

iafor

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy
Volume 4 – Issue 1

IAFOR Publications

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy

Editor

Lystra Hagley-Dickinson, Plymouth Marjon University, UK

Published by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR), Japan

Executive Editor: Joseph Haldane

Managing Editor: Elena Mishieva

Publications Manager: Nick Potts

IAFOR Publications

Sakae 1-16-26-201, Naka-ward, Aichi, Japan 460-0008

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy

Volume 4 – Issue 1 – Autumn 2018

IAFOR Publications © Copyright 2018

ISSN: 2187-0624

joerp.iafor.org

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy

Volume 4 – Issue 1 – Autumn 2018

Edited by Dr Lystra Hagley-Dickinson

Table of Contents

Editor's Introduction Lystra Hagley-Dickinson	1
<i>Kabiyak ng Puso: An Inculturated Approach to Genesis' Creation of the Woman</i> Revenendo R. Vargas	3
J. G. Fichte as a Post-Kantian Philosopher and His Political Theory: A Return to Romanticism Özgür Olgun Erden	17
The Self as an Object of Criticism: Richard Rorty's Denial of the Objectivity of Truth Do Kien Trung	27
<i>IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy</i> Call for Reviewers	37

Editor's Introduction

This is the fifth issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy*. There is recent news that the Journal is now listed by DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), meaning that the publication is now widely accessible in university libraries. As this is just my second issue as editor, this news is very positive and I am committed to continue to improve the standing of the journal with the assistance of the IAFOR publishing team and my review editors (Professor Naira Danielyan; Alistair Ping; Dr. Nai-Ying Whang 雅珍).

There are three articles in the issue of which one is drawn from the Philippines, one from Turkey and one from Japan. They continue in the tradition of IAFOR to provide a platform for cross nationality and intersectional dispersal of knowledge. The issue emphasis is mainly upon the theological and the debate of religious issues as trans- and multidisciplinary in nature.

In this issue we start at the proverbial beginning of creation of humanity, **Vagras's** exploration of the concept of "interculturalism", which really speaks to man, and woman as originally unified as one rather than opposing entities based on sex and gender. He adapts the Filipino term *Kabiyak ng Pusong* tale to discuss religion and the role of equality as a given to be acknowledged rather than to be pursued. As a realist feminist, I regard this as utopian in its premise as it has not been translated in the majority of women's experiences. However, I would recommend it as a worthy read because it offers the pastoral approach as an opportunity to re-enact unity and not as one (woman or man) without the other.

Erden's, work of a rethinking of post Kantian and the work of Fichte follows. He makes a plug for the return to the morality of Fichte which comes as the other extreme of attempting to explain the nature of "man's morality". Erden's paper is a very traditional reflection on Fichte's work. Danielyan in his review states that *the article has an excellent theoretical potential for modern readers. It provokes us to think about the philosophical heritage and its influence on the further historical development including nowadays. However, to make a correct conclusion it is absolutely necessary to compare Fichte's idea of national upbringing and patriotism with human "natural right" (Fichte "Foundations of Natural Right")*. Yet his unique point is to consider a conversion of conservatism and liberality, a consideration that in itself is not radical but might be the beginnings for an explanation put towards the contemporary muddying of positions in the current Worlds' politics.

Do Kien Trung continues to raise the questions of dialogue this time using Rorty's account of Self and the language of Self. Unfortunately, he does not provide any conclusion. However, his work is included here as it renders the debate that is continuous in the field of religion ethics and law, which is the continuing dialogue and purpose of our journal.

Lystra Hagley-Dickinson
Editor

Kabiyak ng Pusong
An Inculturated Approach to Genesis' Creation of the Woman

Revenendo R. Vargas
University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

Abstract

Kabiyak ng Pusong is a popular Filipino term for spouse. It is literally translated as *half of the heart* with a strong reference to the *whole* or the *other half* (of the heart). Its relevance to marriage attempts a modest investigation on the creation of the woman *from the ribs of the man*.

The paper analyzes the creation of the woman from the rib of Adam and assesses the cultural and anthropological natures involved in the traditions of Genesis as described in both the Hebrew and Greek origins. After establishing contextual analysis in the biblical approaches from the Hebrew to the Septuagint translations, there is a need to utilize these seemingly effective means to deliver a valid exposition of doctrinal teachings.

The approach called *Inculturation*, however, limits the presentation from dissecting further into the anthropological nature of the human being but rather focuses on affecting the human conditions of marriage with the use of an already existing Filipino concept *Kabiyak ng Pusong*. The biblical "Rib of Adam" can be approached by deriving the *Kabiyak ng Pusong* as a literary substitute to the biblical text in the pastoral ministries and catechesis towards a more meaningful and culturally appropriate understanding of marriage.

Keywords: creation, rib, Inculturation, marriage, man, woman, heart, love

Introduction

The Philippines was under the Spanish regime for almost four centuries. Its Catholic identity can be traced back in 1521, the earliest recorded colonization of the country led by Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese, serving for the king of Spain coming off the island through the galleons in search for spices. The Philippines is in fact named after the King of Spain, King Philip II. Its inhabitants are called Filipinos.

With the Catholic traditions brought primarily by the cross imbibed among the natives, indoctrinations through biblical narratives have greatly influenced them, paving way towards catechism, conversion and eventual baptism to those who embraced the newly introduced Christian faith. Undeniably, prior to the arrival of the colonizers, there were already folk traditions on creation myths among the natives. These myths that shaped their faith and beliefs come in several forms, either told orally, some written, some in form of songs, rituals and dances. These traditions which were preserved over the years were transmitted orally and handed to the next generations, until modifications and adaptations transpired according to the signs of the times and cultures of the inhabitants. Some of these known traditions are kept today in the archives, while some are still being fashioned to be told, revised or rewritten, and translated to different dialects and languages.

More common folktales among the natives are centered on the story of Creation. The common interest on creation reveals further among the tribes the need to satisfy their search for meaning and of their origin as human beings. This same notion holds true in the writing of the scriptures particularly in the same subject of Creation. The Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*, aptly describes, to have “come through the contemplation and study of their beliefs who ponder these things in their hearts.” (DV 8; cf. Luke 2:19, 51). With pondering hearts, the natives were driven to reflect deeper into their own experiences and come up with their stories according to their traditions and beliefs.

A major characteristic of the common folklores is their similarity to the scriptures in terms of recognizing the power of the supernatural. Both the Scriptures and folktales adhere to the supernatural and parade a story of power, of interdependence and of redemption. Ancient Filipino myths on gods like *Laon*, *Makaobus*, *Bathala*, *Maykapal*, *Gurgurang*, *Eugpamulak*, *Manobo* and many others are just proofs of regional adulations confirming the natives’ mediation towards the supernatural.

A good example of an adaptation of the creation account is the story known as *Malakas at Maganda*. Its biblical reference is quite obvious as it followed the basic characters of the Creator who possess the power to create out of nothing, plus the male and female species. Bearing anonymous authorship, the story evolved from traditions and has been into several revisions and modifications. *Malakas at Maganda* features the origin of the human beings, individually, the man and the woman. The names are Filipino terms translated literally as “*Strong and Beautiful*”. In an online article entitled “Creation Myths Among the Early Filipinos”, the author, Francisco Demetrio, S. J. observed a development of adaptations from a single story of creation with new characters and plots being introduced according to specific themes and interpretations relevant to the context of the story. The cultural dimensions served as the focal point of tale adaptation.

Regardless of sophistication on the plot of the story where variations on adaptations may occur, it still apparently leads to the basic presumption which is the redemption of the man and the

woman. Whether the tale themes for happiness or tragedy, the issue on love and marriage always appear in the setting. At this point, the “proto-type of love and marriage taking place in the early times before the birth of mankind” (Demetrio, n.d.) has been assumed. Closer to this assumption are the implications of a unitive relationship in most aspects of ancient tales.

Overview

What folktales and Genesis have in common is they both emerge from experiences and aspirations of the people with a strong sense of a supernatural. The presumption was to fill the gap of mystery, and extends to the unending search for meaning of their existence. There are efforts in literary interpretations to discover how ancient materials were written with the corresponding literary forms. The inculturated approach is to assume and compare the minds of the ancient Filipino raconteurs the relevance of their tale from the biblical authorship. In this sense, a bridging to the limitations of scriptural writing is enhanced by the perceived cultural practices and undertakings observed in the conditions of the community.

This paper zeroes in to the contexts and culture of the biblical authors in Genesis. The Bible, being a major source in the pastoral and catechetical ministries of teaching and preaching marriage is itself a magisterial authority. Although there is a claim of inerrancy, the process of handling down have put some questions to literary issues particularly in the translation of the scriptures. There is also a perceived limitation in the context of the writing of the scriptures. Thereby, a careful investigation of the contexts have to be considered in any form of translation or interpretation. The challenge was to determine properly the descriptions of those which may not have been perceived at the biblical setting.

Naturally, limitations can exist with the current (scientific) terrain compared to how it was perceived during the biblical writing. As an example, the Genesis’ description of a world which ancient traditions believed to have situated on a plateau has finally been proven otherwise, spherically. This spherical notion has been proven in Magellan’s quest of the new world, as he quoted, “The Church says the earth is flat, but I know that it is round, for I have seen the shadow of the moon, and I have more faith in a shadow than in the Church” (Sorensen, n.d.). The same is the anthropological perception to the human being, primarily composed of the clay from the ground (Gen. 2:7), and eventually the flesh (Gen. 2:21,23) proven otherwise by science and modern technology to be more diverse and complex, proving further that there is so much in the human nature to decipher. The myths and tales on world and humanity were embraced at that time with profoundness on the meaning more than the literal interpretations. What these stories convey strongly satisfied the desire for a Divine reality within the realms of human perception. What is indispensable is the unadulterated truth that is imbibed and transmitted in history, which is of God’s love and relationship to his creation, the human beings. Today, the apparently conflicting concepts in comprehending the religious value of Creation is being complemented by science as prescribed in the Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC, 323–325; 356).¹ The accounts of myths contained in the scriptures remain salvific truths, inspiring further the succeeding generations to create a story of their own, steadfastly searching for meaning of their existence.

¹ The Catechism for Filipino Catholics teaches that Science explains *how*, and religion tells the *why* of Creation. The two rather complement in explaining the doctrine.

The use of parallel myths as a proposed approach in relating the creation story particularly that of human beings is not a literary innovation. Past centuries have already noted, such as in Plato's *Symposium* (189D–191D), synthesized by Schelkle:

Aristophanes recounts a myth with comparable motifs. Since the round sphere is the perfect shape, human beings originally existed as spheres. They were male-female beings with four feet, four hands, and two faces. They also possessed great strength and power, and sought to climb up to the heavens of the gods. In order to weaken them, Zeus determined to divide each human being into halves. With Apollo's help, he formed human beings into the two sexes that they now are. The two halves, however, strive to return to unity again. "It is from this distant epoch, then, that we may date the innate love which human beings feel for one another, the love which restores us to our ancient state by attempting to weld two beings into one and heal the wounds which humanity suffered." (Schelkle, 1979).

The comparison with that of Plato is glaring. It was a story with the concept of "cleaving"² with oddly ambiguous meanings, one connoting separation, and the other as a description to stick two separate objects. This proposed inculturated approach offers a theological discourse with the use of a popular folk culture parallel to that of Plato's philosophical discourse.

The key to this study goes by demonstrating a popular folktale. Sans biblical concepts, folktales provide the needed material in understanding the *beginnings* in the form of legends which were extensive as a literary form of appreciation and reflection to the origins. Extracting how these tales were promoted and exposed develop an understanding of its cultural background.

For catechetical basis and parallelism, Genesis 2 has to be understood with its literary genre, with a given socio-cultural and anthropological view. The mythical aspect of Genesis that holds adequate relevance to the folktales will be adapted in the study and eventually inculturate the creation of the woman for the enhancement of proper understanding and catechesis for marriage. Plato's *Symposium* (as cited above) captured the essence of this Biblical saga. While Plato's audience involves a highly engaged discourse, this modest paper parallels Plato to present an inculturated approach on the Creation of the woman, with the use of a Philippine folk culture for the married, known as the *better halves* or *Kabiyak ng Puso*.

Filipino Legends and the Story of Creation

Two legends complement the study, a Filipino folktale, *Malakas at Maganda* and an adaptation of Genesis' *Adam and Eve*. It is essential to recall that in the attempt to expound the evolution of the stories, understanding the context of the authors is important in the literary interpretation. A pattern of acknowledging the supernatural in the beginnings of human nature, with its moral order for unification is a common proto-type and ingredient in narrating stories. Whether the ancient folktales are coincidental with the Creation stories, the human drama of searching for their origin is a moral norm in the early literary writing genre.

The following tales illustrate how the first human beings, man and woman were perceived, and how stories were told.

² See *Genesis* 2:23–24.

Malakas at Maganda

The legend of *Malakas at Maganda* is one of the most popular ancient Filipino story depicting the origin of the first human beings. The legend has no recorded detail of authorship. The title was not considered original as the story evolved from different traditions deriving from the lowland tribes (Demetrio, n.d.). As a tale earlier described, the power and providence of the Creator was intrinsic and the preeminence of the human beings was less striking, yet prominent. To illustrate an example, Kevin Kalyra has the following summary of the legend:

The world had only the sea and the sky, and between the sea and the sky, flew a beautiful *kite*. Unfortunately, this lovely bird had no home, and in frustration, began to stir up the sea. The sea angrily crashed against the sky, and the sky threw pieces of land to quell the sea's anger. Then, the sky ordered the kite to live on an island.

During this exact time, the sea breeze and land breeze were married. Together they had a child, named bamboo. One day, **Bamboo** was gently floating against the sea, and accidentally struck the feet of the kite. The bird, furious at the Bamboo, pecked the innocent stick into two pieces: **one piece became a man, the other piece, a woman...**(Kalyra, n.d.)

As a common recipe in ancient folktales, the story above proceeded with a delineation of a family, though, the evolution of their descendants is not anymore told to continue bearing no significance to the study. Without discrediting the relevance, it is shortened to emphasize the origin of how the man and the woman came into being from the lateral and equal breaking of the bamboo. The names *Malakas at Maganda* were assigned to denote a deeper meaning and truth about Filipino culture: Men as strong and sturdy (Malakas) where the family depends on them, while women as beautiful, sweet, and soft (Maganda). The lateral breaking of the bamboo exemplifies equality. Its equitable entity is natural as the break lines follow the natural bamboo fibers, creating an equal split from the base to the end of the pile. With this equal breaking, the parity of the man and the woman are naturally unquestionable, a structure and belief already realized and assured at that ancient time. Note that this Filipino tale gave an almost exact description parallel to Plato's symposium as cited earlier (189D–191D).

Malakas at Maganda typifies a Filipino love story and recognition of the Divine power. The tale is evident of a Creation narrative exemplified with the divine power to create and with the doctrinal implications that also elevates the dignity of the human beings as the apex of creation. The theme of Love is a primary recipe in this tale which directs towards the couple's unity. Marriage may not always be explicit in every story for it requires and occupies a particular tradition that necessitates further elaboration for the readers or listeners. As a legend, *Malakas at Maganda* is sufficient to satisfy the Filipino belief and imagination that God is the Creator and Love is the uniting aspect to flourish creation. There is nothing however in *Malakas at Maganda* that directly correlates the religious and biblical contexts as the focal sources of the story. The Christian impressions in this tale are not fully established, what was rather apparent was the religious value which may have been detached from any biblical authority.

Adam and Eve

The other story, *Adam and Eve*, is not directly but inspired from the scriptures on the creation of the man and the woman. It's an ancient Filipino folktale. Although no direct correlation is established as regards its origin, the story of *Adam and Eve* displays parallelism to that of *Malakas at Maganda*, where two individuals, with two sexes, male and female were created,

not by themselves but by another being. This particular story with exactly the same plot to the biblical *Adam and Eve* is spotted from a remarkable collection of a tale late in the second quarter of this century by an anonymous worker in Balingasag, Mindanao, for the Bureau of Public Schools (Demetrio, n.d.). The story introduced a new kind of a Judaeo-Christian identity similar to Genesis. The following is a summary of the report on *Balingasag* tale and a quote: Adam was the first man to whom some of the wisdom of God was given. He could talk, think, and reason. A companion too was given him so that he might not be lonely. While Adam was asleep, God extracted Eve from the left rib of Adam just underneath the heart.

With a significant meaning, God did not extract her from the feet of man so that she might be stepped upon; nor was she taken from the head so that she will be under the will and control of man's power; but she was taken from the rib, near the heart, to be loved, adored, and protected by man. This woman was Eve, the first woman. (Manuel Gapuz Collection, n.d.)

The Christian trademark was evident in the *Adam and Eve* tale, adapting the scriptural narrative on the making of the woman, alluding to Genesis with special references to Adam and his “ribs” as the origin of creating the companion. The story summarized the biblical creation of the woman and inferred a “significant meaning” to the rib and its position in the human body. A very significant inclusion to the biblical narrative was the tale's mention of the “heart” underneath the rib. While the heart has been over-rated in biblical essays as the “the seat of psychic life, of emotions, of intellect, of volition and moral life, the point of contact with God, equivalence of personality,” (Buttrick, et al., 1962) it was rather not too explicit in the (Biblical) Creation narrative.

The comparative layout of the “feet and the head” together with the “heart” spelled a moral call and commitment for both the man and the woman in the story. The *Adam and Eve* tale captures the moral demands with the inclusion of the heart to signify the natural ordering towards relationship founded in the human beings.

In anthropological sense, the *Adam and Eve* tale's distinguishing of the first two human body parts which are the feet and the head away from the heart spells much about moral and natural functions. As the tale described, the woman taken NOT from the feet and the head (which symbolized control over her) – alienates or “separates”, while deriving from the “heart” seeks to “unite” with its call to love, adore and protect. To be more concise, creating the woman from the feet or the head imply alienation and indignance; while creating the woman from the heart, underneath the ribs implies unity. This is indeed a call relevant and natural to the husband and wife, towards a better relationship. In addition, Genesis is reflected on how the man and woman should proceed in creation, stressing love and equality.

Pastoral Implications of the Rib to Marriage

The book of Genesis' reference to the heart as to the ancient Filipino folktale grounding was not so evident. What scriptures can provide are allusions that pertain the heart to the human psychology and emotions (Buttrick et al., 1962). While the “rib” story was explicit in the Creation narrative, its impact was enshrining and apparently authoritative, which nonetheless needs further clarification and contextual consideration.

In the Philippines, the *Adam and Eve* tale was undoubtedly popular. Most Filipino wedding homilies explicated this concept to which it highlights the source of woman's creation, the

“rib”. The tale signified that the rib of Adam, “which is from his side, not from any part of the man’s body, so as the woman walks besides the man, not at his back, not in front, not on top and not below him” was suggestive of aspirations to equality with the man. The tale reflects a traditional and cultural setup of a man-woman relationship in that period where male dominance was highly projected. The woman’s aspiration with the man to work on and “walk with,” remained inherent and the clingy attitude of the woman towards her partner to maintain the social status persists with dependency. Such deportments if they are to be assessed are something digressive from the context of harmony and matrimony.

The role of current pastoral ministry in this context is so essential. Reviewing significant biblical terms related to current issues are important especially those that are consistently integrated in the liturgy and practical applications of Theology. Its significance is relative to achieve the authentic meaning and intention of the celebrations, with references to its original intention as reflected from the scriptures. If the discussion on Marriage needs to be grounded, it requires a great deal of reference to the scriptures, particularly in the context of Creation. It is in the context of Creation that the purposes of marriage are realized. Over the generations, the ends of marriage emerge and develop into new concepts as these unfold with the articulations in theology.

The adaptation of the Rib of Adam from the above stated Filipino folklore, the *Adam and Eve* tale, is usually referred to in most pastoral ministries and homilies in the Philippines particularly in the Sacrament of Matrimony. Sensing the crucial role in catechesis and Catholic teachings, there needs a proper understanding of these narratives by their use and adaptation for a deeper grasp and application with reference to the scripture. This is to avoid the risk of deviating the catechism from the biblical message by emphasizing the folktales.

The term “rib”, in particular is intensely mentioned in many homilies and practical discussions pertaining to marriage. The foretold *Adam and Eve* tale is a testimony to this claim. The rib quickly assumes the role of women in the society. The interpretation accentuating man’s pre-eminence by the order of their creation downplays deeper reflection to their natural order. Over-emphasizing the rib is placing the man in superior stance over the woman with a reference to the more dominant skeletal structure sourced from him. With its inferred “significant meaning”, *Adam and Eve* envisions equality among couples. The discourses on the “rib” play a very crucial role especially its theological impact. Several reflections and concepts have been presented as regards the meaning of the rib. The critical issue on these discourses is when improper comprehensions are elevated to the liturgy and made worse if deepened into the experiences of the husband and wife. Stalling to the “rib” context defies a more meaningful and purposeful end of the marital union, denounces equality and promotes discrimination among couples in adherence to obsolete traditions as forewarned in the tale.

The moral allusion of the *Adam and Eve* tale is the position of the rib with reference to the “heart.” In most folklores, the heart symbolizes love. Although the heart has already been acknowledged in the tale, there was no emphasis as to its functions. The heart’s centrality is prefigured with emotions, in the context of salvation, it is where love manifests. In the context of marriage, it is the demanded act from the couples, obliging them with their use of will and instinct. It is a human act, commanding them to love one another.

Rather than stressing the rib of Adam, which subconsciously elevates the male specie a notch higher than the female by positioning her on the side, an appropriate tale has to be told in

today's culture reflective of equality to both the man and the woman, highlighting same origin, same nature, one. Significantly, without alterations to the biblical authority.

Understanding the Rib from Ancient Authors

The challenge posed is the relevance of the rib as perceived by the ancient authors. Just as creation was narrated by the sacred authors, where the balance between science and religion has to be established, their context has to be uncovered for the sake of understanding their perceptions. The following positions the emerging descriptions of the creation of the woman from the Hebrew traditions and how it was handed down in translation by the Greeks.

The Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the bible from Hebrew has no reference to the “rib”. The Hebrew texts contain the word *tsela* (צֶלַע), which means “side.” The Greek literature scribed *pleura* (πλευρά) which means from the “side of the body.” Contrasting the Greek and the Hebrew translation has to be seriously dealt with. The *side of the body* is different from the *side*. Following a chronology of translations, the former establishes a development from the latter with considerations to social and cultural developments.

With *tsela* as the major term for the *side* according to the Hebrew translation, understanding then the rib alludes to a historical cultural approach as regards its main usage in context. Several usage of the side were found but the scarcity of the side's application to the human body was neither explicit. For some instances however, the Ark of the Covenant (*Ex. 25:12*); the altar (*Ex. 27:7*); the tabernacle (*Ex. 26:20*); the outer skin of the tabernacle (*Ex. 35*) referred to the side. In another instance, Solomon's temple also alluded to “another associated component”, like those on the sides or adjoining to the temple (*1 Kings 6:5–6,34*), which pertains not to a main part but its adjacent object or adjoining structure. It was in the book of Daniel where the rib suggested a flesh, though dealt not exactly of a human being but of a beast: “And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth..” (*Dan. 7:5*).

Regardless of its distinction, the anthropological aspect of the “side” reveals more of the woman from the main part of the man, not adjacent nor adjoining. To consider the woman from the “side” (*tsela*) of the man is rather convincing. To think that the woman was created from the “side of the body” (*pleura*), analogous to the side of the altar, or the temple of Solomon as earlier narrated in Exodus and the book of Kings, would render her not part of the man but someone adjacent to him. This seemingly anthropological view sees the woman alienated from the man in creation, nullifying equality. But amidst ambiguity for the “side,” the “rib” is consistently viewed as the significant visible link uniting the man and the woman.

Admittedly, the “side” (*tsela*) against the “side of the body” (*pleura*) perception remains an opinion as this paper seeks to argue to support the former as the relative reference for the rib. Both Hebrew and Greek culture acknowledges the rib as a human body part. The bones function to hold the structure of the body. It is a major composition of the male and female anthropology. Considering the woman from the rib is more logical and legitimate than anything else like skin, hair, or any other parts of the human body. Internal organs as a major human body parts were inconceivable with due consideration to technology at that period.

In this age of civilization, a concept to the internal body parts is a high sophistication. But in the ancient tradition, the rib is otherwise proven physically in several contexts and traditions. A bare manifestation of the rib could be touch therapies where the body structure is determined.

While a more concrete exposition of ribs is observed in burial sites or exposures to human bones elsewhere along the Jews' nomadic journeys. To subscribe to the rib than any other human body parts like blood, or internal organs which could be beyond frontiers in their perception is a more realistic and acceptable interpretation. Thinking of skin or flesh as the source in creating the woman does not reflect more of a solid foundation and interpretation for firmness and stability, much more, it does not contemplate for a "completing" of the man, but more of ripping a part from him. This concept was neither explicitly supported by other biblical texts.

Inculturating the "Rib"

The Hebrew and Greek comparison can become complex when contrasted to modern histories. The distinctions will be clearly established by the gaps in generation as well as social and cultural developments. The historical perception also varies depending on the time. In order to bridge the gap, a literary approach needs to analyze the context of the contents for interpretation. An analysis called "*genre of fiction*" (Carr, 1996) distinguished ancient from modern historians of Genesis:

The modern fictional texts on which our literary methods were developed make no claims to exactly report past events, and they are usually the complete creation of their authors. In contrast, ancient historylike texts like Genesis were written to make certain true claims about the past. This means that their authors often did not work at the same level of freedom with their material as a modern writer of fiction does. Indeed, ancient authors did not even have the freedom of modern historians. Whereas a modern historian builds a brand new narrative after having critically evaluated her/his resource. As a result, modern historians would not just use traditions, but would reproduce them even as they modified them and/or completely re-contextualized them. (Carr, 1996)

The rib narrative is the center of the ancient authors' interest in transmitting the tradition on the creation of the woman. In the minds of ancient readers, understanding the rib however, as the "side of the man" (*pleura*), or the "side" (*tsela*), bears no significance since it already affirms a social behavior, reminding the woman's role and place with the man or her husband in the society. While no proofs of research and fact finding was conducted (it was not the order of writing at that time anyway), the rib of Adam was apparently the more prominent and accentuated sturdy body part which makes it more suitable source for making the woman. Whether an actual vision of the rib was substantiated, it was proven real needless of technological aid during that generation. Burial sites and rites attest to the ribs. The Israelites were exposed to burial sites which provided testimonies to ribs. Jewish traditions concur with a majority of burial practices by different non-Jewish tribes, that they too bury their dead. Abraham himself purchased a burial place (*Gen. 23*). The Israelites' nomadic culture may also have factored in their burial ceremonies, as they bury their dead on caves during their journey to the promised land. Although no explicit citation relating burial to bones, Baruch described, "to have the bones of our kings and the bones of our fathers brought out from their burial places" (*Bar. 2:24*). In all of these burial testimonies, the only proof for the rib is the dead and decayed. The descriptions are compelling evidences that bones are major and dominant part of the human body. In adherence to Carr's *genre of fiction*, the bones or the ribs as dominant body parts were built into a narrative of human creation and composition. Thus, in the biblical tradition's reflection, wrote: "So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was

asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man...” (*Gen. 2:21–22*).

The Septuagint grounding of the rib is legitimate as it never contradicted with the Hebrew *tsela*. The process of translating rather opened an opportunity. Acknowledging biblical authority and considering a *genre of fiction*, the ancient portrait of *side* and the *rib* reveals truth about human nature, origin and culture. Therefore, a modern historian’s view with his present condition can sufficiently integrate his genre of fiction towards a better understanding of an authentic teaching appropriate to his generation. It is in this assumption that Wayne Simpson affirms, accordingly:

Since the concept of a rib was not so evident in the Old Testament Hebrew translation, what is rather striking is the literal translation of *tsela* which is the side of the man, then the justification for the rib could be that the woman is the side of the man, which can be interpreted as **half of the man**. Such theological reflection is however maintained by scriptural support such as “one flesh”. That the man and the woman, coming from the same flesh, are actually one. (Simpson, 1996)

As a quick overview, the cultural understanding can be laid with the following development, that the woman is created from the “side” according to the Hebrew tradition, which was translated by the Greek with their context to the human side as the “rib”, which is actually the “half of the man” by virtue of the hearts calling them out to love, making the woman, the other half of the one flesh. Thus in the next section, an attempt to see beyond the heart reveals further an inculturated approach to the creation of the woman with reference to Genesis.

Kabiyak ng Puso: Inculturated Theology of the Rib

The book of Genesis strikingly described the main composition of the man with his bone, particularly the rib, and the flesh. The “side”, as pointed by the scriptures is analogous to *tsela* which referred to that of Adam’s part, not adjacent. The interpretation favored Genesis’ implication making the “side” as the part of the Man, not adjacent to him. The man soon acclaimed, “*bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh*” (*Gen. 2:23*).

In Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, he developed “*Original Solitude*” as one of the three experiences that are common and fundamental to the human heart. The others are Original Unity and Original Nakedness (PJP II, 2006). While others see imperfection in this solitude, demonstrated by God’s realization – “NOT GOOD for the man to be alone”, John Paul II sees “*Original Unity*”, where the man longs for a companion, fit for him, where he (the man) realizes incompleteness, no one then was suitable for him (*Gen. 2:20*). The transition from solitude to unity is eventually expounded by the Pope in the same book (PJP II, 2006). In his exposition, later identified the rifts borne out of man’s concupiscence. The rift is signified by its character of severing from the original design.

According to the book *Called to Love* (Anderson and Granados, 2009), the “rifts” between man and God; within man; man and woman; parents and children are brought about by the wounds of sin due to the fragility of the heart or concupiscence. Literally, a rift separates what was united, or breaches a relationship. This separation however, is not an indication that the woman “rifted” from the man through the context of the breaking from the side. The scripture was very clear, it was all by God’s hands that took the woman from the man, totally distinct from the rift

caused by humanity's disobedience. The rift which separated the man and the woman was a free act from the Creator, who eventually called them in unity. Note that same concept was explicit in Plato's *Symposium*, that the "sliced" human beings, in order to be made orderly, was to be healed by the god (190D–190E).

At the Sacrament of Matrimony, the man and woman are called to love one another. In the Theology of the Body, what weakens the relationship was the "fragility of the heart", not the less "density of the bones". The needed strength for the unity of the man and the woman is not spelled by an intense or massive rib or flesh but by the loving nature from the single heart. The call to love is defined by the human heart, to unite the rift originally bonded by Christ, so that they may be one.

The *Adam and Eve* tale which issued a profound inculturation by its relevance to the rib will be paralleled towards a new approach. Playing a major role in the inculturation is the "heart" or "*puso*" (in Filipino). The "heart" has been given a significant meaning from the tale, and in a separate document, utterly expounded by John Paul II.

For an inculturated approach, the two Philippine legends described in this paper, *Malakas at Maganda* with the *Adam and Eve* tale (Adam and Eve) will be combined, paralleled to that of Plato's cited sections from *Symposium*. Man's original solitude, destroyed by sin is looked upon with original unity. Rift is acknowledged and unity is desired.

In the Philippine context, a spouse, either the husband or the wife is called *Kabiyak ng Pusong* a Filipino term (Tagalog) literally translated as the other "*Kabiyak*" (half) and "*puso*" (heart) or "*half of the heart.*" From the *Malakas at Maganda* folktale, the image of a bamboo, split equally crosswise best describes *Kabiyak ng Pusong*. The image of two beings, perceived originally as one, portrays a longing for unity. From the same image, John Paul II's *original solitude* as originally one piece of bamboo cane was cut to half crosswise, retains its *original unity* when put together, and only the creator's hand can put them together, signifying marriage in this aspect.

Kabiyak ng Pusong becomes more appropriate for both the husband and the wife because of the moral order of their union, "to love one another". Loving one another is a command, not accidental, not an inherent duty being given during the Sacrament of Matrimony. To be equally divided between the man and the woman, directly implies equality as narrated in Genesis. Although not explicit in the Creation account, perhaps due to social conditions at that time, there remains an inherent equality among all men and women, and there is the natural duty for both the spouses in Creation. The assumption of their equality was affirmed by *Malakas at Maganda*, situating the man and woman's purpose in marriage. *Kabiyak ng Pusong* denotes equality in all aspects of their married union. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the union of Mary and Joseph is acknowledged as spouses as it proclaims:

That with the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
with the Blessed Joseph, her Most Chaste **Spouse**...

Following that acknowledgment of the Virgin Mother and Joseph as spouses, the Filipino version of the Eucharistic Prayer clearly translates the word spouse as *Kabiyak ng Pusong* with the following proclamation:

“Kaisa ng Mahal na Birheng Maria na Ina ng Diyos,
Kaisa ni San Jose na kanyang *kabiyak ng puso...*”

In the Scriptures, Christ’ command was echoing, “You shall love the Lord your God, with all your “HEART”, with all your soul and with all your strength...” (*Mt. 22:37*), the same command expressed from Deuteronomy 6:5. In these declarations, the heart overshadows the rib.

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, which also literally attempts to explain the creation of the woman from the rib of the man, the following can be expounded during wedding rites, with emphasis on the union of the one flesh, coming from one part, essential in the loving relationships of the man and the woman. To wit, the following can be shared to highlight the matrimonial character and biblical origin of marriage. The following is directly lifted from the creation of the woman in Genesis 2. The modification of the story is the suggested discourse to intensify the explanation and theology of marriage, thus, another tale:

God said it was not good for the man to be alone, and so he will be created a helpmeet. And so God put the man to sleep and while asleep, God opened his chest and divided his heart. Man was given a big heart in order to fulfill much his loving capacity. Yet with a big heart, man was still lonely.

From the half of the heart of the man, God created the woman. That is why, the man is destined to look for the woman, who is half of his heart, (*kabiyak ng kaniyang puso*).

(Not *Katadyang!* Other part of the rib!)

The above holds a great deal of legitimacy as John Paul II himself states in his catechism that the rib seems to indicate the heart (PJP II, 2006; West, 2007). Without directly deviating from the previously renowned tales, such as *Malakas at Maganda*, *Kabiyak ng Puso* embodies equality necessary between the couple. Instead of a sturdy rib depicting strength which is a common male characteristic, a huge heart, soft and tender, embodies his will and loving capacity to be more than appropriate. Longing for a companion is inherent with someone of the same nature, thus, what satisfies the man must be the one whom his heart belongs. The woman, as the husband’s *Kabiyak ng Puso*, is the only helpmeet destined for him. *Malakas at Maganda* were equally divided when broken, the woman, created from the heart, from the side of the man, gets equal dignity with the man. In this manner, nothing between the two is superior. *Kabiyak ng Puso* is more appropriate to theologize the creation of the woman. More appropriate than *Katadyang* (*part or half of the ribside*).

Conclusion

The past and present interplays elaborated by the paper bring an essential dimension in the deepening of the Christian faith, most specially in marriage. The radical use of a myth as a substitute to an authentic Church teaching may possibly open an interpretation contrary to an established thought which may also compromise a cultural underpinning. On the other hand, proper understanding of a literary work soundly based on the political, religious and cultural scenario which serves as a mirror to the present setting provides a more appreciation of the past, which may not have been generously gifted with the appropriate comprehension due to

invincible ignorance, now looks forward to inculturate by adapting the signs of the times, invoking the authority of the past.

The above approach simply determines the necessity of inculturation. The Genesis narrative has not been totally altered, but with the inculturated “rib”, a new dimension in the pastoral ministry and catechetical instruction has been made adaptable. Liturgical celebrations and catechetical instructions need to be deeply inculturated in order to understand further the real meaning of these celebrations. An inculturated approach, which is grounded on the original sources and translations gives unique and authentic interpretation and meaning to the celebration.

Relative to the topic, an inculturation applying the creation of the woman according to Genesis approaches *Kabiyak ng Pusong* as an appropriate tale in Pastoral ministry to re-enact the biblical rib. *Kabiyak ng Pusong* calls and reminds the man and the woman their original unity, the original design of God in creation.

References

- Anderson, C., & Granados, J. (2009). *Called to love*. New York: Doubleday.
- Buttrick, G. A., et al. (1962). *The interpreter's dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Carr, D. M. (1996). *Reading the fractures of Genesis*. Louisville Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Deane-Drummond, C. E. (2000). *Creation through wisdom*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.
- Demetrio, F. S. J. (n.d.) *Creation myths among the early Filipinos*. Retrieved from <https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/936>
- Edwards, D. (2010). *How God acts: Creation, redemption and special divine action*. Hindmarsh: ATF Press.
- Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE). (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*. Manila: Word and Life Publications.
- Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE). (1997). *Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC)*. Manila: Word and Life Publications.
- John Paul II. (2006) *Man and woman he created them*. (M. Waldstein, Trans.). Boston: Pauline Books and Media.
- Kalyra, K.(n.d.) Creation Myths – Philippines. Retrieved from <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/doherty/plan2/kalyracreation.html>
- Manuel Gapuz Collection (MGC). *Report on Balingasag*. Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines.
- McGrath, A. E. (2011). *Darwinism and the divine*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Saint Joseph Edition. (2004). *The new American Bible*. Makati City: St. Paul Publication.
- Schelkle, K. H. (1979). *The spirit and the bride: Woman in the Bible*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.
- Simpson, W. (1996) Adam's Rib. Retrieved from <http://www.jasher.com/Insights%20page/Adamsrib.htm>
- Sorensen, J. (n.d.) Did the Church teach the Earth was flat? Retrieved from <https://strangenotions.com/did-the-church-teach-the-earth-was-flat/>
- West, C. (2004) *Theology of the body explained*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media.

Corresponding author: Revenendo R. Vargas

Email: rrvargas@ust.edu.ph

J. G. Fichte as a Post-Kantian Philosopher and His Political Theory: A Return to Romanticism

Özgür Olgun Erden,
Middle East Technical University (METU), Turkey

Abstract

This paper fundamentally deals with J. G. Fichte's philosophical views, which reshapes intellectual-philosophical bases of the post-Enlightenment era and makes a strong criticism of Kantian thinking. Philosophically, Fichte's philosophy, more representing a return to romanticism, will be debated on the basis of some concepts, among of which has been reason, science, tradition, religion, state, individual, and community. From his viewpoint, it will interrogate relationships among ego, morality and moral order. Based on these relationships, it will be tried to explain what man's moral nature is and how moral consciousness is conceptualized in Fichte' thought. The debates between these concepts will provides basis for a political theory framed by Fichte. Also, it will indicate how a political theory there was developed, outlined by Fichte for German nation over two basic concepts, moral nature and moral consciousness. Taking account of all these discussions, in conclusion it will argue that his political theory had more liberal-conservative implications, along with nationalist ones.

Keywords: morality, consciousness, political theory, Fichte's moral philosophy

Introductory Remarks

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) is one of the most leading thinkers that had taken part among the German Classics defined as a romantic movement, which arose in form of a reaction more after Kantian idea. Fichte was between outstanding representatives of romanticism. Romanticism, which had given its name to a reactionary movement, is a philosophy of nature, mythology, and irrationalism. It is generally initiated with Descartes, one of the most prominent representatives of modern philosophy. Basically, it opposed to Cartesian Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*'s assertion that defines individual or person as a subjective and internal process, without seeing the reality of the external world. This philosophy is ego-centric and looks for its focal point in itself. At the same time, it is to be governed by a schism between thought and being, concept and reality, mind and nature, and subject and object. Fichte was against this schism and annihilated it by way of an absolute ego, which he described as a situation appearing in the world and supposing itself and its antithesis, non-ego (Schmitt, 1986, p. 52). Modern philosophy has laid the intellectual-philosophical bases of Enlightenment. For the very reason, this movement, German Classics, became prominent with its views that object to Enlightenment idea, firstly emphasizing individual's mind, science, man as authority, and individual autonomy, instead of religion, state, community, morality, and tradition and the like. This idea, which refers to a new historical, political and philosophical era, sees reason and scientific activity as a fundamental tool able to put forward true knowledge or truth, with its basic foundations mostly shaped against to religion itself and religious institutions, Church. This idea has been strongly opposed to all religions, since it regarded them as a product of ignorance and fear, and as an obstacle to intellectual progress and clear use of mind. In its view, there is no absolutely "inherent incompatibility" between religion and science (Compleston, 1994a, pp. 2–3). Conversely, romanticism is fundamentally to be comprehended as a movement that objects to the rationalism of the eighteenth century which provides a basic for modern philosophy (Schmitt, 1986, p. 53). Starting from this point of view, Romantic Movement, among of which was German thinker Fichte, formulating its own arguments in opposition to this idea, argues that there are feelings, faith, instinctive actions, mystical visions, and religious ideas or practices founded as a way of obeying to a divine authority or God. However, in an enlightened idea, a sacred authority or God has been certainly rejected, because of asserting that the main activity to discover, verify and justify a great deal of things in society and nature has been science and reason. More importantly, this idea to have an undisputed faith in the powers of human reason to reach to the truth. With its logical-mathematical method, it highlights important to apply to human reason and its scientific viewpoint based upon reason and science for explaining all everything under the sun for removing all obscurity, mystery, bigotry, and superstition. Religion, state, law, morality, language, and art have been institutions or structures able to understand and clarify in the light of human reasoning and scientific activity. Generally, the enlightened idea emphasizes the worth and dignity of human being and basically attempts at delivering him/her from the slavery of – a religious or/and divine authority and tradition, and making him or her self-reliant in thought and action (Thilly, 1913, p. 1). In Kant's words,

“Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of reason, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without

guidance from another. Sapere Aude! “Have courage to use your own understanding!” – that is the motto of enlightenment” (Kant 2010 [1784], p. 1).

Therefore, along with Enlightenment, reason and scientific activity have been the foundation of all everything, included morality, religion, tradition, state, politics, law, ideology, and intellectual production, and so on, whereby laying the bases of a sociological explanation. As opposed to that, a philosophical-romantic movement historically appeared with authentic sociological statements and views, which had taken a stand against a sociology based on an enlightened philosophy and symbolizing an idea defined as The Romantic-Conservative Reaction and represented by some thinkers, among of who were Louis de Bonald, Joseph de Maistre, Burke, Hegel, and even Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte. In common with Fichte and other German Classics, they rejected Enlightenment idea grounded on rationalism and empiricism and referring to reason and scientific observation for studying man, society and nature and solving their problems. Most often, instead of reason, they pointed out to tradition, religion, imagination, feeling, and faith so as to examine whole humanistic and natural problems and resolve them. For them, these, all of which substitute for reason and science, seems as categorical tools natural and positive in analyzing and explaining man, society and nature (Zeitlin, 1968, pp. 35–55). This was a reaction that had shaped against the optimistic faith of the Enlightenment, believing in individual’s reason and scientific activity philosophically based on rationalism and empiricism for transforming them and intervening in man and society with revolutionary enterprises. This philosophical-romantic reaction paved the way for arising a new interest in historical-political order and problems and concepts linked to it. According to this reactionary movement, the enlightened thought is to challenge the essential institutions of society, consisting of religion, tradition, and faith, and thus to cause the loss of the political stability. Historically and socially, the movement in question has been at the same time the source of major sociological concepts and ideas. All in all, this paper basically addresses and debates the relationship Fichte’s moral-romantic philosophy and political theory.

Ego, Morality and Consciousness in Fichte’s Philosophy

Following this reactionary movement with philosophical views and sociological implications, when coming to Fichte’s philosophical approach, we see that there has been a pure idealist point of view. Begin with, Fichte underlines morality or/and a moral law and ethic. For him, morality and a moral order were related to God, and he identifies this order with God. Therefore, we bear witness that in consequence of idealism in question these morality and ethic have a more spiritual aspect than any other thing. For instance, the world, in his view, is intrinsically a spiritual order. Fichte at the same time accepted ego, or spirit as an ultimate and absolute principle by virtue of giving a meaning and worth to the life per se. Here can be basically expressed that this ego is a transcendental ego. To be sure, as will be seen later, the foregoing ego, which has a more spiritual and transcendental aspects, is quite moral and have bases attributed to a moral framework. Besides a moral component, the ego, defined by Fichte as pure, is nothing but simply an activity. However, the pure ego is to be turned into an object of consciousness in the very same way as desire is objectified. Therefore, it is absurd to say that through introspection, we see a desire, an image and a pure ego. For, every act of objectification presupposes a pure ego (Compleston, 1994b, p. 42). In a sense, ego is an activity. For, the ego as an absolutely active, which “posits” a non-ego, is not a

notion that expresses the analytical concept of a rational logic based on abstract generalities. Therefore, Fichte's ego has been a concrete, individual concept that arises in a concrete world (Schmitt, 1986, p. 53) Thus, we become aware of the pure activity of the ego, of free action, in similar way to an intellectual intuition. But, with ego, Fichte does not only mean a subjective ego as a particular individual self with all idiosyncrasies, but also a universal ego because of manifesting itself in all conscious individuals as a universal and necessary truth (Thilly, 1913, pp. 7–8). Except for that, Fichte attributes a power to the ego in order to create an idea of non-ego existing independently, but for the very reason of fact that it is dependent on the ego, this non-ego's activity has been ultimately the activity of the ego itself. Quite simply, this power has referred to the absolute ego, rather than individual self, as long as it has been highlighted that pure-ego is more universal than particular. This power, which characterizes the ego, is described by Fichte as a power of imagination, more appropriately, as a productive power of imagination and/or power of productive imagination. As known well, the power of imagination is a principal element in Kantian philosophy, which serves as an indispensable link between sensibility and understanding (Compleston, 1994b, pp. 51–52). Once more, as we have seen here, the ego has been an activist direction in sense of having a power of imagination. It is an ego that has spiritualist and idealist bases rather than materialist ones as such. The aforesaid ego is an all-important in terms of incorporating a sense and value into our life. These major characters of ego compel it to be more moral because it has to contain moral norms or duties. This ego is fundamentally moral with ethical purposes that realizes itself in nature and in man, which Fichte argued to be universal (Thilly, 1913, p. 8).

Another significant concept upon which Fichte dwelled in his own philosophy has been consciousness. As far as we understand, this notion is closely connected with his own understanding of morality and moral order. But that connection was not merely limited to morality. There would at the same time a relation between reason and consciousness as well. Such relation can be, too, clearly seen, considering the connections among reason, imagination, judgment and consciousness. In this context, according to Fichte the occurrence of consciousness, however, necessitates that the products of the creative imagination should be made more visible. And this is also possible by using understanding and judgment. Other than this, self-consciousness, remarks Fichte, needs more than power to abstract from particular objects in favor of the universal. It presupposes power to abstract from the object in general, in order to achieve a reflection on the subject. And this power of absolute abstraction, as Fichte calls it, is reason (Compleston, 1994b, p.53). Apart from the relationship between consciousness and reason, on the ground that Fichte had a philosophical approach, which emphasizes a morality and moral order based on his own morality-centered philosophy, the word consciousness has been majorly concerned with morality, moral norms, and a responsibility of duties referring to a moral law. Before passing to this link between consciousness and morality, we should clarify what a moral action is and how Fichte defines such an action. In Fichte's view, because of being a moral activity, each particular action should fulfill a certain formal condition. Put it another way, "Always act according to your best conviction of your duty or act according to your consciousness."

This above-statement has been the formal condition of our action with moral bases. The will that acts in this manner is good will. Strictly speaking, Fichte writes under the

influence of Kant in the context of morality and moral philosophy, whereas his philosophy includes a philosophical reaction to Kantianism in the case of science (Schmitt, 1986, p. 53). An explanation regarding this influence can make more illuminating how morality is defined [no doubt we know it was a morality of duty]. However, the relation to be established between consciousness and morality has been, we think, certainly something peculiar to Fichte. At this juncture, Fichte, for instance, spoke of “acting *according to your conscience*.” Because he defined conscience as “the immediate consciousness of our determinate duty.” In other words, “Conscience would be the immediate awareness of a particular obligation.” (Compleston, 1994b, p. 65)

As a matter of fact, this last expression explicitly indicates that his concept of conscience has fundamentally a moral base. However, the main point that he departs from a Kantian thought is that in his view the conscience refers to a *feeling*, though we have expressed above that there was a relation between conscience and reason in keeping with Kantian view. Even so, Fichte insists on describing it as an immediate feeling by suggesting that conscience is directly linked with morality and a moral order. It corresponds to an ordinary man’s actions in everyday life accustomed to act as depended his/her own moral worldview. He states that, for example, a man can say that “I feel that this is the right thing to do. And thus, I feel that another course of action would be wrong.” And s/he absolutely feel certain about it (Compleston, 1994b, p. 66). Therefore, there seems that consciousness is identified with feeling. The reason why it has been so is that consciousness has a pure moral ground. As a result, taking into account all of these, if something is moral, in this case we should take account of being a consciousness there. In this way, it is seen that there has been a clear relation among feeling, morality and consciousness. All in all, we can conclude that they are concepts associated much closely with one another.

Man’s Moral Nature and Moral Consciousness

In Fichte, we see that morality and moral order is conceptualized in relation to a responsibility of duty necessary to be actualized as in a Kantian outlook. In other words, Fichte defines morality as a morals of duties. For this reason, in his opinion morality is something composed of a set of duties performed by human beings because of having a lot of norm, commands, or instructions, and the like. In parallel with this definition, Fichte argues that morality or moral law is categorical: namely, it simply tells “Do this, or do not that.” Put it another way, morality has been a concept that defines as a set of norms including an obligation by commanding individuals to do this or not to do that. In Hegel’s opinion, Fichte was not able to really succeed in overcoming the formalism of the Kantian (Compleston, 1994b, p. 60). In a sense, he states that morality or moral law become different from others owing to compulsive. Even, this diversity has been, signifies Fichte, manifested by being separated the theories of rights and political society from morality or moral law. Likewise, he emphasizes that those theories are concerned with the external relations between human beings. For, in them, for example, the fact that I have a right does not necessarily mean that I am under an obligation to exercise it. For this reason, the system of rights cannot be deducible from a moral law (Compleston, 1994b, p.60). Thereby, morality and moral law have a structure and establishment imperative to be carried out without looking at whether or not there have been external purposes, far beyond a theory of rights and political society. As said earlier, in Fichte’s philosophy there is a moral-based approach, and thus ego and consciousness are quite moral as well.

As a result of the mentioning moral base, man also has a moral nature, and this moral nature has, states Fichte, asked new questions. For instance, there has been such a basic question like “what is meant by man’s moral nature?” At this stage, Fichte expresses that man has some impulsions to carry out certain actions without an external purpose, and not to actualize others. And nature of man, in so far as this impulsion itself has necessarily manifested within him/her, has been a moral and/or ethical one. He asserts that a man can have knowledge concerning his/her moral nature and his/her subjection to a moral compulsivity in two ways. In the first place, s/he is able to possess this knowledge at the level of common moral consciousness. In a word, s/he is able to aware through his/her conscious of a moral order ordering him to do this or not to do that. And this immediate awareness has been quite sufficient for knowledge of one’s duties and moral behaviour. In the second place, a man is able to assume the ordinary moral consciousness as something given and inquire into its ground (Compleston, 1994b, pp. 60–61). Man has a moral consciousness commanded to perform certain duties by doing this, not others, because of having a moral nature. In addition to that the consciousness is moral, it at the same time demonstrates to each of us that we have duties to act in certain ways toward ourselves and others. Thus, Fichte returns his original problem concerning status of a moral responsibility. His problem is interested in reconciling what we know as the casual order of the nature with what we learn from our moral consciousness. This is because our moral consciousness says that we have been responsible for our acts (Fichte, 1956, pp. XI–XII). As in a Kantian idea, there has not been a problem of knowing, but rather we clearly see that in Fichte’s philosophy there was a problem of acting but this acting would be just fulfilled in certain norms or principles by making a feel of responsibility of duty. For him, the basic problem of philosophy has, or should be, been mainly moral. In his one book, entitled “Vocation of Man”, he speaks out that our vocation is not just to know, but to act according to our knowledge (Fichte, 1956, p. 83. Besides this, as stated before, it should be underlined that this morality and moral law is godlike. The reason is that God has been a creative for the moral order of the world and that all of us can exist “only in God and through God”. In thus, he concludes that the God has been same thing with the moral order of the world. Similar to Kant, he rejects the usual arguments purporting to demonstrate God’s existence (Fichte, 1956, p. XV). Briefly stated, morality or moral life is reflected a responsibility of duties which is obligatory to be performed by men and, and also it have a godlike character without demonstrating God’s existence.

Conclusion: Fichte’s Political Theory

From the standpoint of a political theory, Fichte’s theory carries the traces of romanticism or Romantic Movement. Politically, this movement has a conservative orientation with arguments advanced against particularly the French Revolution of 1789. As a political conservative the movement at issue alleges that law and the state cannot certainly stem from the methodical activity of the individual human beings. At the same time, for a romantic movement, nation and society are not overnight products of individual “fabrication”. On the contrary, they are created over long periods of time, involving tradition, religion, morality, feeling, faith, and community (Schmitt, 1986, p. 108–109). All the same, “Revolution ideology,” which caused the emerging of a political romantic movement and symbolizes the French Revolution, suggests that human reason is the source of eternal principles of right in line with which the present political institutions is to be judged and, if necessary, reformed or replaced. In the Foundations of Natural Right, with Rousseuian affects, principally, Fichte claims that

the possession of sovereignty is popular will and in the state the governed must have some roles while governing. This idea is at the core of Fichte's account of the state (Fichte, 2000, p. 11, p. 22). For, in opposition to his writings of 1793 on the Revolution, Fichte accepts a lawful community by asserting that all right and property resulted from the state, and that the individual possesses nothing prior to political contract (Schmitt, 1986, p. 111). On the other hand, in order to make his accounts of the state clearer, Fichte also draws a liberal political frame by separating the rights into three parts. They are original right, the right of coercion, and political right. For him, original rights are rights that individuals possess freely from any actual political order and that have to be guarded and held in high esteem in a state. The right of coercion is grounded on a necessity of state with need to form a reliable "law of coercion" that will deter individuals from violating the original rights of others and punish actual criminals. Lastly, political right is interested in *Staatsrecht*, namely civil law, the state's constitution, and constitutional law (Fichte, 2000, p. 19–20). Taking into account all these, in our opinion, it can be concluded that, within a political context, Fichte had a liberal-conservative perspective because of either defending a community in Rousseauian sense more than individual or giving priority to individual as having original rights over against state. In order to show them, we might return to his ideas again. According to him, the freedom and law were institutions inseparable from each other and ultimately same things. For instance, when one thinks of oneself as free, one would be compelled to think freedom as something taking place under a juridical order; or when one thinks of occurring a judicial order, one would be forced to feel yourself as free. Therefore, there is a close relationship between the law and freedom, and to be free is solely possible with the law. The law is to approve no exception simply because it is to express the very nature of "a free being" (Compleston, 1994b, pp. 64–65). It is a law based on the principles of right created to apply to free actions of rational beings. It is composed of normative principles, that is, a law whose efficacy depends on conscious beings recognizing it as such (Fichte, 2000, p. 18). It aims at the action of an "emancipated being" to become in accordance with the law or the present juridical principles/norms, by making feel of having to act within a responsibility of duty. In other respects, morally every good human being has a universal moral duty to spread morality beyond himself and to encourage it everywhere. However, every free being, and thus also the child, is capable of morality. What make it possible is parents. If the parents themselves are moral, they will take advantage of every probable tools to cultivate morality in their child (Fichte, 2000, p. 310). As a matter of fact, this view was, to a large extent, conservative, though it has liberal implications. The conservative stance at issue is to become more evident with his ideas in relation to state. For one thing, as stated earlier, Fichte argued that man had moral duties towards the state, and that at the same time the state was one and only establishment irreplaceable to fulfill conditions in which a moral life could develop. If man's moral nature were fully developed, this would be more likely with the state and its institutional entity (Compleston, 1994b, p. 59). For this, Fichte ascribes to the state a further role in helping individuals to achieve moral virtue. The one reason is that man is a being that has feelings. The feelings is the necessary product of the natural drive and follows immediately from it. Thus, the state should be charged with the moral education of its citizens. This is because "the morality of its citizens is the state's highest, and only, final end." (Fichte, 2000, p. 24, p. 307). We differently see this in the thoughts which Fichte expressed in the context of community, by being influenced from Rousseauian views. Fichte's theory shares much in Rousseau's political theory, especially concerned with that of social contract. But, although the original purpose of a social contract is

defined individualistically (as the protection of each individual's original rights), its actual implementation necessitates "a high degree of social-spiritedness among its participants – particularly, the ability to subordinate one's private ends to universal aims of the just state." (Fichte, 2000, p. 22). This is entirely a view removed from a liberal-political idea. Therefore, we can conclude that the state with aims, and morality, needed to be taught by his/her parents to each free individual, were indispensable for Fichte's political theory. Presumably, when evaluating his political views based on liberal-conservative arguments, it might, we think, be more illuminating to speak a bit of his one book, "Addresses to the German Nation", which suggested a new life to the German people and laying the bases of German nationalism with the ideals of liberty and justice which opposed the despotism of Napoleon in the face of the French army of occupation (Fichte, 1922). This book has been one of his most interesting works uncovering close relationship between his moral philosophy and political theory. On the other hand, it has clearly showed us under what conditions his philosophical approach shaped, particularly considering Prussian's political and social conditions. First of all, Fichte starts with what sort of soul and conscious German people had to act, for the salvation of German nation. In the difficult conditions which the German people came across, *Addresses to the German Nation* by Fichte desires to arise a German conscious aware of its own national mission and their duty, when the French army occupied the Prussian capital (Thilly, 1913, p. 6). Given the views that he expressed in this book, which intrinsically had aimed at creating a German nation, it seems that there was an overt relation between his moral philosophy and political ideas with more conservative aspects but with liberal ones a bit. Once, since Fichte's theory of morals quite imperative and categorical was founded on a responsibility of duties, his political theory is to express a combination of his own moral philosophy and German nationalism. That theory itself embodies in a moral action defined as an unconditionally devotion to an entity (nation, state, or moral community) without an external purpose and worldly-interest. Taking his philosophy of morals and moral order into consideration, differently from a theory of rights with liberal-political implications, it is no surprised that there was developed a moral-political action, which had become apparent as a goal in itself. This way of action with moral-political bases was to play an important role in building a German nation. Likewise, it was to take shape German nationalism. In this case, such definition of morality and a moral approach appears to have been quite convenient to be used by a nationalist idea.

We can conclude some results from all these. Firstly, nationalism requires a moral approach in Fichte's viewpoint. Secondly, as a result of a liberal-conservative standpoint, we can tell that he was a nationalist thinker, considering his efforts to empower a German nationalism on the basis of his moral philosophy. Thirdly, Fichte formed his political thoughts within a liberal-conservative and nationalist political line. Lastly, generally in his philosophy the main problem has been an issue of acting according to some principles or knowledge, rather than the issue of knowing, and such an acting was more interested in what principles or rules and how human beings had act. Generally speaking, the basic framework of his philosophy consists of theory of rights and morality grounded on how individuals should act. His political ideas would be also founded on such liberal-conservative arguments.

References

- Compleston, F. (1994a). *A history of philosophy volume VI: Modern philosophy: From the French Enlightenment to Kant*, New York: Doubleday Publication
- Compleston, F. (1994b). *A history of philosophy volume VII: From post-Kantian idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche*, New York: Doubleday Publication
- Fichte, J. G. (2000). *Foundations of natural right: According to the principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*. Frederick Neuhouser (ed.) (Michael Baur, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1797).
- Fichte, J. G. (1956). *The vocation of man*. (R. M. Chisholm, Trans.). Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. (Original work published 1800).
- Fichte, J. G. (1922). *Addresses to the German nation*. (R. F. Jones, & G. H. Turnbull, Trans.). London: The Open Court Publishing. (Original work published 1808).
- Kant, I. (2010). *An answer to the question: "What is Enlightenment?"* (H.B. Nisbet, Trans.). New York: Penguin. (Original work published 1784).
- Schmitt, C. (1986). *Political romanticism*. (G. Oakes, Trans.). London: The MIT Press. (Original work published 1919).
- Thilly, F. (1913) *The Romantic philosophers – Fichte, Schelling, and Schleiermacher. The German classics of nineteenth and twentieth Centuries: Masterpieces of German literature*. Kuno, F., & Howard, W. G. (eds.), New York: The German Publication Society.
- Zeitlin, I. M. (1968) *Ideology and the development of sociological theory*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Publication.

Corresponding author: Özgür Olgun Erden

Corresponding mail: ozgurerden1871@yahoo.com & ozerden@metu.edu.tr

The Self as an Object of Criticism: Richard Rorty's Denial of the Objectivity of Truth

Do Kien Trung, Kobe University, Japan

Abstract

Denial of the objectivity of truth in the Self's creation is one of the most critiqued aspects for which Richard Rorty received both consensus and contradiction. Rorty's post-philosophical response to the human language debate lies in the intersection between the younger Heidegger who rejected an ambitious desire to describe the linguistic turn as a Platonic reference structure, which separate the Self from contingency in social practice, and the later Wittgenstein who denied a possible existence of a priori space of Kant's transcendental idealism in which sociology and sciences cannot penetrate. If the role of truth is to stimulate thought and motivate action, the essence of language cannot be described merely as an intermediate tool between the Self and reality. Moreover, if all problems of traditional philosophy can be resolved when the general structure of language is exposed, we must consider that language has supreme authority in which the limitation in our language is the limitation of the world. Rorty overcomes those restrictions by emphasizing that there is no abstract authority independent from rational justification whose only authority is conviction via human discourse. By focusing on discourse, Rorty separates his neo-pragmatism from the experience-focused pragmatism of his predecessors. This article focuses on the two most controversial ideas of Rorty's account of the Self: firstly, the Self's ideal is merely its narrative; secondly, language cannot precede the Self's existence.

Keywords: Richard Rorty, contingency of language, community of language, pragmatism, objectivity of truth

Introduction

Rejection of the objectivity of truth, or denial of the role of language as a general structure to describe reality as “a limited whole” leads Rorty to align with pragmatism, a philosophical movement founded by Charles Peirce along with William James. However, Rorty's departure from traditional pragmatism has received a lot of criticism from Peircean scholars such as Susan Haack and Cheryl Misak. While Rorty refused every theory of representation, promoting an anti-representationalist paradigm, Peirce embraced the theory of representation as progress in the sciences which related to truth. Moreover, Rorty's denial of truth as a theory is no different from James' account of “concrete truths rather than abstract Truth”; therefore, Rorty's anti-representationalism did not extend beyond James's “ideal set of formulations” and Peirce's ultimate representation which “surely refers to something like a set of propositions” (Haack, 2006). Rorty rejects Peirce's account of “truth as a belief that would remain forever justified” (Misak, 2013) and stresses that the concept of truth in Peirce's pragmatism did not provide any practical guidance. He asserted that Peirce's notion of truth was a “pragmatic elucidation” that did not create a metaphysical concept but confirmed our beliefs on “something at which we aim that goes beyond what seems right to us here and now.” (Misak, 2013) Rorty doubted the necessity of internalization and recursive structure in language learnability; and from his standpoint, meaning, truth and learnable languages are closely related to each other in which people do not need to internalize themselves to learn and understand language. However, there must be certain areas where language expresses its existence in being. Rationality must have nature to make sense, and interpretation must exist in interpersonal communication to make conversation understandable (Davidson)¹. Rorty expands his research on the mind-body identity theory by challenging the notion that we can draw a probable line between the conceptual and the empirical (Bernstein, 2010). One of the most important consistencies in Rorty's thought is the challenge of any attempt to create a new metaphysics in contemporary philosophy in which language is separated from its contingency and adaptation in social practice. His meta-philosophy emphasizes “*understanding and criticizing*” (Bernstein, 2010) that truth must be replaced by justification. The mind-body problem, particularly his argument on Descartes's modern philosophy of epistemic expression to identify the mind-body issue, became the central topic for Rorty's critique. Robert Brandom pointed out that Descartes “defined the mind in terms of its relation to our knowledge of it” (Brandom, 2000), and the cognitive approach must take place in a perfect cognitive condition in which impossibility must be excluded. The human mind, in this metaphysical framework, is externalized by our exact interpretations thereof. Rorty denies this modern metaphysics as an “incorrigibility” in his metaphilosophy, especially in his concept of final vocabulary.

The Self's Ideal Is Its Narrative

“The linguistic turn” is nothing more than an attempt to replace traditional metaphysics with a new form under a new name; Rorty stresses this argument in his research on Wittgenstein and Heidegger. The central framework of Rortian – anti-representationalism – comes from Wittgenstein's later work that overcomes and denies the ambitious exposure of a defined general structure of language, in which the problems are solved. Istvan Danka mentions that Rorty found in the later Wittgenstein the idea of anti-representationalism that “provides good arguments against representationalism without mysticism” (Danka, 2011, p. 68) as an opposite of Schopenhauerian mystical thinkers.

¹ Interview: The Rorty Discussion with Donald Davidson (<http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/12993>)

Wittgenstein, Rorty's inspiration to explore how thinking is expressed in language, was mostly concerned about the dissonance between thought and writing as well as its aesthetic presentation, in other words, the disparity between how we think and how we write about a particular idea. Early Wittgenstein tried to discover a systematic structure of logical language in which the dispute between facts and propositions could be easily solved. Because of the statement "True propositions are correct representations of facts; knowing a fact is, therefore, holding a true proposition about it" (Danka, 2011, p. 70), Rorty assumed that early Wittgenstein was responsible for representationalism that placed language into a supreme position in traditional metaphysics as a mirror of reality. However, later Wittgenstein realized that instead of complete dependence on a priori discipline and grammar, the better way is to release mind flows in uncountable discourses and metaphors. This change creates a free space in which the "knowing subject" can enhance conversation with blank spaces, unspeaking, and unwriting that can be re-created in different contexts by other writers – a discontinuity in the contingency of language. From the beginning of a conversation, participants produce perception through propositions, cutting the stream of life with descriptions of the subjects and objects of the conversation. These slices have their disciplines to express meaning in a determined space and time.

When a conversation is formed, those partners start their "language game" (Wittgenstein's concept) with their own motivation and purpose, and create the meaning of the conversation by re-creating their Self without pre-determined suppositions. No one, including the partners have precise knowledge of one another's "final vocabulary;" therefore, the conversation is unpredictable to participants, and enable others to re-describe. When the conversation ends, the meaning will complete its existence as a form of the Self's creation. Every new attempt to re-create the conversation is merely a rethinking and recollection with new meaning in a new slice of the stream of life. We cannot determine the story's realm of existence in the sense of the "knowing subject."

How should we explain to someone what a game is? I imagine that we should describe games to him, and we might add: "This and similar things are called 'games'". And do we know any more about it ourselves? Is it only other people whom we cannot tell exactly what a game is? – But this is not. ignorance. We do not know the boundaries because none have been drawn. To repeat, we can draw a boundary – for a special purpose. Does it take that to make the concept usable? Not at all (Except for that special purpose.). (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 33)

This discontinuity in the contingency of language is called "justification", a concept used by Rorty to describe what he stresses as the creation of a part of our Self by producing our intellect. He agrees with Nietzsche that "this sort of self-knowledge we are not coming to know a truth which was out there (or here) all the time [...] The process of coming to know oneself, confronting one's contingency, tracking one's causes home." (Rorty, 1989, p.27). The Self produces its existence via language in context with a specific purpose in an interrupted slice in a continuous flow of contingency.

A conversation is a single moment in the life process, giving it structure, morphology, and direction. A language game begins to carry the dynamic dimension of deployment in time. In other words, the emergence of a conversation from the flow of life also means a break with the time of practice; the birth of a new transformation with the beginning and the end, a configuration with its own time. Language games are also structured by principles, but in the

intention of human action. These rules are born of the playing process, in the material structure of the object and in the social context.

Obviously, there must be some premises to produce a conversation for every participant. For instance, they must understand each other's language and accept a discipline, like grammar, as the game rule before any conversation. However, those pre-existing premises are neither the cause of the conversation nor the final purpose that the participants want to discover. They can think of this "pre-existence" as a platform where the "knowing subject" transforms along the road of self-knowledge. A conversation creates an artificial world of intentional structure; but in the conversation itself, there is no element that clearly shows intention. Rather, participants in a "language game" can pursue many different intentions. Thus, a conversation is just an empty shell that can be filled with endless possibilities. Conversation creates a contextual understanding of one act, from multiple perspectives. These leads to an intersubjectivity in a linguistic community towards a common understanding, while at the same time shaping the character of the individual.

This view received a lot of criticisms from contemporary philosophers such as Habermas and Nancy Fraser. Richard Bernstein named "transcendental pragmatism" for Habermas's theory of communication in which Habermas played an important role in the history of pragmatism. Apparently, Habermas did not agree with all of Rorty's arguments on the use of language. Edward Grippe mentions that Habermas pointed out the weakness in the Rorty's description of language with two issues: first, Rorty did not clearly separate the position of the participant and the observer in a communication model; even Rorty tried to erase this line by the assertion of the intersubjectivity of the participant and the observer when joining the stories of each other in the community of language; second, Rorty did not give any critical standards to evaluate and distinguish the language using for the useful actions and the language using for the understanding. Regarding the first argument, what Habermas disagrees with Rorty is what Rorty emphasizes in his view of the intersubjectivity that in a conversation between participants there is no room for isolation and separation from conversation content. As soon as a person participates in a conversation, that person's narrative is bound to engage in a relationship with the narratives of others so that a person can reach the interpretation and understanding of the story based on the premise of a common consensus about grammar and language structure. The "critical standards" that Habermas produces in the second argument is an example of an abandonment of an eternally fundamental metaphysics in which a reference system, not an external purpose of the language, is necessary for the identification and evaluation of an intentional language behavior. However, it is not that Rorty denies the role of cognitive standards, nor does Rorty make himself a nihilist, who does not admit any criteria. The "standard" in Rorty's theory is the continuity of re-description objects and thereby re-description the Self in its contingency. Although emphasizing the formation of new vocabulary in the change of language expression, Rorty does not claim that the cognitive subject has the ability to create the new vocabulary for himself outside the community of language. There are always linguistic premises with narrative structures passed down through generations in the community of language. Thus, Rorty used the concept of "re-description," while Eduardo Mendieta used the concept of "re-inscription" to talk about Rorty's point of view, and through this re-description, the cognitive subject is able to construct his new vocabulary; not because of his/her subjective will, but the changes in reality, as Rorty insists on the French Revolution. As a successor of Dewey, Rorty usually mentions that human cognitive process is guided, Arthur Fine wrote, "by intelligence, which continually looks ahead to the consequences of those choices and adjusts how criteria are applied, so as to further what look like the most promising results – insofar as one can tell." (Misak, 2007, p. 56)

Nancy Fraser, on the other hand, criticized Rorty for the political aspect of the community of language as a prerequisite for the formation of the Self. In her article “Why Overcoming Prejudice is Not Enough: A Rejoinder to Richard Rorty”, Fraser points out that the ideological impacts and socio-political tendencies after the Vietnam War have led to a cultural revolution in which the emphasis of social priority on the minority or disadvantaged groups such as women and homosexuals have deepened the differences to the point of opposing each other. A Leftist proposal, according to Rorty, is the return to the pre-Vietnam War way with the economic development priority and the elimination of economic inequality, particularly in redistribution, rather than trying to deepen the cultural differences. Rorty’s goal, in addition to fair redistribution, is to share the value of humanity to seek a solidarity among different groups. Rorty avoids two extremes in shaping the individual and the group in capitalist society, which is an extreme economic tendency in Karl Marx’s view of the material production (characterized by the view of social being determines social consciousness), and the other tendency in Max Weber’s idealism in which it exaggerates the power of religious consciousness (specifically, the Protestant ethic) to build a strong and just capitalist society. By combining both economic and human factors, Rorty believes that the confrontation and injustice of social groups can be solved by engaging in dialogue and seeking for the interpenetration in the unified humanity. Although agreeing with Rorty that “the identity model of recognition” (Fraser, 2000, p. 23) was no longer appropriate in identifying characteristics and intentions of individuals and groups in society, Fraser argues that redistribution is not a radical solution, not only that, the identification of the individual counts only on the identified characteristics of the group where the individual belongs has locked the individual in the characteristics of the group. In other words, Rorty seems to replace a fundamental metaphysical paradigm in thinking with a different metaphysics, the community of language. This, Fraser observes, avoids personal recognition as a complete entity that can connect and express itself to all elements of society. Individuals are not utterly dependent on the group identity but can itself recognize its characteristics by extending the space of activity to the whole society. However, Fraser’s proposal relies too much on a force majeure premise, a diverse society of groups where individuals are free to choose the space that represents their identity and the group they see fit. This proposal is not feasible in a closed society, a uniform society, where individuals have no more than one choice group. Besides, all individuals can only characterize the individual identity in a particular group. Individuals, as cognitive entities, cannot exist outside the group. Even if the individual searches for the other group that he feels comfortable with, once he joins the group, he is forced to inherit an existing language and vocabulary of the group to re-describe his/her Self. That is, every choice comes with a price to pay, his/her story must be involved in the other person’s accounts to form the intersubjectivity in the community of language to shape the identity.

Language Cannot Precede Its Existence

Rorty finds similarities between the younger Heidegger and the later Wittgenstein regarding one’s denial and escape from the contingency of existence in which they are involved. In “Being and Time”, Heidegger denies the traditional way of thinking that structuralizes philosophy as “theoria”² (Rorty, 1991, p. 50) in which the gap between consciousness and existence is created among the “knowing subject”, time, and contingency. From Heidegger’s

² Theoria (θεωρία), a Greek word, means watching, observing from afar. In terms of etymology, it is the root of the word “theory.”

standpoint, the Self cannot exist as a meaningful and cognitive entity if it separates itself from its existential time and social practices.

What the younger Heidegger tells us about the sociohistorical situation of Desein is just what the older Wittgenstein tells us about the situation in regard to language – that when we try to transcend it by turning metaphysical we become self-deceptive, inauthentic. (Rorty, 1991, p. 51)

Philosophy, from this viewpoint, has become a sort of therapy for self-awareness that moves toward self-knowledge instead of the provider of a theory of truth formed by the Cartesian – Kantian epistemological tradition. The limitation of traditional philosophy is its failure to depart from changeable “actualities” to reach “possibility,” eliminating the transformation of time and socio-historical practices. This escape process is the way a cognitive entity discovers the truth in which a correct proposition is also the correct understanding of truth.

Why is there a problem with this view? Rorty mentions that linguistic philosophers like younger Wittgenstein in the early twentieth-century tried to avoid relativity, changeability, and unpredictability of historical processes by referring to language and creating “a priori conditions” as a means of discovering the inevitable truth. However, this creation is caught in the contradiction that if language can create conditions for the possibility seeking process, it cannot set up conditions for the possibility of itself. In this case, language only has meaning when it can exist outside the conditions created by language. Language has no meaning outside of the language itself or its creation in the sociohistorical context. A single concept has circumstantial meaning and after its slice of time, can be described and understood by others in various ways. Therefore, language cannot provide any priories for its existence except the description of a particular fact and the re-description afterward.

By using the concept “*aletheia*,” Heidegger defines the truth as an open, unconcealed disclosure. In the arts and sciences, truth is acknowledged as a language event. “To raise the question of *aletheia*, of disclosure as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth. For this reason, it was inadequate and misleading to call *aletheia* in the sense of opening, truth.” (Heidegger, 1972, p. 70).³

Language is not merely a tool to interpret the human mind. In this framework, the human assumes a central place of being, even a contrast to language. When participants join a language game, they must accept a language system they did not create. Rather, it is a heritage of history and community that is used to re-create the Self, even when words are not exchanged. Language and the “knowing subject” are harmonious organic entity involving socio-historical practices that open a field of living like Heidegger’s assertion that poetry could overcome simple communication towards “opening a realm of life function”. Unlike the logical arguments depicting the stable causal relationship as true or false, poet create an open, undefined space, and unanswered spot through which individuals are free to create truth rather than simply finding the truth. Heidegger also objected to conventional notions that classify language as a tool of communication. A dimension of the existence of human life, “Language is the house of being” (Heidegger, *Letter on “Humanism”*),⁴ work of art that opens a realm of life where human creates truth.

³ Cited in Nikolas Kompridis, “Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future”, 2006, p. 188.

⁴ Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi, p.254.

The question is why traditional metaphysics from a Platonic – Cartesian – Kantian viewpoint, are entirely consistent with a standardized form of the world that determines the meaning and purpose of “actualities?” This complete loyalty can be explained by applying the correct description of language to reality; that if language can describe the facts and conditions for its application, “other conditions” would be necessary to analyze the statement that accurately describes language to get a correct description. Therefore, it is necessary of an ontology of the world that the meaning of language can be identified. In other words, if there is no such thing as ontology, a meaningful proposition must depend on a correct proposition in which immutability and infallibility cannot be denied. Apparently, we, “the knowing subject”, cannot simply handedly create the reference that we can use to describe the world. So, the conditions to the description are indescribable.

Rorty disagrees and asks why the world cannot have its own purpose. Why does language need something outside of its “knowability,” “describability,” and “experienceability?” Language exists in the limitation of conditions, and its meaning depends on the socio-historical practices it describes. He mentions that even when we talk about God, we only discuss His features, powers, characteristics, and salvation. When we talk about the truth, we refer only to the possibility of it. All are “justification” and nothing more. “[...] the present-at-hand was only available in the context of pre-existent relations with the ready-to-hand, that social practice was the presupposition of the demand for exactness and for answer that could be given once and for all.” (Rorty, 1991, p.60)

An object can be seen and used from many perspectives depending on which context the object belongs. The features and meaning of an object, in relation to the “knowing subject,” are not identified as non-empirical and unchangeable conditions.

The meaning, features, and purpose of an object depends on the context of its framework. In a different context, that same object could have very different meaning, characteristics, and purpose. This network of projected purposes is the system of social practices that can be opened forever as interrupted slices in a continuous flow of contingency.

Conclusion

The human being never fully possessed or mastered the whole language. We cannot set the system of conditions for language by ourselves, but must rely on language. It is overcoming the understanding of language as a simple communication tool; we can expand the amplitude of the relationship with the world only by recognizing that language is not a spare in a simple technical world that is “the house of being,” a new realm of the living.

References

- Bacon, M. (2012). *Pragmatism. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bernstein, R. J. (2010). *The pragmatic turn*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brandom, R. B. (2000). *Rorty and his critics*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Brandom, R. B. (2008). *Between saying and doing. Towards an analytic pragmatism*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Danka, I. (2011), A case study on the limits of ironic re-description: Rorty on Wittgenstein. *Pragmatism Today*, 2(1), 68–77.
- Fraser, N. (2000), Why overcoming prejudice is not enough: A rejoinder to Richard Rorty. *Critical Horizons*, 1(1), 21–28. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851600510408>
- Goodman, R. B. (1995). *Pragmatism – A contemporary reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Grippe, E. (n.d.) Richard Rorty. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/rorty/#SH5d>. Access
- Gross, N. (2008). *Richard Rorty – the making of an American philosopher*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Haack, S. (2006). *Pragmatism old & new*. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Hardwick, C.D., & Donald A. C. (1997). *Pragmatism, neo-pragmatism, and religion. conversations with Richard Rorty*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie, & E. Robinson trans.). Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Ltd. (Original work published 1927).
- Kompridis, N. (2006), *Critique and disclosure, critical theory between past and future*. Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Malachowski, A. (2014). *Richard Rorty*. New York: Routledge.
- Mendieta, E. (2006). *Take care of freedom and truth will take care of itself. Interview with Richard Rorty*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Misak, C. (2013). *The American pragmatists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Misak, C. (2007). *New pragmatists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morris, M. (2007). *An introduction to the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Auxier, R. E. & Hahn L. E. (Eds.) (2010). *The philosophy of Richard Rorty. Library of Living Philosophers. Volume XXXII*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Rorty, R. (1979). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1982). *Consequences of pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1991). *Essays on Heidegger and others: Philosophical papers, volume 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. UK

Rorty, R. (2000). *Philosophy and social hope*. Penguin.

Rorty, R. (2007). *Philosophy as cultural politics*. Cambridge.

Shook, J. R., & Margolis, J. (Eds.). (2009). *A Companion to Pragmatism*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. (Original work published 1953)

Corresponding Author: Do Kien Trung

Contact email: dokientrung@ueh.edu.vn

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy
Call for Peer Reviewers
(now accepting applications)

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy is an internationally reviewed and editorially independent Open Access interdisciplinary journal associated with IAFOR's international conferences on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy.

The journal's Editor, Dr Lystra Hagley-Dickinson, is calling for reviewers to assist with the peer review process for upcoming journal issues.

How to Apply

Candidates for the role of Peer Reviewer should have:

- a PhD in a relevant field;
- a faculty position;
- an emerging publication record in academic journals;
- demonstrable excellent English language skills;
- strong critical assessment abilities;
- a sound understanding of academic ethics in publishing (particularly in regards to plagiarism);
- excellent communication and time management skills.

Peer reviewers are expected to review at least 2 - 3 papers each year.

If you are keen to gain review experience and to work with highly capable colleagues to further your own academic publishing career, then please contact Dr Lystra Hagley-Dickinson via **publications@iafor.org** with your CV and cover letter. Please include "Peer Reviewer Application: Ethics, Religion & Philosophy" in your email subject line.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch at **publications@iafor.org**.

the iafor
journal of ethics,
religion &
philosophy

ISSN: 2187-0624