

The Consolation of Philosophy in the Age of Globalization: Reaffirming the Wisdom Tradition in Education

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to develop three variations of the practice of philosophy in the age of globalization that retain a renewed contemporary appeal. These are: philosophy as social criticism, freedom for concepts, and the self as text. That is, this work argues that philosophy can have a vital role to play in an age marked by loss of personal meaning in the midst of complex interactions at social and cultural levels. The task of philosophy is essentially concerned with transforming the challenges of globalization into opportunities for peaceful coexistence with one another, with careful attention with the excluded and marginalized members of society. We philosophize in terms of our specific human condition, which provides the occasion for interpretation, globalization is today's moment of humanity. Globalization is what we make it to be. If we choose to transform it into an enriching experience of being human with one another in mutual peace and harmony, then we see that globalization carries with it potentials for increasing our sense of social responsibility and solidarity with one another, especially with the marginalized and excluded members of society. A responsible philosophizing today therefore has to be sensitive to the reality of globalization and must proceed with sustained reflections on the issues of globalization. If this can be done, then philosophy keeps its enduring consolation as a truthful vision of the world.

"With a good heart make philosophy your goal and your work."

Plato

Introduction

Reflecting on Plato's exhortation above, we obviously ask: "Why?" Why do we have to make philosophy our goal and our work, when it is even derided by others for its alleged futility? Why do we have to be interested in a pursuit that has the unfortunate reputation of being allegedly notoriously abstract and purportedly detached from society's

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real problems? Yet, following Plato, we raise the following important questions: What is it then in the study of philosophy that makes it essentially important to us today? In what does philosophy's supposed good consist that warrants an appreciation in today's global society? Briefly, Plato's appeal to lead a philosophical life reveals the lasting positive value of the study of philosophy, both as a theoretical discipline and as a mode of existence. Together these two dimensions of philosophy constitute philosophy's destiny as society's cultural achievement sustained by people's capacity for asking fundamental questions about issues affecting their lives. That makes philosophy useful!

Philosophy was actually something that the ancients seriously concerned themselves with. It was part of their entire culture as a people seeking inner peace with themselves and a meaningful place in their society as citizens. The ancients' engagement in philosophical life was humanly integral, since it involved the both the theoretical and the practical orientations of being human. It was a task they had to carry out, if they wanted to achieve a good life. Indeed, the quest for the good life is at the heart of every philosophical practice that at the same time transcends historical moments.

Thus, a historical look at such culture reveals today the basic insight that philosophy is, as it was practiced by the ancients in their search for a wise living, remains a contemporary issue; it has evolved into a people's longing for meaning that sifts the wisdom of the ages and translates such into real concerns of today. Human life is one complex reality within which we find ourselves. With all its travails and hopes, we try our best to deal with life to the best we can. Characterizing life this way impels us to construct a perspective that allows us to attain to some degree of meaning. Hence, far from being assigned to be a detached intellectual activity where only a few can privilege themselves to become practitioners, philosophy is and must be everyone's business.¹

How do people become philosophers? "People become philosophers," writes Alexander Nehamas (1998, 2) in his widely-acclaimed *The art of living*, "because they are able and willing to be the best type and to live as well as human beings possibly can." It is therefore with this search for meaning in life and for what promotes human flourishing that philosophy

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¹ A reconstruction of the ancient Greek philosophy reveals that originally philosophy was a practice of the care or the culture of the self, since life in antiquity was seen as a test for strength. Accordingly, philosophy, primarily understood and pursued as care of the self, constituted the essence of education. It required applying one's whole life to series of tests which were meant to strengthen one's mind and body. "In other words," explains Michel Foucault (2005, 439) in his *The hermeneutics of the subject*, "the whole of life is an education... Its scale encompasses the whole of life, consisting in educating oneself through all of life's misfortunes."

begins. Philosophy as an engaging reflective experience of being human is truly a complex human endeavor that embraces everything that pertains to the challenge of living genuinely; its explicit end is the attainment of human development in the midst of a rapidly changing society. In short, philosophy is a way of life prompted by an ethical impulse to seek and cultivate the good life under just social institutions. What we want to see precisely in this age of globalization is a society characterized by the presence of just social institutions.

In response to the challenge of reaching a level of the good life within the context of the present concerns, this paper aims to develop three variations of the practice of philosophy primarily in the age of globalization that retain a renewed contemporary appeal. Talks about globalization veer towards a host of criticisms against, especially when the discussions focus on the economic aspect. But point is to make it work in improving people's lives. At least, this is the argument of the proponents of globalization who "believe that globalization has the potential to bring enormous benefits to those in both developing and the developed world," writes Nobel laureate in economics Joseph Stiglitz (2007, 4). But regardless of how one feels about the perils and promise of globalization, it requires the basic recognition of its being today's human condition permeating the various aspects of human life. "The problem is not with globalization itself but in the way globalization has been managed," continues Stiglitz (*ibid.*). In other words, we recognize that globalization is today's context of doing philosophy, since it is the very situation from which we think.

Therefore, globalization, as Annelies Decat correctly puts it, "needs to be understood empirically and responded to theoretically" (2013, 2). Accordingly, we need to ask if philosophizing with its cherished tradition of the search for truth is still possible in a world driven mainly by economic pursuits. We cannot stress this enough considering that in globalization we see where, as Jean-Luc Nancy (2007, 34) observes: "the convergence of knowledge, ethics, and social well-being dissipated, and the domination of an empire made up of technological power and pure economic reason asserted itself." To challenge this ideology, we can reactivate today the ancient practice of philosophy as a mode of being human geared towards a life of truthful relations.

Specifically, we intend to argue for the following variations of philosophy, namely: philosophy as social criticism, freedom for concepts, and the self as text.

Philosophy as Social Criticism

Edmund Husserl (1965, 178) in *Phenomenology and the crisis of philosophy* firmly believes that "philosophy has constantly to exercise its role of leadership for the whole humankind." That makes philosophy necessarily

social.² That is why a truly purpose-driven life in society is deeply rooted in an understanding of life framed in a philosophical inspiration. Since philosophy is implicit in our vision of reality, it proves an interpretive perspective on what it means to be human. It is our capacity to subject our values and beliefs to a sustained method of questioning, with a view to freeing our mind towards a realistic understanding of reality. For, what is philosophy, if not a higher level of inquiry that deeply examines our pre-suppositions and assumptions of who we are. Michel Foucault (1997, 316) in his important essay “What is enlightenment?” correctly underscores the historical orientation of our thinking, thus describing philosophy, as follows: “I shall thus characterize the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits that we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings.”

For one, philosophy is a practice of thought that endeavors to be historically informed and critically transformed. It is a critique of what we are, do, and think. Likewise, it can be seen as an historical analysis of the external forces contingently imposed upon us. More importantly, philosophy involves a questioning of the possibility of going beyond the limits of one’s being in the sense of becoming better! In practice, this means that “a philosophical work,” to quote Ludwig Wittgenstein (1999, 52), “consists essentially in elucidations.” Philosophy analyzes, reflects on, and finally changes the contemporary situatedness of the human person in fabric of relations. It sees that one’s thinking is a product of one’s own specific time and place, and that it is called to reappropriate that thinking in response to new emerging situations. That makes philosophy transforma-

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² There exists a prevailing view that philosophy, strictly speaking, cannot be but far from being relevantly social. This view insists that philosophy can hardly be considered socially useful, since many of everyday’s concerns can be best addressed by, say, science, economics, and law. Some say that there is nothing philosophical, that is, metaphysically insightful about, for instance, scientific discoveries that philosophers in that mold seek to explain. Scientists have a better cosmology than metaphysicians are willing to admit. Others further claim that philosophy is nothing but what people like John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein consider to be philosophy’s primary function: to clarify and improve our minds about the way we think and use language in our everyday affairs.

However, there also persists an equally interesting belief that the social nature of philosophy precisely lies in its origin in the shared or collective rational capability of a community to understand. The revered figure of John Dewey (1957, 122) himself in his *Reconstruction in philosophy* strongly suggests that philosophy, undeniably having had a long tradition in humanity’s progress, can and must be transformed in the way of “rationalizing the possibilities of experience, especially collective human experience.” Thus, it certainly belongs to the purview of philosophy the comprehension of the human situation. Philosophy must therefore be applied to the solution of human problems. Dewey concludes that the “articulation and revelation of the meanings of the current course of events is the task and problem of philosophy in days of transition.”

tive. “Every philosophy is a transformative continuation of one or preceding philosophies or parts of them,” writes Adrian Peperzak (2012, 28). In other words, we envisage philosophy as a critical history of our present situation that makes us deeply aware of our times!

Philosophy encourages, that is, it touches on the heart of the matter, the activity of self-criticism which is philosophy’s essential virtue. For philosophy to be true to its critical calling, it must interrogate its own foundations and motives of radical questioning. Philosophy carries out this humbling yet enriching task by reflection, whereby it turns its probing strength back to itself. The development of philosophy into a sound and critical process of self-interrogation affirms the borders of thought and aims to expand them. This analytical bent can have ethical implications. For instance, the ability to put things in proper perspective and view reality from an inclusive vantage point is the quality of a happy man.

Perhaps, uncharacteristic to some, but even the revered analytical giant Bertrand Russell has some important existential insights to offer to a society in crisis. Concludes Russell (1996, 188) in his *The conquest of happiness*: “The happy man is... a man (who) feels himself a citizen of the universe, enjoying freely the spectacle that it offers and the joys that it affords, untroubled by the thought of death because he feels himself not really separate from those who will come after him. It is in such profound instinctive union with the stream of life that the greatest joy is to be found.”

No doubt, philosophy suggests the expansion of consciousness meant to embrace the truth of change that is supposed to be learned with one’s heart. Coming to terms with change is as rational as spiritual an endeavor that sees the self connected to a greater reality. What this further tells us is that in a flux of uncertainty that grips people today, thus making them disoriented and at a loss for meaning. We therefore turn as it was in the past to the role of philosophy as fundamentally an ongoing process of carving out new pathways for new consciousness that sets us free. That is, in our search for a meaningful life, philosophy helps us look for and focus on things that truly matter. John Dewey (1997, 324) writes well, thus: “There is the endeavor to attain as unified, consistent, and complete an outlook upon experience as is possible. This aspect is expressed in the word ‘philosophy’ – love of wisdom.”

Philosophy then is all about leading people to a higher level of self-knowledge, which empowers them to face up with new situations and challenges in the light of rapid changes in the world. Philosophy rightly understood and widely applied can mean an indispensable life strategy enabling us to reach our goals in the most rational way. Immanuel Kant (2003, 470) in his *Critique of pure reason* writes about the meaning of philosophy as that “which we endeavor in various ways to approximate, until we have discovered the right path to pursue... In other words, we can only

exercise our powers of reasoning in accordance with general principles, retaining at the same time, the right of investigating the sources of these principles, of testing, and even of rejecting them.” Kant’s critical perception of a philosophical life definitely has implications beyond the ordinary order of knowing. A life of philosophy strongly proposes a perspective that takes into account the varied ways we can make of the meaning of human existence. As in the enigmatic words of Abraham Heschel (1979, 193): “Philosophy is what man dares to do with his ultimate surmise of meaning in existence.” Confronted with the depths of human existence, philosophy exercised with appropriate thinking competencies and positive attitude can help us fathom existential depths with a sober mind. More than a mental capacity, philosophy fundamentally implies a positive attitude towards life.

Thus understood, philosophy suggests seeing the world aright outside any insinuation of dualism that divides the unity that is constitutive of the wholeness of the human person. This means a practice of inwardness that builds on the center of the self, called *consciousness*. Since philosophy compels us to recognize the presence of the self that truly cogitates itself as it relates itself to the world outside itself. The fullness of consciousness in the human person necessitates one to look at oneself with the truth that only clarity of honest and responsible thinking can bring.

In a sense, uncluttered and free, the mind can reach the highest peak of its potentials in transforming the world into what it designs. Therefore, consciousness is constructivist as it is revisionist. It is constructivist because it shapes up the world we see; revisionist, for it changes the perspectives through which to perceive beyond the changes that blur the stability of reality before the observing eye. This is the meaning of overcoming possibilities of deception with which philosophy as truthful seeking of reality is tasked.

Philosophy certainly has a high importance on today’s social and political issues, helping us analyze and reflect on these issues in order to be able to act justly and live wisely. Why is this? A truly responsible conception of philosophy includes a critique of hegemonic rationality. Philosophy calls upon us to refrain from imposing one’s notions of truth upon others, for that would be dangerously ideologically suspect. Otherwise, philosophy would not politically matter at all. Consequently, doing philosophy in society has a lot to do in the activity of the cultivation of mindsets at an institutional level, thus acknowledging the presence of philosophy conduits in educational centers like the university.³ In *Points*

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³ The presence of a philosophy department in the university is vital to the life of the university as a whole. For from the philosophy department comes much hope for the future of the university, since, as expected, philosophy education is concerned with the most fundamental presupposition of all education: passion for truth that leads to *love of wisdom*.

Jacques Derrida (1995, 338) emphasizes that “questions concerning the teaching of philosophy are inseparable from those concerning teaching and research in all disciplines at all levels.”

Freedom for Concepts

The practice of philosophy teaches us to frame and articulate with sense our arguments, no doubt. Meaning, it shows us how to pursue with logical coherence and style our views with one another on important matters affecting us. Freedom of thought demands freedom of concepts. For this we necessarily subscribe to enabling interpretive constructs in seeing the world. Hence, we live by our own self-concepts, for good or ill. That is why it is imperative to become conscious of what our self-concepts are doing to ourselves and to our relations. Certainly, self-questioning is a philosophical habit. We need to constantly examine our intentions and desires, insofar as such gesture has wide-ranging implications in the way we conduct our lives. In other words, philosophy involves the practice of critical as well as creative thinking patterns that engages us in a radical confrontation with ourselves!

Philosophy discloses that our generalizations of the world including ourselves are inescapably framed; systems of thought that organize our interpretation of the world through enabling concepts take on their cue from the structures of our understanding. That is why we assert the constructive role of philosophy in terms of creating concepts through which we structure and explain our worldview.

Philosophy invents concepts to structure in a particular manner our understanding of the changing world. Philosophy then provides an indispensable critical tool of citizenship. For the concept of citizenship refers

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The discipline of philosophy is an explicit training in the thinking process that is implicit in all other disciplines.

That makes every discipline, therefore, in the whole university structure, philosophical – whether one is aware of it or not. “Philosophy is indispensable for *education* because it *draws* knowledge into an artistic conception of the world, and thereby ennobles it,” runs Nietzsche’s (1995, 21) aphorism in a series of his collected works *Unpublished writings (From the period of unfashionable observations)*.

We suggest here that the university, through its various academic groups and programs, must seriously take its mission of educating the members of the society, leading them to what essentially matters in their lives beyond empirical realities. This involves instructing students in the habit of creative and critical thinking, that is, in free and truthful reflections, thus enabling them in the process to learn how to problematize their changing life contexts. For education means the formation of capacity for an adequate interpretation of one’s situation, in view of the transformation of the same situation into the end of a good life. Ultimately, education is self-actualization, in the sense of attaining an integral knowledge of oneself in relation to the wider society. Ideally, it is to this end that every university must commit its very existence.

to the experience of the freedom of choice and self-determination as a member of society. Freedom which is the essence of citizenship is truly a philosophical issue. Freedom of inquiry leads to freedom of being human.

Philosophy as concept-laden is an effort to mediate our finite view of the world with what is infinitely intriguing. That is, in the plot of life we attempt to achieve an orderly pattern of our experiences to form a whole story. Otherwise, we feel at a loss. Accordingly, philosophy deeply situates our being in this world that makes us worthy actors in a story that we creatively weave with “truths” of ourselves. The text of ourselves therefore is constituted in a narrative context, that is, in an account of meaningful relations; and it can only be appropriately understood within that context. The text of being human is a function of recontextualization in manifold relations!

Philosophy as a way of life cannot ignore the life of truth that it implicitly recognizes in every genuine interpretation. Philosophy is invariably interpretive. Martin Heidegger and his famous student Hans-Georg Gadamer argue that the human existence is an hermeneutical situation. Interpretation is not a tool we can arbitrarily dispense with, but rather it is the very character of being human. To exist is interpret, to make sense of our experiences. That is, it is to seek understanding of who or what we are in relation to others and the world. Accordingly, as a passion for truth that ultimately promotes authentic living, philosophy must resolutely bring out in the open the most essential truth behind the many facets of reality.

Likewise, Gabriel Marcel’s understanding of the nature of philosophy is most aptly nuanced at this stage of our meditation on philosophizing at the present age. A life of critical thinking forces us to think in fresh perspectives in the light of new events. As he (1970, 65) writes in *Creative fidelity*: “No concrete philosophy is possible... without the most stringent and rigorous reflection directed on our most intensely lived experience.” Philosophy innovates our ways of leading our lives prompted by emerging new realities. Moments of innovation are reflections of interpretation. Out of various viewpoints we see the rise of an unmistakable truth, whose light we cannot play blind to. To approach the light is to see the power of a light that transforms our vision into a truth-seeing inclusive experience of freedom.

Philosophy is an inclusive way of life, because it embraces the totality of the limits and possibilities of being human unfolding in manifold relations; it is a cosmic responsibility. In the words of Jostein Gaarder (2007, 5): “Human beings are possibly the only living creatures in the universe with a universal consciousness. And so our responsibility to preserve the living environment of this planet is not only global but cosmic.” It actually further helps us actively remember and reflect on life’s enduring questions,

that whether in a postmodern age or not we strive to commit ourselves to. It is a way of life that always goes back to philosophy's original practical intent: living wisely. The revered understanding of philosophy as love of wisdom certainly implies living wisely. Alfred North Whitehead (1997, 198) evidently shows that "wisdom is the fruit of a balanced development." Philosophy is definitely a life-enhancing pursuit that is worth-exploring, to say the least, for its invaluable importance to and relevance in our search for a genuine coexistence.

Francis Gevers (1966, 367) describes the transformative end of doing philosophy, which results from a painstakingly interpretive relation to the world, in the following: "Philosophy has the never-ending task of clarifying that man is a meaning-creating-existence who, by realizing himself, realizes also the world and makes it a world for man." Philosophy then culminates in the creation of a new man and of a new society. This happens when the study of philosophy is explicitly sought to lead towards a genuine life with others. More specifically, philosophy must aim at fostering peaceful coexistence with one another across generations. Therefore, any philosophy that breeds violence, injustice, and hopelessness is far from having a real existential value, let alone spurious of being an rational project. Hence, we need to explore new forms of consciousness that are more ecological in orientation, in terms of pursuing a justly comprehensive and sustainable human and environmental world. As Gaarder (*ibid.*) continues: "Philosophy is nothing less than a celebration of mankind's consciousness. So shouldn't a philosopher be the first to defend human consciousness against annihilation?"

Therefore, we must work for an education in society that which renews humanity's desire for shared universal values as key to global peaceful co-existence; an education that challenges oppressive social structures; an education that fights for human rights, an education that fosters total human flourishing under just social institutions; an education that teaches mutual respect between different beliefs in a multicultural society; an education that encourages harmony among diverse cultures in a heterogeneous society; an education that promotes international understanding and cooperation; an education that respects the irreducibility of every human person; and finally, an education that realizes the human person's "cosmic" potential. By education understood as the handing down (tradition) of wisdom from past generations, we keep alive the huge contribution of various communities of thinking that preserve our civilizations. Peperzaak's (60) eloquence is instructive: "If education is the transmission of a culture's tradition from one generation to the next, educators are charged with the highest kind of responsibility to continue and renovate human history." Arguably, beneath such education theory adequately considered above is and must be a philosophical foundation. Thus, there is a need to explore and develop a genuinely sound philosophy of education.

In a society that is constantly threatened by irrational actions, that is, actions that refuse to see what is right and just in the context of human interactions, there is a need to harmonize the various qualities of the human person. The human person as a “meaning-creating-existence,” in the lucid formulation of Gevers echoes the fundamentally existential tone of philosophy in not so far a past. Jean-Paul Sartre’s famous existential pronouncement that “man is nothing but what he creates himself to be,” then self-creation presupposes the utmost exercise of freedom that helps determine the individuality of every human person independent of the expectations of society. Sartre is often accused of individualism that breeds an irresponsible social existence. But a closer look at what he is saying clearly promotes an authentic way of what it means to be a human person under “a starry heavens above and the moral law within,” to bring in here Kant’s celebrated musing.

The Self as Text

By text we mean that which is open to interpretation, including ourselves. *Who am I?* Globalization – notwithstanding the ambiguity the term suggests and the lack of consensus among scholars of its true sense – shows us a path towards answering this anthropological question through a description of the human person as essentially an hermeneutical being. This human situation enables the human person to make sense of globalization as his current context of being. In truth, philosophy which is supposed to be an interpretation of and a reflection on the human condition cannot ignore the challenges and the opportunities of living in a rapidly globalizing society, which is today’s society. A responsible philosophizing today therefore has to be sensitive to the reality of globalization and must proceed with sustained reflections on the issues of globalization. If this can be done, then philosophy keeps its enduring relevance as an affirmative vision of a better world.

Globalization is a cultural phenomenon characterized by the opening of geographical and cultural borders across the planet. This thereby allows the increased free flow of ideas, technology, labor, etc., which all consequently shape human life. Obviously, this broad development necessarily presents us a wholesale definition of who or what we are. However, we hope for a positive definition of ourselves, which springs from a genuine change brought about by globalization. As Stiglitz (50) consistently situates and advances the positive view of globalization, thus: “Development is about transforming the lives of people, not just transforming economies.” Moreover, globalization resulting in people’s transformed lives is supported by an on-going weaving of stories, interests, and ideologies. Every definition we have of who or what we are is always limited by a chain of interpretations.

Every anthropological definition is certainly bound up to a network of meanings. Necessarily, then, the way we understand ourselves comes from various interpretive sources that provide the framework of our self-understanding. Name it: family, culture, environment, relations, etc. All these come into play in the formation of our self-understanding. That is why we assert that the self is a text intertwined with a context of manifold relations. This view underlies that a genuine philosophy is context-bound, for the search of self-knowledge is a restless journey, as oftentimes uttered by postmodernity. That is, following the postmodern persuasion, if there is any truth that postmodernity accepts, it is the truth that we do not know ourselves. Classically Socratic and Augustine-nesque!

Speaking of the contextual character of philosophy, we therefore affirm the hermeneutical mode of our existence. Language is our primary medium of self-understanding. In and through language we live our interpretive and dialogical nature; we understand ourselves, that is, we make sense of who we are, and communicate with one another to live meaningfully in this world. Ultimately, the essence of language is its enduring goal to foster mutual understanding among individuals and their societies.

Indeed, philosophy as a reflective manner of existence, a unique sense inherited from the ancient wisdom, means facing up to the practical exigency of grasping the inextricable link that exists between interpretation and transformation. That is, in making sense of everything one necessarily attains a certain mode of being. Ludwig Wittgenstein's analysis of the reflexive activity of philosophy carries a fundamental sense. In *Culture and value* Wittgenstein (1980, 16) elaborates, as follows: "Working in philosophy is really more a working on oneself." Thinking well which philosophy inspires must result in living well! Thus, Wittgenstein argues that the practice of philosophy refers to the rational performativity of being human.

Performativity of being human refers to the conscious effort of doing what it takes to accomplish the task of reaching the fullness of one's humanity through the reflective practice of the various areas of being a human person. Following Wittgenstein's persuasive suggestion, philosophy is definitely a vital aspect of the practice of being human. In every critical effort to relate to the world, that is, in the reflective practice of philosophy, one attains a particular mode of being. The totality of the human person's thinking, acting, and being are closely inter-connected and mutually related to one another, when seen within the whole process of self-transformation. Philosophy is essentially the rational striving towards the unity of the human person. Philosophy which consists in the habit of critical awareness of and openness to an evolving world precisely provides this sense of unity, of sobriety within oneself. "Any person who is open-minded and sensitive to new perceptions, and who has concentration and responsibility in connecting them, has, in so far, a philosophic disposition," to cite Dewey (1997, 325.)

Conclusion

Globalization is where we are, and it is what we make it to be. With a critical attitude towards it, we can certainly bring about some positive elements out of it. Thus, as a human condition globalization can be made into the very context of doing philosophy today. The consolation of philosophy mainly consists in giving us hope today that we can still accomplish a life we truly deserve as rational and free beings under a just society. That is, overcoming the risk of hegemonic ideology, philosophy's assumptions as a system of thought can be examined and challenged in the hope of reaffirming and reframing our humble beginnings, our very solitude of finitude, which paradoxically opens us up to an experience of the fullness of life. To repeat: Philosophy is a sober attitude towards human finitude! This is the hermeneutical import of being human; being human is a reflexive activity of self-understanding, whereby we examine the very grounds of our self-understanding! More importantly, globalization is a rich philosophical resource through which we strive to understand our current human condition. Accordingly, we can develop an ethics of globalization that is concerned with, to wit: Challenging dominant interpretations of reality; Keeping the call of justice alive; Overcoming discrimination and marginalization; Respecting human rights; Celebrating differences; Recognizing otherness; Embracing diversity; Building mutual trust among everyone in envisioning a shared future; Promoting dialogue with one another; Living together in mutual peace.

Thus, the key to living meaningfully in the age of globalization is to explore and develop its positive characteristics, notwithstanding the pull of hegemony to which it strongly tends. That philosophy as hitherto noted in this paper presents a complex endeavor, which further indicates that its object of inquiry, that is, human life, is the epitome of a significant issue. Just when is one fully human enough? Is it not the case that being human is oriented towards the approximation of the real that prompts the inauguration of brand new attempts to reach the summit of what it means to be human? In short, while the ideal of being fully human is beyond the full comprehension of anyone, such is no cause of frustration. For what significantly matters is the amount of response that one gives in the hope getting nearer the goal of becoming authentically human.

In practice, therefore, being human is a continuous process that one undergoes with one's whole finite being. That is, even in the face of suffering and occasional defeat, we resolve to constantly lead the best form of life possible, not just for ourselves alone but for others as well.

The story of Sisyphus carrying a boulder upon his shoulders up to the top of the mountain fundamentally reveals one lesson of life: *the quality of being human depends on one's capacity to bear responsibility*. On that note,

one can realistically assume the meaning of life, since philosophy as a way of life carries the precarious burden of learning to live finally! That is why no matter how lonely the whole process of leading a life of philosophy may be, notwithstanding the ridicule that awaits those who wish to stand for what is right and just in this ambiguous age, this directs us to single-mindedly build our thought, our tradition, and our institutions as sources of meaning. The planet's future hangs in the balance.

Owing to globalization's perils and opportunities, philosophy must therefore be explored as a significant instrument in facing up to human problems, which is integral to being human through character formation. It is in this coherent sense that philosophy can do justice to a society that continues to put premium on economic gains at the expense of denying philosophy's promise of leading humanity to a life that is worth-living with one another. It is that kind of life which is conscientiously pursued in the presence of the poor, the excluded, and the marginalized. Finally, we conclude with these words of the world-renowned Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho: "*Wisdom lies... in the mystery of the questions that enrich our lives.*"

So, we continue to seek solace in the consolation of philosophy in this age of globalization to which it is sent to make its transformative presence felt in a world in need of vision.

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