

Categories of Thinking: Regressive, Digressive and Progressive Thinking

PHAVISMINDA Journal
Volume 8 (May 2009): 89-103.

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In this article, thinking shall be considered as an outcome of the interplay of three species of thinking: regressive, digressive and progressive. The formulation of this list, was conditioned by our analysis of R.G. Collingwood's *An Essay on Philosophical Method*¹ (hereafter, EPM). Here is our summary of what regressive and progressive categories initially amount to.

Between the kind of reasoning in science and philosophy, science is more attuned to progressive thinking while philosophy follows the regressive approach. In an encapsulated form, science makes use of progression since it builds on the truth of its axioms or presuppositions. However, when science decides to inquire into the nature of its presuppositions, science would need to let go of its scientific hat and make use of the philosopher's. This is because when axioms or assumptions are questioned, the scientist needs to regress – to think like the philosopher. This means that the scientist, with the philosopher's hat, makes it his task to look into the strengths and limitations of existing axioms in the hope of configuring a new one. As an implication, the philosopher-scientist, with the axioms as the main object of the investigation, is disposed to analyse and reflect on their latent structures which may occasion the emergence of a new axiom as the basis of another system of thought.²

Given such initial discussion on EPM, the present paper shall adopt progression and regression as two members or species in the category of thinking. On the one hand, progression shall be the bandwagon for thinking activities that need to assume an unquestioned starting point. This is the exploratory approach. Regression, on the other hand, shall stand for thinking activities that attempt to look into assumptions and presuppositions. This shall follow the in-trospective direction. Against the background of such appropriations, one may have now raised this inquiry: 'How did we come up with digressive thinking as another species in the thinking category?'

Digression, in our present article, serves as a label for thinking activities that favour and give space for the symbolic, comic, the fictive, and even the absurd. This perspective arises when man considers himself as a microcosm³ – an occasion of the overlap. However, the label symbolic does not mean that digressive thinking is less serious, hence, subsidiary in significance, when compared to the other two species of thinking. Digression actually forms an integral and indispensable aspect in describing how thinking occasion symbols, humour and fun in their relations and interactions.

Considering the three species of thinking – regressive, digressive and progressive – this article hopes that such species of thinking may be later used to characterise a Filipino Philosophy. In this respect, the present composition is our attempt to contribute a discursive framework in understanding thinking activities in general and the Filipino mind-set in particular. This article also stands as our invitation to Filipino thinkers to articulate conceptual categories that may contribute to the philosophical discussion on the nature and method of thinking.

Regressive Thinking: Senses and Sensibilities I

The regressive kind of reasoning⁴ rests on a two-fold assumption: each individual has a thinking horizon, and in many occasions, the ideas and assumptions in a person's thinking horizon are not really cognised. Here is an example that may help us illustrate the point of such presuppositions. For instance, a Filipino may have the idea of attending church activities every Sunday as obligatory. Another Filipino may also be in possession of an idea which holds that church attendance should neither be regularly done on a Sunday nor be done at all. Given such difference in thought, thinking regressively means that an individual is asked to look into his idea and probe into the possible reasons as to why the idea is privileged. This means that, in relation to our example, the person who decides to think of Sunday church activities as optional must know and explore the reasons as to why he thinks that such is the case. This is a requirement if the person decides to engage in regressive thinking. Regression, therefore, initially implies that the individual raises this inquiry: What are the reasons why an idea is privileged compared to other ideas in my thinking horizon? In raising and owning such question, the person is disposed to discover and explore his thought assumptions – the main object in regression.⁵ In relation to the notion that attending Sunday church activities is obligatory, the possible assumption of the thought is that God exists. This a presupposition which regressive thinking is very interested to contemplate on and analyse.

One may now have the impression that the focused and intense introspection of underlying reasons and thought assumptions is a task that



appears strange and difficult. It appears strange, since regression somehow implies that one is expected to engage in a conversation with the self. And it looks difficult, since such a conversation must be sustained when the person commits himself to the main question a regressive quest raises. These impressions are correct. However, our stance is that they are not to be treated as constraints or stumbling blocks. Rather, they are to be considered constitutive in the process of in-trospection. Such is the case, since regression believes that the latent capacities of a person's ideas and assumptions are evoked and revealed through the unfamiliar and difficult tasks.⁶

When choosing an idea from an existing pool of thoughts, the person may quickly quip this query: Why focus on a specific thought? Our response is that regressive thinking can start with any idea in an individual's thinking horizon as long as the commitment is there to introspect and investigate its assumptions. By doing so, the regressive thinker is introduced to the habit of being extra sensitive to the relationship between privileged thoughts and corresponding assumptions. He is also disposed to broaden his conception of how assumptions are affirmed when certain ideas take the forefront in analyses, discussions, and making decisions. This is also the kind of in-trospective activity that the regressive thinker shall be mindful of when he listens and converses with the ideas of other people. Given the introspective nature of regression, the person who intends to regressively think is, therefore, expected to remain open to intellectual discomfort. The regressive thinker must witness the healthy tension between the known and the unknown – between the known idea and the relatively unknown assumption of the thought. Even when thinking appears to have reached an agreeable position, the regressive thinker knows that such a position is importantly influenced by underlying presuppositions.

Another dimension that a regressive thinker upholds is the tension between the known idea and the idea's conceptual oppositions. This means that regression assents to this point: every stance exists with a concomitant opposition. In a more familiar tone, every affirmation has a negation.⁷ Because regressive thinking values such a tension, the regressive thinker aims at cultivating a habit of being mindful, hence, maintaining the precarious location of every idea and assumption. This implies that when an idea and its assumption are explored, the philosophic mind is also aware that such a conceptualisation does not aspire to extract and separate a stance from its perceived oppositions. Rather, both idea and assumption are explored with the cognition that every position is better comprehended when its negations or oppositions are also included in the whole process of the investigation.

Here is an example to demonstrate possibly what conceptual oppositions mean: when one comprehends the reason for stipulating that God exists, one

possible reason for saying so is based on the argument of Divine intelligence. It can be recalled in St. Thomas Aquinas that the universe exemplifies a plan or an architectural design.⁸ Given the balance between order and complexity, the universe cannot be simply a product of chance. Hence, there must be a supra intelligent being – named God, to account for the teleological creation of the universe. This reflects the affirmative side of regression. But to have a better grasp of what believing in God means, regressive thinking also endeavours to identify and cognise its possible opposing stance. For instance, one may have encountered the idea that the universe emerged out of the cosmological Big-Bang. In regression, one does not remain content in simply having this idea as a possible anti-thesis to God's existence. With the Big-Bang theory, the universe is said to evolve out of a Big explosion. The theory explains the existence of the universe from the material standpoint, and as an implication, it leaves out the Divine in the whole account of creation. If this is the stance that the Big-Bang theory upholds, a regressive thinker must seek ways to improve his notion of such a theory. The initial assent to God's existence should not act as a constraint or delimitation. On the contrary, it should serve as a motivation to also research and reflect on the merits and demerits of concomitant oppositional concepts. If one chooses to understand regressively the concept God, one must be willing to study and reflect on the truth-claims of oppositions. Regressive thinking holds that it is in this line of reasoning where the meaning of regressively defending an idea is to be sought.

Thinking regressively also acknowledges that the interplay between opposites does not end up in a closed synthesis. Regression does not aspire to have and produce fixed points of agreement. The hyphen may well symbolise and exemplify an open type of synthesis. This is because the hyphen, in this regard, stands for the gap between concepts. But at the same time, it stands as a link – a kind of access – among terms or entities. The hyphen, therefore, marks as an instance of and for the overlap. It is a fertile space where regression faces and meets the 'same and an other'. This is our reason for saying that truly there is no place for close synthesis and irrefragable positions in regressive thinking. What then does regressive thinking aim to discover, present, and elucidate?

Regressive thinking aims for nodal points – temporary points of reference.⁹ If a thinking horizon has crooked, straight, or contoured lines, the nodal points function as accessible guides or sign-posts that can probably give a 'sense' of how the thinking horizon looks and feels like. The nodal points, therefore, act as attempts to give us a feel and image of what is available and not available in one's mind-set. They also provide us with a view on why a person reckons that some ideas are more meaningful than other thoughts. Comparable to the map, a person's horizon has contours and details that

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cannot be adequately represented by any nodal point. The sign post or nodal points can only inform as much. This is what the regressive thinker understands. He is fascinated by the idea that there is always something more to be known. There is always a hyphen in every idea and position. To this effect, every regressive account is understood as a possibility. It does not pretend to have arguments where its premises are both sufficient and necessary. True to its mindfulness of the precarious status of nodal points, regressive thinking continuously affirms and preserves its intimacy with the unknown.

Regressive Thinking: Its Possible Contribution to a Filipino Philosophy

Thinking regressively seeks to articulate the assumptions that are operative in an idea, method, field of study or investigation. This, as our previous discourse pointed out, is grounded on our understanding that a system of thought has a special relation to its assumptions. But what is regressive thinking in relation to a Fil-osophy?¹⁰ This is a question, which the ensuing discussion shall try to better understand.

When the Filipino attempts at thinking regressively, he needs to commit himself to two assumptions of regression: first, Filipinos are already in possession of ideas in a thinking horizon, and second, in many instances, Filipinos have not really cognised why some ideas are priveleged over other thoughts, and they have not articulated the assumptions of such thoughts. With the two presuppositions, the regressive thinker is fascinated to discover an idea within the Filipino thinking horizon and seek its possible operative assumption.

The initial presupposition may serve as a fertile ground for a Filipino philosophy because one is conditioned to think that Filipinos already have their own ways of thinking. Such mind-set can even become a reservoir of constructive energy when Filipinos realize that there is no valid reason to consider their ideas inferior to the ideas propogated by other cultures. This is not to say of course that all ideas are equally significant. The point here is that we have notions that we may consider as 'second-rate' even if they can be aptly labelled as profound. Regressive thinking reminds us that we are the starting point of a Fil-osophy. The ideas that shape our thinking horizon is made possible by what we affirm and what we negate. No two cultures can possibly share identical positions and oppositions. It is about time that the Filipino discovers that he has not given himself enough due when it comes to the production of knowledge. The Filipino has a beautiful mind. This is a rallying point that regressive thinking shall try to further look into and uphold.

To exemplify regression, here is an example of an idea that can be located in a Filipino mind-set. A Filipino is said to have this idea in his thinking horizon –

the existence and presence of non-human forms. For example, he thinks that some non-human or intangible creatures abound in secluded areas, forests, falls, and beaches. He is sensitive to the possibility of their presence such that when he is in those locations, he tries his best not to destroy something in the place. Usually, the Filipino says 'tabi' or 'excuse'. The expression of this word is his way of feeling protected and secured from possible forms of punishment that the non-human and spiritual world may render. It is also his way of expressing to the non-human forms that he comes with good intentions. What then is the assumption of such an idea? In our regressive reflection, the notion of existing spirits and non-human living entities may be grounded on this presupposition: existence extends beyond the domain of the tangible. This presupposition somehow means that the concrete world is but one of the many dimensions of existence. When the Filipino sees a big tree or a nice cove, he does not only see the tree-image or cove-image, he also 'sees' – by way of feeling and imagining – that there are other non-tangible and non-human forms in the tree or in the cove. His 'image' of reality is marked by an interplay between what is directly perceptible and the limitation of his external senses: the intangible.

The foregoing assumption may then be used as a launchpad for describing the Filipino's understanding of reality, of himself, and his relation to his surroundings. Through the examples of presupposition, one may have a glimpse of the operative ethos in the Filipino mind. For instance, the presupposition reveals an explanation as to why many Filipinos prioritise and value the sense of being one, at home or comfortable in his relation to his location. The assumption, in this regard, stands as a ground for his interpersonal relations. One can even propose that the presupposition conditions a Filipino's need to feel one with others and conclude that such is an outcome of the Filipinos' inclusive understanding of existence – of things, elements and beings that may be said to overlap with the empirical world.

As a result, one may have a better sense as to why a Filipino's way of connecting and communicating with others may be described as multi-faceted. His kind and degree of sensitivity entails a mindfulness of presence, be it human or non-human, living or non-living. Through this ethos, one may even be disposed to discover a novel conception as to why a Filipino thinks that it is also his responsibility to show to others his mindfulness of their presence. In the word 'Tabi', the Filipino materially communicates his multi-faceted sensitivity. He understands that it is important to make 'them' literally hear the word and couple it with a sense of sincerity evidenced by one's actions and demeanor.

To extend the regressive approach to the example, one is also expected to identify an idea, which is antithetical to the meaning and claims of the notion



that some Filipinos think that non-human forms also exist. The opposing idea that we have in mind is that some Filipinos also think it is unreasonable to say that there are non-human forms co-existing with us in our location. This is a route that regressive thinking should explore and not simply ignore. But the substantiation of such topic shall be expressed in another article for the present concern of this paper is to elucidate and describe the two remaining species of thinking – progressive and digressive.

Progressive Thinking: Senses and Sensibilities II

Progression is another species in the category of thinking that refers to a person's approach and orientation towards the familiar world. In many occasions, this world may be described as connotative and denotative of the given – tangible, comprehensible, and estimable or demonstrable in terms of quantity and quality. This is also reckoned as the scientific realm, since science is directed and limited to the study and analysis of such domain.¹¹

With regressive thinking as our background, progressive thinking can be said to have a peculiar relation towards axioms and presuppositions. This peculiarity, as we shall later see, takes a three-fold nuanced turn. Here is a synopsis of these three ways of doing and upholding progressive thinking.

First, there is a kind of progression that is mindful of assumptions that need not be questioned, since they have no bearing to the proceedings of an investigation. We shall call this as 'The Certainly-Indifferent' progressive thinker. Second, progressive thinking proceeds unaware that thought-systems or thought constructions have presuppositions. As an effect, progression in this sense is confined and limited to existing thought-system. Hence, 'The Wholly-Certain' may be an apt name for such manner of doing progressive thinking. For the third type of progression, thinking has exerted the needed effort to cognise assumptions. This is the 'Scientist-Philosophic' stance. This kind of progression entertains the possibility of having new assumptions to ground another system of thought. However, this progressive thinker understands that turning such a possibility into a reality may require some time to happen. As a consequence, progression of this kind decides to continue adding dimensions to already existing systems of thought while remaining sensitive to ideas that may trigger the unfolding of another thought-system, which shall be grounded on a new presupposition.

The Wholly-Certain thinker has a bias that favours the known or the familiar over the unknown or the uncertain. This is shown in this thinker's attitude and understanding of the tension between the known and unknown. For him, the unfamiliar is reckoned as an 'area' to be solved or comprehended. The term 'area' is in quotation marks to note the operative intent in progressive thinking – to put forward frameworks or structures through which

a certain area of study can be cognised, taxonomised and possibly controlled. Given the stress on frameworks and structures, the unknown is translated as a domain or a space to be mastered and occupied. The tension between the known and the unknown, therefore, is approached as an experience that is to be deciphered and resolved. This probably explains why mechanical competence and efficacy permeates the mind-set of this thinker.

In our reflection, the Wholly-Certain thinker is conditioned by this lack of awareness: that ideas and thought-systems have presuppositions. Assumptions, when considered, provide the impression that systems of thought rest on something important. That assumptions act as a ground suggests that thought-constructions rest or depend on something. When the mind encounters such notion of dependence, the mind is disposed to wonder into the kind of role that presuppositions play in relation to systems of thought. Thinking, therefore, expands as it now gives a serious look at something other than the constructed ideas. Because the Wholly-Certain progressive thinker is unaware of the possible grounds or assumptions of ideas, he is not inclined to think outside the privileged facts and methods. This is not a too distant possibility when thought-assumptions go unnoticed. In most cases, the value attached to certitude gains the upperhand.

The Certainly-Indifferent' is not that different from the aforementioned way of progressive thinking. They actually share some similarities. For instance, both value more and give prominence to certainty over the intimacy between certainty and uncertainty. Both species of progression, therefore, looks up to the domain of constructed thoughts and accompanying methods as the objects of and tools in their investigations. The crucial difference between the two forms of progressive thinking, however, lies in this awareness: the presence of assumptions in ideas and thinking activities. Unfortunately, this difference in consciousness is insignificant, since this thinker already decided that it is not his business to delve into the nature of assumptions. He may even know that ideas may be better comprehended when latent assumptions are articulated. But he chooses to maintain his distance from the possibility of acquiring such knowledge. This thinker's attitude is reflective of an individual who has long decided that the established facts and methods of investigation, in general, are already complex, impressive, and beautiful. He may add that the truth brought about by the familiar world is already complex, so there is no reason why one should get out of its terrain, since there is so much to be known in the familiar world. This partly explains why the Certainly-Indifferent dismisses the invitation to even peek into the presuppositions of thoughts. The temptation to stay indifferent wins over the insight that assumptions may offer certain explanatory principles and reasons. Hence, this thinker has decided to remain indifferent to the relation between ideas and presuppositions. This is a position



that he is not willing to challenge. So, if the progressive thinker later discovers that ideas may be better appreciated and improved when thought-assumptions are studied, 'The Certainly-Indifferent' thinker delegates the task to others. True to the habit of indifference, he is content to add or modify a little to the present archaeology of human understanding. For him, the familiar is his defining location and boundary—the entry point and end point of his thinking horizon.¹²

The third way of progressive thinking works side by side with regression, hence, the name 'The Scientist-Philosophic'. Unlike the previous progressive thinkers, this thinker attempts to maintain the intimacy between ideas-assumptions and the known-unknown. Operative in this approach is the insight that there is tremendous value in the relationship between ideas and presuppositions. This form of progression, therefore, neither undermines the familiar over the unfamiliar nor thinks that the familiar is more significant than the unfamiliar. There are latent possibilities inherent in the interplay or dialectic between the two domains. Armed with a unique kind of sensitivity, 'The Scientist-Philosopher' intends to master the merits and demerits of existing facts and methods of research. While so doing, he also does not cease in his fascination over the plausibility of having new facts and methods when new presuppositions unfold or are discovered. This implies that progressive thinking is attracted to and maintains these two objects of fascination, namely, the beauty and soundness of thought-system constructions, and the power of new presuppositions to open and carve a new ground for another wave of thought-system construction.

Another way of looking at this third kind of progressive thinking is through its unique perspective which the previous ways of progression fail to achieve – a hyphenated standpoint. This vantage point, we shall hold, may serve and stand as an ideal for progression in a Filipino thinking horizon. This is because it is via such a framework that the Filipino is encouraged to think like 'The Scientist-Philosopher'. More specifically, the invitation is to comprehend eagerly the knowledge and methods of science, at the same time, stay intimate with assumptions.

Digressive Thinking: Senses and Sensibilities III

The Digressive thinker may be said to look at processes and occasions from a committed and half-committed standpoint. This is because digression as a thinking activity has and enjoys a unique leverage that is not found in both regression and progression. Whereas regression seeks to better understand a presupposition and its relation to systems of thought, digression may reckon such a concern as a miniscule interest in a very mysterious multiverse. Whereas

progression exemplifies the mind-set of 'The Wholly Certain, or 'The Certainly-Indifferent', or 'The Scientific-Philosophic', digression may easily dismiss such approaches to the given existing world and its concomitant claims as entirely fictive. Digression, therefore, is a kind of thinking activity that can possibly stretch and reconstruct the other two thinking species. This is a capacity that we shall try to explore.

What is a committed and half-committed perspective in digression? Digressive thinking speaks in the language of ridiculous possibilising. This means that when thinking analyses and reflects on different facets of reality, digression always looks for other routes and ways. In this respect, digressive thinking has to be committed in listening to and understanding what regression and progression presents. At the same time, digression also has to be half-committed to the forwarded truths, since its interest is to radicalise thoughts, positions and questions even to the point that the thinking enterprise becomes absurd. Thus, digressive thinking is always paradoxically on-guard and relaxed towards the activities of the mind. It has to be on-guard, since it can only truly digress if it knows or has cognised what it intends to reconstruct. Its orientation also has to be relaxed, since the kind of reality it subscribes to is always considered as possibly fictitious and miniscule. With progression and regression stressing the need for focused and sensitive attention, digression promotes the language of the symbols. This includes humour, paradoxes, analogies and absurdity as prominent channels of digressive thinking. As symbols, they stand for the overflow and ultimate reflexivity of meanings.

Here is an analysis and reflection on humour as a symbol of digression. When a person articulates a joke, he has to first make an estimation of the proceedings in a situation. This includes a sensitivity to the on-going discussion, or even to the kind of ethos that is at work in certain instance or occasion. Thus, humour has to be committed to a certain object, topic, or group. It cannot be addressed and extended to the 'all or everybody' category. It has to be somewhat circumscribed to a location or specific space and time. The half-commitment dimension of humour enters the scene when the person has figured out a way to radicalise or ridiculously possibilise a thought or two in the given location. When humour is conveyed, digressive thinking has proceeded.¹³ Whether the recipient of the joke see the humour in it is another concern that is constitutive in digressive thinking. This makes the task of digression corporate. As the domain of symbol, its language is conditioned by its capacity to successfully communicate and impart its point without losing its appeal towards mystery.

In view of the foregoing points, we find ourselves ready and excited to contemplate on how digressive thinking is at work in a Filipino thinking horizon. This is a project that we shall be most interested in, since we can already



intuitively observe that digression, for instance – humour, takes a relevant and symbolic turn in the life and everyday concerns amongst Filipinos.

Conclusion

Through a mind that in-trospects, here is a summary of what the three species of thinking propose:

Regressive thinking zooms into the assumptions of ideas and systems of thought. Its primary concern is to identify and analyse underlying presuppositions. Its subsequent concern is to make sense of the relationship between ideas and their assumptions. Regressive thinking, in such respect, posits that when presuppositions and ideas are studied and reflected, thinking is disposed to reach a level of comprehension that is both unique in kind and degree. Since regression makes the assumptions as the proper object of its investigation, thinking has to stay as intimate as possible with the known and unknown or the familiar and unfamiliar. It is through this kind of intimacy where the regressive thinker celebrates questions like, 'What do we know?', 'Why do we know them?', and 'How can we better know?'.

Progressive thinking is oriented towards the understanding of the world of the familiar – the processes in, nature of, and ideas about the tangible-material domain. This type of thinking is classified into three: 'The Wholly-Certain', 'The Certainly-Indifferent' and 'The Scientific-Philosophic'. The Wholly-Certain is unaware that ideas and systems of thought have presuppositions. This unawareness is the condition that possibilises the habit of confining one's thoughts to the realm of the familiar like the existing views on the world and the accepted methods of doing research. As a result, a novel idea is understood as an extension of the same principles. There is no room for new assumptions. The Certainly-Indifferent is aware that ideas have assumptions. However, such awareness does not make this progressive thinker different from the orientation of the first. It can even be construed that the second form of progression is a radical version of the first. With the insight that thought-construction has assumptions, The Certainly-Indifferent opts to focus on the existing body of scientific knowledge. He has reached the decision to stay away from discussions on presuppositions since knowledge about the world can stand on its own. He assents to the stance that it is not his business to regress; his only job is to improve and expand existing thought-constructions. The Scientist-Philosophic is interested in both existing systems of thought and its assumptions. He understands the concern of the regressive thinker and finds regression a vital component in his investigations. He is also convinced that existing systems of thought must be explored and does so for two overlapping reasons: (1) to cognise the processes of the world and the ideas constructed that tries to explain the mechanisms of such world, (2) to look and wait for

ideas that may condition the possibility of finding and understanding new axioms and/or presuppositions.

Digressive thinking looks at the world as a boundless pool of ideas, assumptions, and symbols. It knows that ideas and assumptions are important yet enjoys a license that the two forms of progression do not have – 'ridiculous' possibilising. This is a capacity which may be expressed and exemplified in humour, myths, paradoxes and the absurd. Digression, in this respect, is a thinking activity that takes advantage of 'overflows', since it builds on the notion that man is a microcosm.¹⁴

Against the background of the three species of thinking – Regression, Progression and Digression – these constructs are invented as our response to the standing invitation to create frameworks that emerge from a Filipino thinking horizon. In so doing, we assert the autonomy of a Filipino as a thinking individual and become disposed to reflect on the latent constructs and capacities of our ways of thinking.

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Pavo, Raymundo, "Between Progressive and Regressive Abstraction in R.G. Collingwood's *An Essay on Philosophical Method*" A paper presented to the Department of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Mindanao February 2008.

Endnotes

¹ Robin George Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). Here is our overview of the general theme of the EPM. The overlap between sameness and difference—of not being totally different, and of not being totally the same—is one of the observable and pervading topics in the EPM. This theme helps explain two principal features of philosophical reasoning: the overlap of classes and the scale of forms. In the language of the EPM, the various experiences of the mind—art, religion, science, history, and philosophy—are arranged in an overlapping scale of forms. The two features of philosophical thinking suggest that man's experiences are not reducible to either sameness or difference. On the one hand, if the habits or experiences of the mind are reduced to sameness, the move only makes the distinctions or differences between experiences irrelevant. The subject matter of philosophy is reduced to a homogeneous singularity. If, on the other hand, they are solely interpreted in terms of mere differences, these differences mutually exclude one experience from another. The various topics of philosophy are equated to isolated and unrelated wholes. Hence, an important insight that the EPM holds is that philosophy cannot be reduced to either sameness or difference. Philosophising importantly includes or accounts for the similarities and differences among at least two experiences of the mind. In other words, a philosophical concept can be properly explained and exemplified if it is interpreted from the standpoint of the overlapping classes in a scale of forms.

² Raymundo Pavo, "Between Progressive and Regressive Abstraction in R.G. Collingwood's *An Essay on Philosophical Method*," paper presented to the Department of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Mindanao February, 2007, 10.

³ Microcosm, as a notion, is appropriated from Aristotle's discussion on the nature of the soul (animating principle). Aristotle holds that man contains in his soul elements that are also present in the souls among other species. Man like the plants, has a nutritive soul. Similar to the animals, man is in possession of a soul capable of locomotion. But unlike the plants and animals, man's soul is rational. Thus, the term microcosm signals two things: man's unity and connection with other species in the universe and man's specific difference with the other species. Aristotle, *On the Soul*. 434a – 435b. 434-436.

⁴ Regression takes inspiration from Collingwood's discourse on the meaning of philosophy and the method that exemplifies such meaning. He holds that philosophical thinking is best exemplified by the scale of overlapping forms. In understanding the framework of the overlapping classes in a scale of forms, we may be aided by this dual movement or direction, namely ascent and descent. The former movement takes place when a philosophical inference progresses. This happens when a philosophical inference or species coincides more with the subject matter or genus that philosophy is in search of. Ascent, in this regard, means that the

position or interpretation becomes more and more philosophical as it progressively instantiates the philosophical idea. The latter direction in the scale or the descent, however, happens when a philosophical inference settles with previous experiences in the scale. The inference, in this connection, fluctuates into less philosophical positions. The philosophical genus becomes less typified. Between the ascending and descending movements, Collingwood shows that it is through the former that philosophy is more instantiated as an overlapping and philosophical thinking experience. Collingwood, *EPM*, 188-190.

⁵ What philosophy does is to continuously examine its present conception of a concept and its assumptions. It need not rely on a complete and exhaustive entry position. What philosophy needs is a minimum condition, say, a present interpretation of the concept goodness, which can be subjected to analysis and modification to articulate and cognise its limitations and strengths. Also, in acknowledging the nature of this entry point, the philosopher leaves himself open for more rational, more thought out and reflected thinking experiences. Collingwood, *EPM*, 173-174.

⁶ In this regard, we specifically take heed in B. Russell's discussion on the interplay between the self (familiar) and not-self (unfamiliar). When the not-self makes itself known, the self is disposed-- at times even forced to reconfigure some of its current positions. Since the unfamiliar carries with itself such a capacity, it is in this respect that the not-self can overthrow the self from its comfort zone and unleash some of its unknown dimensions. Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy," in *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 100.

⁷ Collingwood, *EPM*, 109. The requirement to know when a term ought to be applied or ought not to be applied reflects Collingwood's principle of concrete affirmation. This principle states that "if you want to be clear as to what you are asserting, be clear as to what you are denying."

⁸ Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*. Q.2 ART. 2-3.

⁹ Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993), 318-320. A nodal point, taking into account Collingwood's discussion of it in *The Idea of History*, is a chosen and verified position. In history, it is also called an evidence through which a question or assumed queries can be better comprehended. This explains why a nodal point or evidence is also reckoned as an answer to questions.

¹⁰ Why Fil-osophy? A Fil-osophy stands for the abbreviated version of the terms Filipino and Philosophy. The abbreviation is made to signal the interlacing of the intension and extension of the two terms. Such that when we use the word Fil-osophy, we are thinking of and referring to a philosophical treatment of concepts and ways of thinking that unfold from a Filipino thinking horizon. Although the concept Filipino is a changing domain, our general connotation of it includes perspectives that seek to understand various approaches to issues, ideals, values, notions and positions that Filipinos live by, are engaging in, and are struggling with. It may be pointed out that such a description of the concept Filipino is rather loose. But then, such an imprecision is only considered a weakness when the canons of truth of the Western paradigm of analytic philosophy are privileged. Our stance here is that we may need to rethink the veracity of such canons and reconfigure our notion on what a Filipino philosophy can be. Thus, the term Fil-osophy, we hold, may be a good entry point to the possibility of configuring a Filipino Philosophy.

¹¹ These scientific concepts, according to Bridgeman's, are classified as performable or demonstrable concepts. Percy Bridgeman, "The Operational Character of Scientific Concepts," in



The Philosophy of Science, eds. Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper and J.D. Trout, (London: England A Bradford Book, 1991), 57. In Philosophical Analysis, scientific concepts specifically refer to abstract, empirical, theoretical and dispositional concepts. Andresito Acuna, Philosophical Analysis (Quezon City: U.P. Department of Philosophy, 1998), 50-54.

¹² This notion is appropriated from Collingwood's discourse on the meanings of history. For him, history can be interpreted in three ways, namely scissors and paste, and critical and scientific. Here is an overview of these kinds of doing history. The scissors and paste historian is simply limited and confined to re-arranging ready-made historical statements. The only thing that this type of historian needs to be wary of is the possibility of endorsing an idea that does not coincide with traditional historical claims. Second, the critical historian looks into the positions of the authorities in history and asks this query: How can we verify the authenticity of an established historical claim? Armed with this question, the historian evaluates whether a historical fact is authentic or not. From an obedient historian, he is now critical of ready-made claims in history. Thus, this paved way for a new kind of history: critical. However, a closer analysis shall reveal that critical history still worked within the scissors and paste framework. How is this possible? If you look into the question of the critical historian, he is still working within the scope of the established historical positions. Third, the scientific historian understands the idea that he can only get as much information from his investigations depending on the kind of question he asks. Hence, prior to his research, he has already taken the initiative of making it clear to himself what he intends to find out. In this respect, he undertakes the investigation to confirm or deny the possibility of an idea or object. The scientific-historian also has cognised the role of the question in sustaining the whole process of the research. This means that he knows that the project may continue as long as the question has not been dismissed as futile or irrelevant. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 258-259.

¹³ Half-committed truths, as an idea, is appropriated from current discussions on "The Paradox of Fiction." In Philosophy of Fiction, this paradox takes place when one epistemologically knows that a fictive character is real yet such a knowledge (as in the case of watching an animated film) does not act as a constraint or hindrance to emotionally be affected by the characters, lines and roles in the movie. Is the emotional response to fictive entities real? This is where the Paradox lies in the philosophical study of fiction. The leading figures in this kind of investigation include: Peter Lamarque, Kendall Walton, and Colin Radford. In relation to our discussion, the notion of half-commitment, thus, refers to the idea that knowledge-wise, we accept some certainties. However, such an acceptance does not automatically exclude things that are mysterious to us. To be more precise, individuals can only actually commit themselves to half -truths, since for the most part, life is always riddled with uncertainties.

¹⁴ Microcosm, as a notion, is appropriated from Aristotle's discussion on the nature of the soul (animating principle). Aristotle holds that man contains in his soul elements that are also present in the souls of other species. Man, like the plants, has a nutritive soul. Similar to the animals, man is in possession of a soul capable of locomotion. But unlike the plants and animals, man's soul is rational. Thus, the term microcosm signals two things: man's unity and connection with other species in the universe and man's specific difference to the other species. Aristotle, *On the Soul*. 434a – 435b. 434-436.