem* in as much as the thing is *intra mentem*.

But there is something more than just *mimesis*.<sup>19</sup> There is also

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<sup>18</sup> We have to admit that the reflections of M. Foucault have been of help for us on these subject matters. Cfr. *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. (New York, 1974).

<sup>19</sup> *Mimesis*, aside from being limited and limiting, is also imprisoning. It is not

what we term as poiesis or creativity, the capability to create fiction. *Poiesis* is not fleeing from bitter reality into an imaginary world. Fiction is simply narrated truth that could be based on an actual mimesis of reproductive or conformist historicity, but which essentially transcends this kind of historicity and creates its own. Fiction does not seek to accommodate itself, but rather it accommodates. It does not seek to reproduce, but to create or rather to re-create from within. Mimesis is inevitably the necessary point of departure of Poiesis. We all live in an objective world; our creativity does not take place in a vacuum. We all start imitating that realm in which we find ourselves and we appropriate of it to recreate it from within.

Creativity flows from a lived experience or reality that is lived, assimilated. It is a reality that has been given. Human creativity is not *ex nihilo*, but parts from what is given, from what is found, discovered within the mimetic ambiance. Creativity or poiesis seeks to go beyond and at the same time go deeper or to penetrate the realms which mere ontological conformity and representation does not reach. It seeks to discover not new realities or things, but rather a profundization or deeper cognizance of our experiences of said realities... to discover its richness, its otherness, its hidden meanings. Only creativity, given that human creativity is only a participation in the Supreme Act of Creation proper to Him who can create *ex-nihilo* (as the scholastics would put it), could lead us to new experiential bounds beyond mere imitation, mere conformity, mere slavery to forms, to what is given, to what is there.

Creativity is not an act of rebellion, but it is a cry for a better world, for a world not just for existing but above all for living. It is a constant cry for a free world wherein creativity is always given a chance. Creativity can only have its roots in a given experience necessarily and inevitably taking place in a mimetic world or the world of mere exist-

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capable of "letting go" or respecting the autonomy of the other. The greatest expression of the autonomy of the other is precisely creativity or POIESIS. Mimesis is the expression of a conformist epistemology which has so far been the most dominant epistemological model together with "coherentism." It is only good as a starting point. Conformity should always give in to "letting be." This necessarily implies an ascetic process which we could term as "detachment" in the negative sense, but "serenity" or better yet, "acceptance" in the positive way.

ing. But it reaches out to a world for living. This is the path of metaphysics. Ontology is concerned with existing. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is concerned with living via the experiential way, the way of *experiencing reality* in as much as it is *real*.<sup>20</sup>

Existence is in itself a deep question. It is the primordial question that deeply hurts the questioning and probing ego of man, specially when questioning opens up the unfathomable abyss of mortality and what is beyond the moment of death for the one who crosses the bar. All questions hurt because they seek to penetrate and burn through security blankets and covers of a silence that seeks to hide what should be exposed to broad daylight. Likewise the skins of our conventionally imposed (cultural) sensibilities are scorched. Questions are an un-veiling and un-forgetting moment. This is what the greeks would call *alqhia*. Questions are truly the moment of truthy Existence is in itself a condemnation to be a question without the desire of being asked. It is not the questioning that matters, but that the questioned be answered or at least the very attempt to respond to the question. This very process is the process, the way of experience.

Questioning is hurling oneself to the reality. It is being alone in taking an unsafe road, making a plunge to what is unknown and, from

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<sup>20</sup> This expression is not entirely ours, but Zubiri's. In 1980 while commenting on his first important work *Sobre la Esencia* (About Essence) which appeared in 1962, Zubiri writes that "philosophy is not a philosophy nor is the objectivity of entity; it is not phenomenology nor ontology, but it is metaphysics, the philosophy of what is real in as much as it is real." Cfr. "Prólogo a la traducción inglesa" in *Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*. (Madrid, 1987), 16. Zubiri can be considered as this century's great metaphysician, while Heidegger with whom he studies is the great ontologist. However, Zubiri's metaphysics is still somewhat very ontological. If Heidegger proposed "Das Sein des Seinendes" as the *grund* of the multiplicity of beings or entities, Zubiri's notion of "reality" plays the same role with regards to this multiplicity. In other words, Heidegger and Zubiri played the game of the Ancient Greeks starting especially with Parmenides and Heraclitus all the way to Plato and Aristotle: the game of the One and the Many. Heidegger and Zubiri looked for a One "Sein" or "Realidad" as that *grund* or foundational, universal, abstract, comprehensible principle. These notions, in our opinion, do not differ from the husserlian Transcendental Ego. This is not surprising since both Heidegger and Zubiri made use of the husserlian phenomenological approach. We do not play the same game. We accept multiplicity, the multiplicity and momentariness of reality. Reality is plural. Its being real is its quality, the quality that makes it a reality. And as a reality it PARTICIPATES in the reality which is real in itself. The notion of PARTICIPATION is the key to understand our notion of realities in as much as they are real and the quality of being real is only possible in experience.

the vantagepoint of asking, unsafe. One must go beyond the question and enter into its profound depths, into its labyrinth like forests and meadows. In order to go beyond the question one must primarily realize that it is the very same question posed to us, which we must all answer. That way there can be no solitude. The question in itself is solitude. But, we realize that there is solidarity. At first, solidarity would manifest itself as pity and compassion. But this is the *commencement of that journey wherein the question is not just asked, but that answers are being searched for*. It is when existing ceases from being a solitary question. It is the start of that slow, rambling, somewhat dragging process wherein existing is constantly being transformed into life. In living, the question is lived because it is no longer throwing oneself to the unknown, but it is exploring together not an *unknown* region but an *unfamiliar* place that could somewhat be homey, comfortable, special and warm. The world is a big *house*. It is the house of the sheltered and unsheltered alike. Experience is the mode by being its own mode in transforming the house into a *home* for all who dwell in the world.

Truly, there is an abysmal difference between ontology and Metaphysics. To opt for the latter, is to choose the truly plentiful. It is desiring the abundance of reality instead of the momentary totality and truly limitedness of ontology. Ontology need not be prescindend of, but it should be subordinated to Metaphysics. It could be, in many cases, an effective tool to introduce, to initiate a neophyte into Metaphysics. In this sense, Ontology plays a pedagogical, better said a mystagogical role. Mystagogy, from its etymological origins, precisely means conduction or initiation into the mystery without exhausting the mystery. It is letting the one initiated experience the experience itself of the mystery.

Mystagogy is not the end, but the way, the process, the steps that must be taken. It is not the object of philosophizing, though because of the unfoundedness of various philosophical tasks, it would be necessary to understand what mystagogy in order to serve the basis for a valid, legitimate and honorable philosophical project.

### 3. The Way of Philosophy and philosophy as a Way

Experience, in as much as it is mediation, is a process. Process in order to fulfill itself as process must create its own modality. And this

modality of process is what we call way, path. It may be straight, long, winding with many curves, twists and turns but it is a way, a path. Trodding upon it means at first glance progressing because distances are covered. However, it may not necessarily be progress depending on the point of view adopted or whether the one traveling is really approaching the goal. The way, the path is in itself an invitation. It is pure openness. It indicates directions without forcing anyone to trod upon. This is the true essence of mediation: it consists in teaching, showing, directing, conducting but always respectful of autonomy. The way in itself is not yet the journey, but it is the supreme mediation for the journey to take place.<sup>21</sup>

It is the foundation, the possibility of the journey. It is laying the path for the journey. This is mediation. Directing, conducting, leading, accompanying inevitably and eventually would mean not making possible, but giving in to the autonomous possibility which at the same time is tantamount to laying the foundations. Because of its respect for autonomy, it is not initiating the journey nor is it undertaking the same; it is, as already said, giving in or providing, letting go, opening paths for the journey.

Philosophy, then, is the mediation of experience. Mediation must be understood in terms of what has already been explained above. Hegel's masterpiece, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, was meant to be a Science of Experience and consequently an Introduction to his system.<sup>22</sup> Hegel's work was a Science of the Subject of Experience. This very same subject is a self-conscience that aims for absolute knowledge. It goes out of itself, in a creative exteriorization process, in order to end up with ones self. It always goes back to itself in a reflective act. This is Hegel's way of relating experience and science wherein science is pure conformity, education of subject and object, of knower and known wherein the knower goes back to himself, of reality and concept in a way that spells Absoluteness. Hegel's System, which is the great certainty of Absolute Knowledge via Experience, is truly one of the great-

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<sup>21</sup> The German word for EXPERIENCE is "Erfahrung", meaning "journey," "travel."

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. M.N. Foster, *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*. (Chicago, 1998). I am particularly indebted in understanding Hegel to my Professor M. Alvarez, *Experiencia y sistema. Introducción al sistema de Regal*. (Salamanca, 1978).

est achievements of man's speculative powers. We only have words of admiration for Hegel although his system somewhat dissolves the experience in reason.

What we are trying to sketch is something different and, definitely, less assuming than Hegel's gargantuan speculative prowess. Experience is mediation, but in spite of this the experience is fulfilled as the end in itself. In other words, it is its own mediation in its aim to fulfill itself. As mediation *in sensu stricto* it is only a way being a way towards itself, but it does not seek to end in going back to itself. It seeks to reach out, to go out, to explore the realm of autonomy without going back to itself. It is not like the journey of Odysseus that seeks to go back to his homeland, but that of Ruth. Ruth goes to that unknown, willing to accept anything but not blindly. She always had this certainty, the certainty of experience of experiencing that which is real in realities that at first seem strange and new to her, but are actually homely, comfortable, familiar because of her mother in law, Naomi. This is the openness to mystery. "Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you! for wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my god. Wherever you die I will die, and there be buried."<sup>23</sup> Here there are no promises, unlike in the theophany to Abraham wherein the stars were the signs of the promise. In the case of Ruth, it is undertaking a road that is not yet there, but a road that still needs to be constructed, to be mediated. But all along she had this certainty.

Said certainty is said to be the foundations of what science is. Science is certain, demonstrable knowledge. Certainty may be achieved via conformity or adequation, but certainty does not end there. True certainty is manifested, effectively experienced only in a path like that of Ruth wherein there are no promises, but a certainty even at the initiation of the journey, of the adventure. It is only in trodding upon an unknown route wherein there are no promises wherein the initial certainty is truly and experientially confirmed. There must be no going back to the to ones self like Odysseus, but rather one must go on constructing the road, the way. It is only in this way that there be true progress in the journey. Like Ruth we will only find ourselves as we go along for the paths we take are irreversible; they cannot be repeated

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<sup>23</sup> Ruth 1:16-17.

although they could be recalled, remembered or reminisced. It is in getting there that we truly confirm. And in confirming we find ourselves enriched. The true mark of experience is enrichment. Enrichment is the fulfillment of experience as mediation in which experience becomes the end of itself. Each experiential moment is an enrichment in terms of reality in as much as it is real. Fulfillment consists in the confirmation that reality in as much as it is real is experientiable. At the start of the journey, just like Ruth, this is the great certainty even though there are no promises. Experience is in itself certainty, but it makes no promises although it is, in as much as it is enrichment, fulfillment.

The way of experience is the way of Philosophy. In the fulfillment of experience takes place the very fulfillment of Philosophy. Philosophy is in itself an experience, but it is an experience that mediates experience. Mediation, in an Experiential Philosophy –and all Philosophy should be experiential and all Experience must be submitted to philosophical scrutiny– is a process of the self fulfilling itself by itself; if ever other instruments, tools, modes are to be used these should be assimilated experientially by the self. Therefore this tool, this book, this pen, this sheet of paper, this Macintosh Performa 5200 CD is no longer a mere tool, book, pen, sheet of paper or computer. By being assimilated or integrated they form part of the whole experience, at least in its experiential moment. This process just cannot help itself but become a development of sorts. In this development, there are moments of tension; better said, these moments are by constitution tense. Tension is not the confrontation of opposites that evade their catalization and synthesis. Rather, tension is a “not yet” with reference to perfection. A “not yet” with the certainty of fulfillment, of perfection.

Perfection is the end-goal of the process; upon reaching the end it does not necessarily mean that there is perfection. But an end is not fully an end if it is not perfection. We seek therefore the perfection of Philosophy. The mode can only be experiential. Likewise, the perfection of experience can only take place in philosophy.

#### 4. Directions

But where will all this lead us? Hopefully it will direct us towards making sense of life. Life is what really matters. *Sharing the*

*same experiential paradigm or model means sharing the same way of life or at least, it could lead to this.*

The philosophical task of presenting a model of comprehending reality has truly gone a long way. But has it been consciously pursued is in itself another story. What has been certainly pursued is the conscious use of philosophy for a particular motive or purpose such as the desire of emancipation (contemporary critical thought), of linguistic understanding (contemporary analytic thought), comprehension (contemporary hermeneutical thought), etc.

In other words, philosophy has been consciously transformed into an ideology-the “aggressing” of ideas in order to move, shape and transform in the Marxian sense the world. Perhaps since the days of Nietzsche, the notion of “overcoming” has been the “in” thing among various philosophies in their attempts of outdoing each other. This is perhaps because many of these philosophies have not outgrown the hatching stage, i.e., the subjective stage of each philosophy. The end resulted has been the transformation of philosophy into a personality contest wherein name and fame have taken over the truth. This is the great illness of contemporary philosophy. Contemporary thought has unfortunately given up the truth for the thinker or thinkers.

Perhaps “sharing” in the sense expounded previously can give us the direction that we are looking for now that we run the risk of driving in into that philosophical dead-end with a solid wall. This wall is that which prevents present day philosophers from receiving with open hands the creativity necessary for philosophical originality.

Philosophy is a kind of research; it can only be undertaken through research which includes various processes such as thinking, reflecting, criticizing, data gathering, synthesizing and documenting. As the result of research, its findings must be shared not in a dogmatic and imposing manner, but in an interrelational manner thus making the findings truly dialogal in character. This is the first step in overcoming the subjectivity in all beginning philosophies which, because of their impressive erudition, language and systems, are taken, more often than not, as mature philosophies.

The only aim of philosophy is that people would share the same way of life. This goes beyond dogmatic impositions, influences and all forms of manipulation. It also destroys the various idols of which Bacon once spoke. It will also help us clearly see the light without fear

and without blushing like that of the freed prisoner in the Platonic Allegory of the Cave.

This does not mean that we give up our philosophical past. I will not look at them as a set of errors as Ortega did, but as fragments of the great, broad and limitless truth of which whatever we can achieve on our own is but just a fragment. We too will attempt to transfer this fragment to the level of language battling the aporia of ineffability. But if we bring together past and present, our chances of expanding the future will be better wherein the fragments will form a better picture, a more definable and aesthetically pleasing, at least, mosaic of the truth of our reality.

## 5. Truth

Truth is what we are all after. We must first of all be conscious of its broadness, of its limitless nature-impossible for us to grasp all together especially for a particular generation of thinkers and cultural workers.

The history of the world has shown us the power of the truth. Truth viewed as power, or at least inseparable from it, has been the prevailing viewpoint. Truth as power as more often than not been identified with objectivity, i.e., the truth that is not made, but just appears or manifests itself phenomenologically. This has been the truth that has made systems work, that has walked along the corridors of power, influence and force. At the end of the last century, truth took a turn: it wished to discover its subjective side wherein imitation or mimesis was to be overcome with poetizing or creation or *poiesis*. In both cases, truth has been reduced into what is criteriological, i.e., verifiable or verified.

We cannot change the truth-neither must we attempt to do it-, but we can adopt a viewpoint. But previous to the act of adopting a viewpoint, we have to build a solid buttress as to how we can or better said, must conceptualize the truth.

Truth is that which is experientiable and vice-versa. Truth is the guarantee of reality in as much as it is experientiable and effectively experienced.

But the task is that truth must be narrated. We have to admit that those who took truth as *poiesis* have shown us the potential of

truth as being narrated. What is narrated is what is significant. All that is narrated, including the minor details, constructs and supports, springs forth from the experience that is considered significant. This “signification” process or act of giving importance is not selective or purely subject to subjectivity albeit the construct must also have a poetic (creative) character in order to at least have aesthetic appeal. But this “signification” process derives its true meaning or sense not from this aesthetic endproduct, but rather in its role of being a witness.

It must act as a witness to what is true: to what is experientiable in as much as it is effectively experienced, not subjectively or individually neither collectively or objectively –but totally, i.e., within the same world of experience as mediation of reality in order to be real, within the same lifestyle in as much as it is shared.

The main task of truth is letting be in *wei-wu-wei* fashion: *that of letting experience speak for itself*.<sup>24</sup>

## 6. Method

To attain all this, definitely there must be a method. Since the days of Aristotle’s *Organon*, “method” has been in vogue. Then came the *Novum Organum*. Nowadays, Literary Theory has in a special way highlighted the current trends (Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Psychoanalysis, Structuralism, Critical Thought, Marxism, etc.) as method; erroneously even scholasticism, viewed from a modern perspective, has been considered as a method. Gadamer refused to submit the quest for truth to method.

It is unfortunate that “method” has been viewed absolutely or as the end of itself in philosophizing. Honestly, most of these so-called methods have remained in the level of *theoria*; their use or application or *praxis* has not yet been discovered, exploited and manifested? It would be dreadful to affirm that innately they do not have what it takes to be of use. History has shown us that a movement based on a philosophy of emancipation has indeed transformed the world, has indeed shown us the level of *praxis* –but it has not revealed its application in as much as what philosophy is: the presentation of a model of reality as

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<sup>24</sup> Cfr. M. Ofilada Mina, “Realidad, Experiencia y Ser” in *Philippiniana Sacra* 33 (1998), 239-249.

experientiable in order to be experienced. To be experienced is to assimilate in a way of life, in that way of life desired and hoped to be shared.

Method is identified with *techné*, with “craft,” with facility. It is not “art” as we commonly understand it nowadays, but its craft, its modality to facilitate its self/realization of fulfillment. Method must never be identified with the model of reality as experientiable in order to be experienced. The latter is plain truth in as much as it allows itself to be captured, drawn, documented, described and interpreted by us as a fragment, as a piece of the great puzzle that to us is a mystery.

Philosophy, with its fragmentary contributions, seeks in dialogue not only with others or the Great Other, viewed by Husserl as the convergence of these Others or by the Personalists, but with reality in as much as it confronts us, faces us, surrounds us and becomes the very field wherein we have our being as life: as a creative process that reaches out, that opens us constantly, not only expanding horizons or fusing them, but going beyond them discovering new horizons beyond and embracing or assimilating the past horizons at the same time.

## 7. System

System is not what we are after. Modernity has taken rationality to the hilt in building rational systems or complete constructs based on rationality culminating in Hegel. Historians of philosophy have taken thinkers and their thought as systems in order to present them in an effective pedagogical manner even to the point of forgetting that the authors of great works such as the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, *Being and Time*, *Truth and Method* are men of “flesh and bones” as Unamuno would put it.

System is the highest summit of science or certain knowledge since the Illustration. System would mean the formulation or construction of a compendium.

There can be a compendium of reality, but reality escapes all compendium. In the same vein, truth escapes all forms or attempts of compendium. This does not mean that system is totally divorced from truth, but truth, even its form, is not necessarily linked to system, to compendiums. Truth, in as much as it is configured, can only be grasped in a fragmentary manner.

Experience, although it aims to widen the horizons of truth and the human grasp of the truth as the quality of reality in as much as it is real in the various realities, could only get hold of truth in a fragmentary manner. The fragment assures us of what Polanyi would call personal participation<sup>25</sup> in the truth. Said participation is necessarily experiential in its attempt to overcome the dichotomy of the universal and the particular. Likewise said participation assures us that the fragment is in itself totality.

It is not what we experience or the contents of the experience that matters. System emphasizes the contents, the elements and the moments more than anything else. What really matters is the experience in itself. Philosophy, in the light of all these, must be able to explain what it is to experience presupposing that we have a grasp, though fragmentary and necessarily finite, of what experience is and what is that experience under consideration.

Philosophy has, more often than not, wanted to submit experience to a process of demonstration thus betraying its aim of comprehending the experience or what the experience is. It has failed in narrating what it is to experience. This narrative should be the very configuration of Philosophy itself.

There is an internal necessity in Philosophy to configure its very nature into an overcoming that presupposes the reduction or process of comprehending, which presupposes description (Phenomenology) and interpretation (Hermeneutics), experience or what it is to experience. Its concern should not merely be what it means to experience, but the very experiencing in itself. If we allow description and interpretation to be the absolute end instead of the means, we run the risk of ending up like its greatest advocates: like affirming an hyper objective or transcendental and solipsistic ego in the case of phenomenology or extreme subjectivity bereft of criteriological sensibilities wherein everything, in as much it is valid, is correct, acceptable or normative in the case of hermeneutics. Not even a hermeneutical phenomenology, with all its ontological projections, can only ask the profound question as to the being of beings. The history of philosophy has shown us that only the question has been asked. The ontological question poised by herme-

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<sup>25</sup> Cfr. M. Polanyi. *Personal Knowledge. Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. (Chicago, 1962).

neutical phenomenology has not only gone beyond the question itself, but has made an excursus into the one asking the question (man) and in spite of the profound analysis on this topic, the question still remains unanswered neither the horizon as been well defined or projected because of the inevitability of mortality and the collision course of the one who asks the question with it.

History, in as much as it is the consideration of relevant experiences, must be elevated as to the necessary background of experience and therefore of Philosophy itself. In order to attain this, history must be refigured as the narrative of what it is to experience. History, in effect, is the adequate and necessary externalization of the very experiencing in itself which is the very concern of Philosophy.

History is then the testimony not of the coincidence of the universal and the particular or that the universal already contains the particular but of the personal participation, the genuine experiencing in itself.

## 8. Representations

More than just imitation, *mimesis* could be understood as representation. To represent is not just imitation. It involves creation, originality, artistry which are summed up by the word *poiesis*.

Humans have a basic mimetic character which starts from imitation. But this imitation could open up to the poetic, to the making of fables and narratives. But all this can be summed up in representation, i.e., to present, to make a presentation, a discourse, a reenactment which presupposes a personal appropriation or participation.

To represent is to present, to give, to make a discourse, to make one's point. It is then the form making process. And philosophy as much as we know it is a form or it is known in its form which has its configuration in idioms.

This is the realm of the symbolical, i.e., to point to another, to which it signifies. But this pointing should eventually be a return to oneself wherein the form returns to the content which is not multiplied or varied but the very concern of the fact of experiencing itself. In other words, the form may present itself as what it means to experience or what are the things, persons or events experienced. But a return to itself would mean the phasing out or better yet, the integration

of all these elements or moments in what it is to experience. Thus the representation is not just an imitation of what is experienced or what it means, but a projection of the experience in itself.

Therefore, representation is nothing else but the return of the experience to itself undergoing many stages and phases among them the intent to comprehend the experience in itself. This return to itself is nothing else but the enrichment of the experience in itself, not just a better understanding of the experience and its elements, but the effectivity and execution of the experience as such in as much as it is the mediation of the real as reality and wherein reality is truly real.

But this return is not a return to the same place, but to the goal. Here the experiential point of departure is reencountered as an end, a goal in the finish line.

The end result is not just a model of reality or a model of comprehending reality, but reality in itself strengthened with a new critical sense of overcoming mere ideologies, or words that close up into an egoistic warp in the name of immediate praxis, in the search for truth. Thus, there are no more various formulations of truth but the very truth in itself in its varied pieces just like a colourful mosaic. Each of these pieces could be the object of a representation. It may be fragmentary, but it assures totality! It effectively becomes the synecdoche of reality in itself. This is what experience is all about. It should be the very question that should be asked, for in it the answers could be found.

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Experience is still what is primordial for us persons. Whatever we do with it follows a certain pattern starting with our representational nature which characterizes the way we know. Knowing is our basic activity as persons. To be a person is first of all to know; then from knowing experiencing flows as the very stream of knowing and towards which knowing attains its goal. To reach the metaphysical level implies having developed one's critical acumen. But all this involves a process which is beyond the scope of the present essay. What matters right now is that in as much as we experience or are creatures of experience we find ourselves *in medias res* or in a middle ground, not necessarily in a middle way or path. Metaphysics comes later, at least in the sense of our efforts towards the construction of a transcendental thought. But we should always be cognizant that a transcendental

thought should be transcendentalizing for us in an ambiance of consciousness of the presence in our midst of that which is transcendental. Hence, truly we are creatures of experience in the wake of our existence in the Mystery that effectively becomes the Mystery of our very lives and thus becomes a calling for us to experience. For that which is transcendental is truly transcendental in as much as it is in with us, in solidarity with the situatedness in terms of *in medias res*. Only in this way does it fulfill the paradigm of only that which is experienced (and experientiable) is real and vice-versa. For whatever is experienced (and experientiable) is a reality. And the world, as expression of the situatedness of *in medias res*, is a world of realities; it makes the real manifest itself as realities that are real in as much as they are experienced, *in medias res*, not just ‘sin the world,” but that the world in as much as it is real and place of the real is *in medias res*. This presupposes the givenness which has to be acquired through efforts in order to be possessed. From here appropriation comes. And appropriation, in as much as it is an act of the self, is the key to creativity.

Wittgenstein’s closing of his *Tractatus* (which is already found in its very preface) comes to mind for occasions such as this: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.”<sup>26</sup> It is not that I am taking refuge in the ineffable, but many matters that still must be discussed are ineffable, hopefully only in the meantime. It is easy, without a doubt, to say that what matters is what has not been said. But, in metaphysics, especially in talking about experience what really matters is what we have been trying to say, in spite of all our efforts and giving our linguistic and historical limitations, but remains not unsaid, but already said in an unsatisfactory or at least implied. It takes more than reading between the lines. It is more of filling the empty spaces left empty by reading.

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<sup>26</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. by C..K. Ogden (London-New York, 1990), Prop. 7.