

# philosophy and the thinking of the end times

editorial

We gladly welcome you to this fourth volume (2015) of *Suri: The Official Journal of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines* (PAP, Inc.) with the hope and promise of a freer, more emancipatory engagement with the blessed fruits of our esteemed contributors' hard work and painstaking research. By choosing the online medium of publication, it is hoped that a more democratized access to *Suri* can be more readily available not only for PAP members, but for all philosophy enthusiasts and practitioners here in the Philippines and all over the world.

The present volume was done under the auspices of the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO, through the efforts of Dr. Rainier Ibanez, which gave a special grant to PAP in order to organize a One-day Teaching Ethics Conference at the Leong Hall of the Ateneo de Manila University last December 6, 2014. The conference, designed to explore new ways of integrating philosophical education in the K-12 system, was well attended by more than 430 philosophers, teachers, and students attendees representing various institutions and universities in the country. It was graced by the presence of distinguished lecturers and professors such Dr. Antonette Palma-Angeles, Vice President of the Ateneo Professional Schools; Dr. Agustin Martin Rodriguez, chair of the Ateneo de Manila's Philosophy Department; Dr. Manuel Dy, Dr. Tomas Rosario, Dr. Jade Principle, Dr. Jean Tan, Dr. Oscar Bulaong, Jr., Dr. Jacqueline Cleofas, all also from ADMU's Philosophy Department. Dr. Zosimo Lee of the University of the Philippines rounded up this excellent and select group of speakers.

Also complementing the activity were five breakout panels that contributed to the richness of the event: 1) Business ethics organized by ADMU; 2) Environmental Ethics led by Miriam College; 3) Research Ethics spearheaded by the University of Santo Tomas; 4) Gender Ethics organized by De la Salle University; and 5) Bioethics led by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. These panels ensured that more concrete and relevant approaches can be integrated in the study and teaching of Ethics in the world today.



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Several words of gratitude are in order. Of course, we would not be able to realize this work if not for the trust and mandate given to us by the PAP Board of Directors, through our President, Dr. Mark Joseph Calano. We thank the Board for giving us the opportunity to be of service not only to our PAP members but to the philosophical community in the Philippines as a whole. It was a daunting task we wholeheartedly took in the spirit of service, one which we think we could only approximate to the full only with good faith.

We would like to profusely thank the present contributors to this volume. We hope that your generosity will continue in the future issues of *Suri* as you inspire the whole Filipino philosophical community to be more generous in sharing your intellectual resources for the good of all. Truly, the development of philosophy in the country, one that grounds a philosophical nationality, constitutes a task to be shared by all of us.

In a special way, I wish to acknowledge with profound gratitude the help provided by my two associate editors, Dr. Jeremiah Joven Joaquin of the De la Salle University (DLSU-Taft, Manila) and Prof. Virgilio A. Rivas of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP-Sta. Mesa, Manila) for sharing with me the burdensome task of editing all the papers contained in this volume (2015) and in the next two (2016-17). In a very special way, I wish to thank the excellent job by our editorial assistant, Jayson Jimenez, also from PUP-Sta. Mesa, for providing the "third eye" necessary for cleaning up our mistakes, in form and content. More importantly, it was him who provided the excellent design of the *Suri* webpage, making sure that we are spared of the nauseous task of dealing with all the intricate technological demands connected with translating a journal from print to online. I also would like to thank Dr. Paolo Bolaños of the University of Santo Tomas (España, Manila) for taking charge of the *Suri* webpage and for the maintenance of our PAP website. I wish to acknowledge his work as the first editor-in-chief of *Suri* (2012) and the work of Prof. Michael Ner Mariano of the Ateneo de Manila University, who succeeded him for our 2013 and 2014 issues. Our work is a continuation of what they have beautifully started.

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The articles in this year's (2015) two issues mostly consist of those papers delivered and presented during the One-day Teaching Ethics Conference. They reveal emerging trends that concern philosophical research in the country: that of education and on ethics.

## I. Education

In the first issue, we see an enlightened and critical engagement between philosophic reflection and the conduct of educational reform in the country. In the present Philippine context, the introduction of the government's K-12 educational reform invites us to consider its technological impact upon concrete human lives. Underlined by the obsessive-compulsive demand to produce Filipinos as a trained workforce for the international market economy, there is the widespread recognition that the K-12 educational technology represents another form of machination that enframe individuals within a totalizing educational framework intent at producing its citizens as mere cogs within the global techno-capitalist machine. This gesture, in which the complicity of the modern academe is necessary, signals the triumph of that tele-techno-capitalist rationality pervading the minds of the modern elite bourgeoisie that rule this intellectual poverty-stricken country. All hope is not lost, however. The possibilities for emancipation incipient within philosophy as a discipline, and the humanities by implication, provide us with that seminal hope that can never be lost. Jovito Cariño's article in this volume, "Philosophy and the Academe," enlightens us to the necessity of grounding holistic education, both basic and higher, in the more important goal of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*). Following Alasdair MacIntyre's seminal thoughts on education, Cariño calls for mindfulness to the ways in which national and transnational corporate ideologies and capitalist industry shape the market economy of human beings as readily available for export for exploitation by global capitalism. This "cheap fiction," as Cariño calls it, is something that we must overcome if the K-12 education is to achieve its more important goal of forming holistic human persons and not only job-ready individuals hopelessly enframed within the fetishistic egoism of modern contemporary life.

Mark Joseph Calano's "Ang Pilosopiya at ang Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao" is a reflection on the teaching of philosophy considered from within its Greek origins and how it can be approximated in the current task on achieving a holistic education for the humanities. The task of philosophic teaching is not only to teach concepts but to make it as central to the individual person's life. This can be achieved by centering the formative process on the acquisition of virtue [*arête*] which would eventually underlie the achievement of the good, both of the social and the personal. Only within this dialectic can we truly understand the full meaning of human flourishing.

In the same spirit, Marc Oliver Pasco's "Heidegger and the K-12: Un-learning as the Proper Task of Educational Reform" invites to a critical examination of the founding assumptions of this educational reform towards the cultivation of a certain cautiousness, one which would warn against the exploitation occasioned by the power of money-as-capital. The capitalization of education and the consequent bourgeoisification of the

academe is something that philosophical education must counter-act and overcome if we are not to let the enframing of Filipino bodies get the best of us.

Jonas Miranda's article about Hannah Arendt's thoughts on education provides an interesting ground for learning in the "love for the world." In Arendt's thinking, education must concretely respond to the problems that the individual encounters in the world in its path towards achieving its full humanity. Thus, it must not let itself be caught within the totalizing ideologies that ultimately oppress and dehumanize the human being. Instead, it must lead towards a certain responsibility that acts as a concrete instantiation of this love of the world within our shared political lifeworld. Miranda concludes that the proper understanding of the human condition involves the appreciation of the fact of our natality, plurality and spontaneity, which are all marks of an ideal political system.

The last article in this issue, Marie Chris Ramoya's "A Theory of the University: A Deconstructive Approach," centers on the responsibility of the university to be authentic centers of learning and knowledge. Following Jacques Derrida, Ramoya invites to the consideration of the essence of the university as a philosophy, as something philosophical which necessitates a theory that enables philosophy itself to fulfill its task of bridging the different fields or sciences which cannot, and does not, think by themselves. This implies that the acquisition of knowledge within the university must be codified by the specific thinking of the philosophical as a liberating factor from the limits of the economic and teleological limits of instrumental reason. Only when the university is freed from its enframing within techno-capitalist instrumental rationality that it can acquire its proper essence as a university: that is, its privileged mandate to seek and access the truth.

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## **II. Ethics, Ecology, Society**

The opening article in the second issue, Virgilio A. Rivas' "Designing the Apocalypse: A Sketch for a New Ecological Aesthetics," forcefully argues for the inescapable need to confront the threat of global human extinction. This threat, tied up with the event of planetary collapse, is anchored on the modern technological machination and enframing which has characterized the time of the anthropocene, that is, as the scene where man has taken the privilege of mastery, control, and domination over the whole of nature and creation. In modernity, this privilege started when Rene Descartes ushered in the time of the *Cogito*, which, as Rivas argues, reduced the whole world of objects into the thinkable by human consciousness. In contrast to this anthropocenic privilege, Rivas invites us to a radical reconsideration of the aesthetic way by which we can face the negative effects of the inevitable planetary entropy and environmental collapse. This way, to design the apocalypse is to let the world of nature *be*, preventing its

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destruction by modern technology, and to forego the exploitative tendencies of modern anthropocentric thinking.

The next article, Ian Clark Parcon's "Heidegger's Notion of Dwelling and Ecological Democracy," explores the possibility of addressing the current ecological crisis' attendant catastrophe through a return to a more fundamental understanding of the human condition in terms of dwelling. Following Heidegger's conception of dwelling as man's being-in-the-world, Parcon considers it as a possible ground for the thinking an ecological democracy that mediates between human responsibility and environmental demands. Caring for the earth as our common inheritance demands not a total renunciation of the human factor in ecological concerns but rather a more meditative listening that enables us to recognize our proper place within the scheme that has nature as the primary element.

Kevin Ross Nera's "Rethinking Identity in a Multicultural World: Amartya Sen's Proposal for Peace," further highlights an important aspect of modern life that can be developed through education: the sense of cosmopolitan responsibility. The fact of a diverse, multicultural planet necessitates a thinking of identity beyond the narrow parochialism of ethnic-religious and communal identities. While not discounting the important sense of ethno-national identities in the struggle towards self-determination and over-all human emancipation, Nera invites us to subject our inherited biases about our *ethos* or ways of life and to think beyond the epistemic violence connected with thinking one's sense of self solely in terms of religions and ethnicities. The demands of the modern world for peace lie in the educational task of developing compassion and openness to other modes of life in ourselves and in the young.

This volume ends with Jayson Jimenez's "Kant and Precolonial Mathematics" which provides an interesting rejoinder in these discourses about planetary end and the hopes of education. Using Kant's thinking on pure intuition and mathematics, he seeks to locate for the possibility of looking at the Angono Petroglyphs as a form of ethnomathematics that rely on pure intuition. This kind of ethnomathematics was utilized by the ancient inhabitants of pre-Hispanic Philippine societies in order to build their conceptions of geometry and apply them to ancient shipbuilding and other crafts. The lesson to be learned is about the richness of ancient knowledge that we, people in the present, have only started to uncover.

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What does it mean for philosophy to think of the end times? Does it mean to think the status or nature of philosophy at the end times, where we think its relation to an end which escapes its own grasp? Or, does it mean to think the role of philosophy at the end in the hope of negotiating, or better yet, designing as Virgilio Rivas calls it, the terms

of our extinction with the inevitable event of the apocalypse? Is it possible to think philosophically and of philosophy *about* the end? Indeed, of philosophy *and* the end; of philosophy *as* the end; of philosophy in relation to the end of times or to that apocalypse where the thinking of the end is also the thinking of the goal, the purpose, and the finality of things which ultimately redounds to the thinking of the reason, the *why* of things?

How do we go about thinking this relation between philosophy and the end? The existence and practice of philosophy has always given homage to its purpose as the search for truth. Its continual justification is structurally tied up to this relation to the truth which, as the *telos* of the love of wisdom, directs philosophy to the singularity of the real, of that which is. To think of philosophy and the end is thus to think of its privileged relation to truth as its specific end, its purpose, the *raison d'être* without which it would no longer be what it is. Against this traditional thinking of philosophy as the love of wisdom, in its essential relation to the truth, I propose that we measure the thinking of philosophy and the end times.

It is probably too obvious by now that the discourse about the end times, about the apocalypse, has gained currency in much contemporary philosophical reflection. All major thinkers, from both western and the eastern canons, have said something about the end: whether it is about the end of times, faith, philosophy, capitalism, colonialism, the nation, gender, humanity, etc. These suggest an essential relation of thinking to its end that needs to be articulated in the attempt of thought to acquire a complete image of itself. But this relation of thought to itself is the very act that constitutes the very value of philosophy itself: that it be free to pursue the truth.

To think the *what has become* of philosophy, to assess its reason or purpose in relation to its present state requires a careful thinking of the apocalypse and the manifold forms it takes. In our present context, the capitalization of education, the bourgeoisification of the academe, and the transformation of humans as cheap labor, constitute the main obstacles that we must confront. What is at stake in this confrontation is about the dignity of a humanity that must be capable of redeeming its dignity in the face of the global catastrophe that is no longer *to come* but something that has already happened and one in which humanity finds itself unable to escape. It is in this sense that philosophy must realize its vocation to truth; one that does not let itself be limited to the powers that be, or to the homo-hegemony of techno-capitalist institutions, such as the market economy or even that of a bourgeoisified academe. We must always safeguard this mandate to truth as the way to counter the apocalypse that has already come. This apocalypse, whose form is constituted by the deplorable suffering, dehumanization and oppression of countless human faces, can only be addressed if there is a return to the essence of philosophy as freedom. Our task, then, has only just begun: philosophy must always act against the complacent order of things. And it can only do so once it has shed

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the shackles of a thinking enframed by the money-fetish and owes its loyalty to no one, not even to philosophy itself, but only to the truth and justice for the other.

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