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DUTERTE, KANT, AND PHILOSOPHY

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Preliminary Remarks: The Ethical Question of Extra-Judicial Killing(s)

In a stimulating essay entitled "Why President Duterte Could be Correct [sic]," Bro. Romualdo Abulad, SVD expatiates on one burning political and moral issue currently raging in contemporary Philippine history.[1]

The main burden of Abulad's short treatise revolves around the intriguing philosophical-ethical question whether the specter of extra-judicial killings (hereafter EJKs) allegedly being perpetrated by Duterte's government in its brutal campaign on illegal drugs can be morally justified or philosophically defended.

Abulad—a star professor who teaches philosophy at *Christ the King Mission Seminary* and the *University of Sto. Tomás* (UST)—is arguably styled as "the most prominent Kantian scholar" in this unhappy land of ours.[2]

Indeed, his philosophical thoughts and locutions are unquestionably carved from the frozen cube of Kantianism. For Abulad, Immanuel Kant is to philosophy what Magnus Carlsen is to chess—the supreme virtuoso of metaphysical lucubration, the finest connoisseur of what Plato once wistfully described as that "dear delight," the feast of the gods (philosophy).

The fascination of Abulad's treatise chiefly owes itself to the uncanny way in which he unfolds his thesis and builds up his arguments. He does not bare the body of his unspoken assumptions in a direct and pointed manner. (The title of his essay which is framed as a rhetorical question bears out this

observation.) Nor does he deploy the conventional weapons of persuasion in advancing his ideas and insights.

Abulad's essay tries to sway his readers by titillating their raw instincts and jagged prejudices, and by warping, perhaps inadvertently, their moral coordinates. It teases, tempts, and lures them, in short, into the enchanting garden of academic disquisition where the unwary and the gullible are most likely to fall into the snare of philosophical errors, in the same way that the guiling serpent at Eden entices the unsuspecting Eve to chomp the irresistible fruit of curiosity. What is remarkable about Abulad's essay is that it marshals and mobilizes to its cause the thoughts of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, Immanuel Kant, and the inevitable Friedrich Nietzsche. He also draws snippets of stimulation from the Old Testament and St. John's Gospel, for good measure.

Abulad's tract on the subject of EJKs deserves serious consideration not only because of its clever and crafty exposition; not only because of the contentious nature of the topic; but also because of the fact that the opinions and assertions he puts forward—or, more accurately, suggests in an almost stealthy manner—startle and confound us.

The points which Abulad subliminally propounds to his readers are of such a nature that we least expect them from a serious and soliloquizing thinker. He does not explicitly endorse and approve of them; he only insinuates them to the reader's mind. (We shall point out presently the reason why he does not endorse them overtly.)

We shall avail of this opportunity to closely examine Abulad's philosophical stance on the issue of EJKs and attempt to expose the errors and fallacies that lurk beneath it. In taking on the challenge of debating with Abulad at the philosophical plane, we are mindful of his lofty stature and reputation as one of the "most prominent" Filipino philosophers in our country today.

The Kantian Notion of the Good Will

At the outset, it is essential to state here Abulad's veiled thesis that underpins his short but forceful essay. He contends in a roundabout way that the EJKs under Duterte's reign "might actually be morally justifiable." This is the crucial hinge upon which turn and twist Abulad's claims and contentions.

We would like to draw the attention of the reader to the phrase "might actually be morally justifiable." Abulad picks his words very carefully as become a cautious and calculating thinker. He does not pronounce his intentions directly but overlays them discreetly by seeking refuge in the redoubt of circumlocution.

No one can therefore accuse him of advocating EJKs as a policy in the practical, or political, or legal sense. This should be clear at first blush. He only suggests it to us as a theoretical option or conceptual probability, or even as a logical abstraction.

However, judging the general drift of his disputation, he is, for all intents and purposes, *arguing* for it at the ideational level—or, more precisely, in the high altitude of philosophical discourse—as he considers and calculates the social contingencies of the times through his unshakeable kaleidoscope.

Let us now tease out the underlying strands that hold up Abulad's cogitation and bring them under the spotlight of a philosophical critique.

It is noteworthy that he starts out by stating his primal, existential conviction in an unequivocal fashion—i.e., that he is a Christian. In fact, he is not just a Christian; he is a religious missionary brother ineluctably conscripted to serve as ambassador of the *Prince of Peace and Compassion*.

Tracing the biblical provenance of the conviction that killing is a "moral evil," he says the following: "*Speaking as a Christian*, I would go to the Ten Commandments that say, among others, 'Thou shalt not kill!' (italics mine)." Abulad then goes on to cite

the New Testament's (hereafter NT) commandment—i.e., "to love one another," as Jesus has loved us (John 13: 34)—as the firmer ground on which the abovementioned conviction stands.

He further lays down St. John's assertion in his *First Letter* that "God is Love" (1 John: 4:16) as the basis of his (Abulad's) claim that the NT's notion of love is now the "measure of good." (Abulad mistakenly cites the statement from John 4: 16, which is actually the passage where Jesus tells the Samaritan Woman: "Go, call your husband, and come back.")

It is at this point where Abulad dabbles in philosophizing. Having established God's love as the source and measure of *what is good*, at least for Christian believers, he now introduces to the discussion the Kantian conception of the *good will*, which Kant characterizes as the only thing that is unconditionally and unequivocally good.

"It is impossible," Kant writes, "to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a **good will**."[3]

It is instructive to note that the Kantian conception of the *good will*—or the *pure will* or the *will as such* (*Wille*)—is a formal and constitutive principle of rational action. It is self-legislative or self-determinative because it is independent of the "necessitation by sensible impulses"[4] (natural desires and affective tendencies) and the law of causality (the law of nature, of appearances).[5]

By "self-legislative" Kant refers to the metaphysical capacity of the *good will* (i.e., transcendental freedom) to recognize and adhere to the moral law which is, he explains, the necessary motivation and the determining ground of pure willing.[6]

But, we may ask, if the *good will* or the *pure will* is self-legislative, why is it entirely determined by the moral law? The answer is simple. Although the moral law entirely determines the *pure will*, the latter remains absolutely self-determined. This is

because the *pure will* gives unto itself the moral law in a metaphysical reciprocity.

It is the very source of moral concepts and precepts which are summed up in the categorical imperative: "[A]ct that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of a universal legislation."[7]

And, reciprocally, the obligation of obeying the moral law also originates from the *good will*.

At bottom, what Kant means in real terms is that the *good will* functions as the condition of possibility for *all* kinds of *willing*.

It is absolutely, unconditionally, and formally *good* because it makes possible the very act of volition, pretty much in the same way that the Platonic *idea Good*—"the idea of ideas," "that-which-enables as such, τό ἀγαθόν"—is *good* precisely because it enables every *form* or *idea* in Plato's world to be what *it is* and to do what *it does*—i.e., "to shine," "to show itself," and be "seen."[8]

This is why Kant describes the *good will* as "transcendental" on the ground that it is ontologically prior to, and independent of the sphere of the sense experience (or the faculty of sensibility).

Abulad draws a smart and sound correlation between the Kantian notion of the *good will* and the Christian understanding of God's love. Just as the former is the condition of possibility for all acts of *willing*, so, too, it may be urged, the latter is the condition of possibility for all acts of *loving*—i.e., God's love as the ultimate source of all kinds of love is also what makes every deed of loving possible.

Abulad is also correct to point out that every person is, formally, possessed of the *good will* "within," echoing Kant's view that "in the human being there is a faculty of determining oneself from oneself, independently of necessitation by sensible impulses."[9]

So far so good. Abulad's train of argumentation is on course.

Nietzsche's Nihilism and the Transvaluation of Values

What puzzles us, however, is that right after Abulad makes the point that "[w]e have . . . within our natural selves the key to what makes good," he arbitrarily introduces, out of the blue, Nietzsche's notion of the transvaluation of all values to the discussion.

This is where Abulad's train of reasoning skids and gets off the track. At first glance, we just cannot figure out his meaning and his point.

Let us take a look at the relevant passage in his essay:

> We have therefore within our natural selves the key to what makes good. This is why the transvaluation of [all] values such as Nietzsche proposes makes a lot of sense (addition mine).

Between these two statements—the one referring to Kant's idea of the *good will*, the other to Nietzsche's conception of the transvaluation of all values—a huge, unbridgeable gap gnaws. The latter is supposed to proceed from the former as a consequent with syllogistic necessity, but it is difficult to see any logical connection that links the one with the other.

The question is, "What has the Kantian idea of the *good will* got to do with Nietzsche's conception of the transvaluation of all values?"

Unhappily for Abulad's readers, he does not furnish them with any clear explanation. Thus, we are at a loss to discover between the two abovementioned statements any point of convergence that may remotely suggest itself to the mind.

Abulad makes, as it were, a big leap into the philosophical abyss of the unknown and the unexplained. And the reader is left wondering whether he has successfully inverted a well-known biblical wordplay by joining together two dissimilar propositions which human thought has put asunder.

Levity aside, our task now is to unriddle Abulad's enigma at hand and to detect his underlying motivation in putting the Kantian notion of the *good will* alongside Nietzsche's transvaluation of all values.

On deeper examination, the juxtaposition of the two alien ideas is a matter of strategy because Abulad is, at this point of his exposition, propping up the key plank of his thesis.

To make sense of his move, it helps to briefly consider Nietzsche's metaphysics of nihilism, the centerpiece of which is his conception of the transvaluation of all values.

Recall, dear reader, Nietzsche's statement "God is dead." Although it has become a most famous byword since the lantern-bearing mad man pronounced it, it is very little understood by many.[10]

By "God" Nietzsche does not refer to the God of Pastor Ely Soriano and Pastor Apollo Quiboloy. By the term Nietzsche denominates the "God of metaphysics," the "God" who represents the tendencies and aspirations of the entire Western philosophical tradition. This "God" is the Platonic suprasensory world of *forms*/*ideas*, the metaphysics of the *ideals* upon which is framed the whole network of the Christian (Western) worldview—its thoughts, tradition, trajectories, and theology.

Just as the Platonic metaphysics posits the two spheres of the supersensible and the sensible—the former being infinitely superior to the latter—so, too, Christian theology envisions the two worlds of the spiritual and the material, the heavenly realm of the saints and the angels, and the earthly domain of mortals and sinners.

According to Nietzsche, the long-running Western intellectual tradition, the product of Platonic metaphysics and the Christian *Weltanschauung*, is now discombobulated and falling apart. The suprasensory world, with all its ideals, values, and presuppositions, which held sway for more than two thousand years no longer wields power and suasion over the

lives and thoughts of Western peoples. It is now without life, without strength, without spirit, and its values and principles have lost their influence and attraction. In short, it has become unreal and irrelevant; and, in the words of Martin Heidegger, it has been reduced to "an unstable product of the sensory."[11]

The demise of Western *Weltanschauung*—a worldview sustained by the Platonic-Christian metaphysics—is what Nietzsche meant by the "death of God," ontologically interpreted.

But although Nietzsche speaks about the death of the God of metaphysics (i.e., Western civilization), he does not mean it in the sense of total overcoming (*Überwindung*), or disappearance, or elimination. What he has in mind is the overturning (*Umkehrung*) of Platonism as a metaphysics or worldview.

This turning-upside-down of Western metaphysics implies a "counterpoint" to what is overturned. To the Platonic metaphysics—and the Christian faith and theology framed upon it—Nietzsche counters his own brand of metaphysics which he calls nihilism.

Two essential features make up Nietzsche's notion of nihilism. The first is the "devaluing" of the highest values and the decay (*Verwesung*) of the Platonic suprasensory world. (This is what Abulad refers to as the "transvaluation of [all] values.")

How can we continue to believe that "God is the truth, that the truth is divine," Nietzsche writes, "if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie—if God himself should prove to be our most enduring lie?"[12]

The second aspect of Nietzsche's nihilism is the *re-positing* of fundamental values. This is the second phase of nihilism as metaphysics. The new and groundbreaking *positing* of fundamental values is the "countermovement" to the *devaluing* of the former set of values, which consummates and completes the *nihilisation* of Western civilization.

In Nietzsche's transvaluation of all values, he envisions a total reconstitution of the nature, manner, and meaning of *valuing* itself—a new way of interpreting the world and of reassessing human existence.

And what is this new way of interpreting the world and of reconstituting the nature and meaning of valuing itself? The answer is Nietzsche's *will to power* elucidated in terms of the essence of value.

The Nietzschean *will to power* is the realm and the bedrock of the new *value-positing*, the provenance of the possibility of value judgment, and the principle of *revaluing* of all values (transvaluation).

It is not within the scope of this essay to elucidate at length Nietzsche's nihilism, its suppositions and magnitudes.

We would like, however, to zero in on one attendant insight which spills out of Nietzsche's unique brand of metaphysics: the prospect that a given *Weltanschauung*—with all its beliefs, traditions, and values—can be shaken, overturned, and annihilated.

This truth is incontrovertible. Civilizations and cultures decline and die out over time; and new ones arise and flourish in the course of history. That nothing remains constant in this corner of the universe is the basic principle of reality itself.

And this is the insight which Abulad tries to exploit in his essay in a general way.

Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Values and the Act of Killing a Human Person

Abulad insinuates to the mind of his reader(s) that even our most cherished moral values and principles *can* be "devalued" or "transvalued" in the Nietzschean sense. Take, for instance, the basic respect for the dignity and value of human life. Abulad obliquely suggests that this ethical imperative—shaped by our Christian faith and moral intuition—*can* be "devalued," or at

least emasculated, as hinted by Nietzsche's overturning of Platonic metaphysics.

Conversely, Abulad implicitly argues that the act of *killing a person* (i.e., a human being) may actually be "good" in a qualified and contextualized sense.

Let us now quote him at length:

> [I]t would be a mistake to consider killing as an *absolutely* wrong act independently of the *context*. Indeed, if any act such as killing earnestly comes from the good or general will, one may even say that killing is *good*. Had Abraham killed his son, Isaac, on the command of Yahweh, that would *not* have been a bad thing. A reading of the Old Testament shows a God who has no qualms about killing if that would be tantamount to good (italics mine).

Here, we have to pause for a while, take a deep breath, and try to chew and digest Abulad's food for thought.

What he says above is the very meat of his contention. Given its leathery texture, we have to mince it slowly (*himay-himayin* [shred] as we put it in *Tagalog*) in order to munch its substance and possibly swallow it.

The first sentence in the quoted text is formulated as a rhetorical tautology because you cannot object to what Abulad is saying in it. It does not say anything philosophical on the ground that the act of killing as such is amoral (i.e., by itself, it is neither right nor wrong) from the standpoint of philosophical ethics—or Christian ethics for that matter.

In truth, the assertion assumes the form of a general statement bearing some biological or gastronomic implication. For instance, we slaughter a hapless pig, grabble its entrails, and sieve its fresh blood for braising the delicious and curdling *dinuguan* dish.

Here, the act of killing is "good" from the culinary or biological point of view—although the butchered hog may have

another opinion. It is a given fact that we have to hunt and kill our noble brethren in the animal world in order to live, thrive, and survive.

We therefore cannot help but agree with Abulad when he contends that "it would be a mistake to consider killing as absolutely wrong act independently of the context." (In propositional logic, his pronouncement has a truth-value as the statement, "Either it will rain tomorrow or it will not." [Does the statement contain a new information or say something useful? And can it be contradicted?]).

But Abulad artfully leaves off from his statement one important term that should fundamentally alter the bearing and impact of his overall argumentation—i.e., *human being* (or *human person*).

The precise formulation should read thus: "[I]t would be a mistake to consider killing *a human person* as an absolutely wrong act independently of the *context* (additions and italics mine)."

In the *context* of Duterte's vicious campaign against what he considers as enemies of the state (i.e., drug addicts/users, drug lords, drug pushers, drug dealers etc.), we think that this is exactly what Abulad has in his beautiful mind.

However, in keeping with his strategy of obliqueness, he craftily veils his intention by dropping the crucial term (*human being*) and setting up the elastic word *context* as his escape hatch through which he can conveniently crawl his way out of any potential philosophical predicament or embarrassment.

The Moral Intuition and the Non-Transvaluation of Fundamental Ethical Precepts

Having put the words back to the horse's mouth, so to speak, let us reformulate Abulad's rectified statement in the form of a question: Is it a mistake to consider killing a *human*

person as an *absolutely* wrong act independently of the *context* (italics mine)?

Raising this question brings us right into the center of a philosophical debate where thoughts and locutions quiver on the grey areas of philosophical ethics. It is unfortunate that Abulad himself does not tread into this philosophically treacherous terrain. He simply opens the gate and lets the unwary stride into the charming garden full of philosophical-ethical perils.

But before we give our answer to the question, let us return for a while to Nietzsche's transvaluation of all values and Kant's notion of the *good will* to which Abulad appeals in formulating his convoluted thesis.

Despite Nietzsche's superb elucidation of the transvaluation of all values in his metaphysics of nihilism, we are fairly acquainted with some basic human values and principles that will always hold absolutely true, imperative, and permanent at all times and in all places.

For argument's sake, let us venture into the sphere of philosophical ethics and consider some moral values and precepts rendered in the form of propositions: a.) It is morally wrong to sexually abuse children; b.) To kill or murder a suspect without giving him or her an opportunity to defend herself or himself is ethically indefensible; c.) It is morally wrong to torture defenseless and poor prisoners.

Our moral sense or intuition—the last citadel of human morality—tells us that at no time in the future will these fundamental human precepts ever be "overturned" or "transvalued" in the Nietzschean configuration.

As long as the texture and tendencies of human nature remain what they are, our moral algorithms assure us that there will never be a point in time in the next 100,000 years and beyond at which human beings will ever consider the act of shooting a defenseless human person—or of sexually molesting children, or

of torturing hapless and poor people—an ethically justifiable or morally good deed, in the same way that Davao's famous fruit *Durian* will never ever bear cats or dogs until the day when this planet sputters and disintegrates in limitless space.

And we are confident that this truism will remain unassailable despite the contingencies of contexts and the changes of circumstances—and despite what Abulad suggests to the contrary that "[t]he times . . . demand that we keep our minds open and dare to rethink and review our revered values."

Nor do we think that the act of shooting an unarmed, indigent, fleeing drug addict in *tsinelas*—no matter how morally wretched he or she is—will ever be *formally* sanctioned by the Kantian *good will* on the grounds that the operations of our human moral sense will never be out of sync with the formal trajectories of the Kantian *good will*.

"[A]ct that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of a universal legislation," Kant tells us. He has another version of the categorical imperative, which is more incisive: "[A]ct that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."[13]

Will our metaphysical or formal moral coordinates ever endorse the physical obliteration of a pleading, unarmed, and destitute drug pusher and uphold it "as a principle of a universal legislation" (i.e., Can we rationally *will* that *everyone* act as we propose to act?), as Abulad implicitly suggests?

Our moral intuition tells us, "No." We don't think so. And we take exception to Abulad's predilection to the contrary.

The Kantian Good Will and Jesus' Ethical Injunction

Both as *theory* and *practice*, the act of killing defenseless drug suspects who are widely perceived to be prone to commit atrocious crimes cannot flow from the Kantian *good will* or *pure will*.

This is because, firstly, Kant's notion of the *good will* is, as we have shown, a formal conception devoid of any empirical and affective contents. It does not furnish us with practical minutiae of *what* and *how* we should think, feel, intend, and behave under specific circumstances, contexts, and conditions.

Nor does it concern itself with particular human acts and their contents such as the killing of drug suspects to create peaceful communities, or the robbing of a bank to help feed the hungry, or the assassination of tyrants and dictators to free the oppressed.

The Kantian *good will* only provides us with the general rule for *willing* and *acting* in the form of the categorical imperative: "[A]ct that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of a universal legislation." Irrespective of space and time, such a general principle holds true, valid, and incontrovertible.

Secondly, the *good will* as such dovetails neatly with our moral sense of what is good and bad, of what is noble and ignoble, of what is ethically true or false.

To explain this, we let us refer to an analogy.

The biblical equivalent of Kant's categorical imperative is Jesus' injunction to "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6: 31) or, conversely, "Don't do to others what you wouldn't like them do to you." (From the standpoint of philosophical ethics, the prohibitive rendition of the golden rule is less problematic philosophically, which needs no treatment here.)

Like the categorical imperative, the biblical command wields a universal grounding in terms of ethical legislation and practical execution; although, we should point out here, it is much simpler, sturdier, and sharper than that of Kant.

Jesus' version of the ethical imperative is also a formal one and—again, like the Kantian categorical imperative—independent of human impulses and the law of causality. It can

be applied to any given context, time, and place—irrespective of people and culture, of feelings and moods, or color and creed.

If one is guided by Jesus' ethical injunction in one's behavior and action, one will *never* go astray from the path of moral goodness and justice. It is, in short, a universal ethical imperative, and it is well consistent with the sentiments of human nature and the operations of our moral intuition.

What fascinates us about Jesus' moral imperative is that it sets up the moral agent to imagine himself or herself in a given situation where he or she can alternately be both the broker of an action and the recipient of the *other's* dispensation—be it good or bad.

With Jesus' injunction in mind—as well as Kant's categorical imperative—let us imagine a situation (i.e., *context*) where you, dear reader, are a devoted anti-narcotic officer in the Philippines, engaged in the campaign against illegal drugs.

You are well familiar with the attendant perils of your occupation. And you are strongly convinced by the justice and righteousness of your cause.

One evening, you and your partner on the beat apprehend a small-time drug pusher in the neighborhood. He is uneducated, indigent, unarmed and, at the moment, quivering in fear.

Many youths in the *barangay* are becoming drug-dependent and violent because of his illegal activities. By killing him there will be one less pestilential soul in the block.

The law says he should be given a fair trial in court; but what the heck, this wretched human individual belongs to the lees and dregs of society. By shooting him dead, it may be argued, possible crimes or commotions in the neighborhood can be prevented. Getting rid of such a sort of worthless creatures may—again, it may be maintained—bring peace and quiet to the neighborhood. Will you pull the trigger and blast the living daylights out of this despicable human being?

This thought-experiment throws into sharp relief one of the core issues—i.e., the person and life of the drug suspect—in Duterte's war on illegal drugs. What is at stake in this sort of "war," generally speaking, is the life of *a human being* (no matter how vile he or she is), not that of a pig, dog, or chicken.

Of course, the answer to the question ultimately depends not only on one's ethical beliefs, not only on one's ideational assumptions, but also on one's social prejudices, political persuasions, and personal experiences.

Given the contentious nature of EJKs as a social and ethical issue, the oral dispute, for example in social media, over the pros-and-cons of the case at hand goes on and on *ad infinitum*.

From the standpoint of philosophical ethics, however, Abulad will answer, *yes*—you *may* pull the trigger, since he is of the opinion that EJKs "might actually be morally justifiable." Adopting his point of view, you *may* then feel justified to fire the shot and send the suspect (i.e., he is not yet proven guilty in the court of law) to his just rewards. And not a few Filipinos will agree with you.

At this point, let us, for the sake of argument, bring in the Kantian categorical imperative and Jesus' injunction to the picture.

We have pointed out in the preceding that both ethical principles are formal, imperative, and independent of the law of causality. This means that, in practical terms, both have a universal validity at all times, in all contexts, and under all conditions.

Now, imagine, dear reader, that **you** are the drug-pusher cornered by the police. Unknown to them, you are a twenty-year-old jobless man; that you come from a very poor family; that you have only finished grade three in the elementary school; and that you resorted to selling drugs because you are the only bread winner (the eldest) in the family.

You have two young brothers and two sisters whose survival depends on you. Your mother is dead; and your father is bedridden because he fell off from the second floor of the building while working as a construction worker.

That is *your* story as a human being.

The question is, Will you sanction your *own* execution as a morally justified act of the *other*?

Of course not! Why? Simple. It's because you now personally feel the cutting sharpness of Jesus' two-edged-sword-injunction—now as the recipient of the *other's* action which impinges with unbearable weight on your existential survival.

The same reaction you will feel if the drug suspect—or the victim of EJK—is your father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or cousin, or lover, or friend. (I remember Bishop Virgilio Pablo *Ambo* David of Caloocan recounting—in a 2017 conference to the priests and religious of the *Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines* (AMRSP)—the story of his cook in the convent, a grandmother. She previously supported Duterte in his drug-war and the annihilation of drug users and drug pushers in her neighborhood—***until*** her own grandson became an innocent, collateral victim of EJK.)

This is the chief reason why we pronounce that the act killing of a drug suspect in *tsinelas*, even if he or she is the most wretched criminal in the world, cannot be morally justified from the standpoint of Christian ethics, and that it cannot spring from the Kantian *good will* which gives unto itself the categorical imperative.

In short, the rationale of EJKs, either as a product of state policy or as a philosophical stance, is incompatible with the deepest moral intuition and natural feelings of human nature. Nor can it receive Kant's approbation as an expression of "a principle of a universal legislation."

Your conduct or action towards the *other* in a particular situation, dear reader, bears the character of "a universal

legislation" (as Kant puts it) if it is exactly what you would like the *other* do to you if the situation or circumstance is reversed. Thus, one's act of justice (or the act of compassion and charity) towards the *other* has the value of "a universal legislation" simply because it is the same kind of action which one would devoutly wish from the *other* in any given context or condition. Such an act is completely compatible with our moral sense and ethical consciousness.

How about killing a notorious but unarmed drug suspect quaking in fear? Can the act be morally justified? Can it bear the character of "a universal legislation?" Can it be a function of the Kantian *good will*? The answer to these questions is clear: No.

At this juncture, we are now ready to answer the main question we raised previously: Is it a mistake to consider killing a *human person* as an *absolutely* wrong act independently of the *context*?

Given the preceding discussion, we answer **yes—**it is unquestionably a mistake. In the *context* of Duterte's brutal war against the drug lords, drug pushers and drug addicts, we categorically state that it is absolutely wrong.

The Dominating Picture of Duterte's War on Drugs

In Duterte's war on drugs, there is a dominating picture that holds enthralled the minds of many who support the brutal and bloody side of the campaign. It is the face of the drug suspect. Mention the epithet "drug addict" or "drug pusher" to the general public, and it conjures in the mind the frightening image of the devil himself or a maniac out to wreck Himalayan havoc on our neighborhood.

The image is so repulsive that we shudder with revulsion and indignation. And understandably so—for the effects of *shabu* (methamphetamine) addiction, for instance, on the user as well as his/her victim(s) often manifest themselves in lurid acts of

violence, crime, perversion, and insanity such as rape, murder, physical assault, etc., etc.

But the face of the drug suspect (drug dealer or drug addict) is elusive, indistinct, and deceptive. This is because *not* all substance users or abusers fit the image of a fiend.

Boys in slums as young as eight years old (known as "Rugby boys" or "Solvent boys") sniff rugby and other aromatic substances to alleviate the stabbing pangs of hunger. The poor fishermen in the neighboring cities of Manila occasionally snuffle small doses of *shabu* to keep themselves awake when they set out to the sea. Weary and *isang-kahig-isang-tuka* nighttime drivers of lorries have to take in some stimulants to stay alert in the busy streets of Manila.

And, yes, even Duterte himself admits to taking shots of marijuana to stay roused and cocked to serve the Filipino people;[14] besides, of course, using the pain-relief drug fentanyl—an opioid prescribed to patients with chronic pain and taken either in solid or liquid form—which, as he once said, gives him the "cloud nine feeling."[15]

It is so regrettable and deplorable that Duterte's regime embarks on a vicious war on drugs with very understanding of such terms as "drug addiction," "substance use" or "drug abuse," "drug-dependent," and "drug-pusher."

An insomniac who nightly swallows sleeping tablets just to doze off may become addicted to the substance in the long term. A doctor who prescribes needlessly to his wealthy client large doses of fentanyl—considered as one of the five deadliest drugs, the addiction of which causes, among many others, depression, irritability, aggression, and mental disorder—is no less different from a street drug-peddler.

The deadliest drug, of course, is alcohol, which is also the most addictive substance. Many alcoholics or tipplers become violent (think of wife-beaters) and destructive (think of drunk drivers).

So, what is the face of a "drug-user" or "drug-dependent" or "drug addict?"

Is it the face of a famished boy in a slum huffing rugby at a corner in order to "forget hunger?" Is it the face of a poor and sleep-deprived truck driver who takes a shot of *shabu* before navigating the 83-kilometer distance between *Batangas* and Manila in the wee hours of the morning? Is it the face of your cousin, an insomniac, who is now addicted to *Seresta*? Is it the face of my neighbor who drinks *Marka Demonyo* like a culvert and who beats up his hapless wife when he gets home?

Is it the face of the hardworking President of the Philippines who smokes marijuana just to relieve himself from the aches, strains, and stresses sustained at the unselfish service of the Filipino people?

Or, is it perhaps the face of your brother or friend who puts some strong stimulant like *ecstasy* in his drink while watching the live concert of *Eastside Band*?

Are they also good candidates for EJKs?

The majority of Filipinos who rabidly endorse EJKs—including those policemen and Philippine narco agents who carry them out—will be hard-pressed to define what drug-addiction is as a medical term. Nor perhaps can they distinguish "drug user" from "drug addict," "drug use/abuse" from "drug dependence," "hard drug" from "soft drug;" nor can they tell the difference between stimulants and depressants, between opiates and opioids, between fentanyl lollipops and hallucinogens, etc., etc.

(EJK executors do not even distinguish a drug pusher from a drug user when they shoot a suspect on sight.)

And yet, these Filipinos who are unaffected by, and indifferent to the ravages of Duterte's drug-war roundly cheer with satisfaction every time a drug suspect falls dead in the street. *"Buti nga sa kanya!"* ("Serves him right!"); *"Tama 'yan!"* ("It's right and just!"); *"Buti na lang siya ang nabaril, keysa naman*

maka-rape pa siya, di ba?!" ("It's better he's the one shot dead by the police, instead of somebody getting raped by him, right?").

It's so easy for those who support EJKs to spew out these words of judgment and vindictiveness when the image of a drug suspect that dominates their mind and imagination is the picture of a beast or monster.

But such a picture is distorted, since, as we have just shown, *not* all drug addicts or dependents assume the face of a charging brute. If EJKs' supporters and perpetrators can only replace such a distorted image with that of a real flesh-and-blood human being (like the face of their son or brother) with a life story behind it—or if they themselves (like the old lady cook of Bishop *Ambo*) experience how it is to lose a loved one in Duterte's blood war on drugs—they will likely have second thoughts about Duterte's drug-war and perhaps entertain other measures or models in solving the drug problems in this country.

Duterte's War on Drugs and the Fallacy of Faulty Deduction

From the standpoint of philosophical logic, gullible and naïve Filipinos who endorse EJKs as a means to solve the problem of illegal drug trade and drug addiction in the country usually and unwittingly fall into the fallacy of faulty deduction.

This sort of error is illustrated by the following logical form:

X is part of ***Y***

Y has property ***Z***.

Therefore, ***X*** has property ***Z***.

An example of this syllogistic form is the following line of thinking pursued by those who endorse Duterte's bloody campaign against prohibited drugs.

"I've heard that many rapists are drug users who are good-for-nothing fellows and who therefore deserve to be shot to prevent them from doing heinous crimes. My 17-year-old neighbor has been snuffling Rugby since he was 10 years old.

Therefore, my neighbor is a worthless individual who is a potential rapist and has to be shot."

Here is a shorter and simpler version of the train of reasoning of the same:

My neighbor (***X***) is a drug user (***Y***).
Drug users (***Y***) commit crimes like rape and murder (***Z***).
Therefore, my neighbor (***Y***) is a criminal (rapist) (***Z***).

While it is true that some violent crimes are committed by drug users (or drug addicts) it does *not* necessarily follow that *all* drug users (think of your insomniac cousin who nightly takes sleeping pills) will commit crimes like rape.

An egregious example of a reasoning which stems from the fallacy of faulty deduction is the obtuse answer given by the Philippine Foreign Minister, the lamentable Alan Peter Cayetano, to the question by Aljazeera T.V. journalist Mehdi Hasan in an interview.

Asked by Hasan if "**every single one** of the three and a half thousand people killed was a drug dealer," the clueless Cayetano, who is a lawyer by profession, blurted: "Yes."

"How we do know that? You didn't try them. You didn't charge them. You didn't prosecute them. You shot them on sight. That is not a democratic way of solving crime(s), is it?" Hasan followed up.

Cayetano stammered, stumbled, fumbled for a retort, and mumbled some impressive words of inanity. Hasan pressed on: "Three and a half thousands have been killed by the police. Are they all criminal drug dealers?"

Again, the bollixed former Senator of the land blurted out: "Yes." Hasan then pounced on him. "How do we know that? None of them were tried. Normally you arrest someone and put him in trial. The Philippines is just killing people . . ."

It's a most pitiful and embarrassing sight to watch in global airtime our Philippine Foreign Minister confidently traipsing into the quicksand of his own folly and impertinence.

From the political and social perspective, the war on drugs in the Philippines being waged without letup by its President will *never* work and succeed. This has already been pointed out by the former President of Colombia, César Gaviria, who—in an opinion-editorial in *The New York Times* entitled "President Duterte Is Repeating My Mistakes"—writes that "[t]hrowing more soldiers and police at the drug users is not just a waste of money but also can actually make the problem worse."[16]

He further points out that "extrajudicial killings and vigilantism are the wrong ways to go." In short, killing drug suspects will just not work ("I'd be happy to slaughter them all!" Duterte says).[17] He then gives a good advice to Duterte: "Trust me, I learned the hard way."

"*Gago!*" [*Idiot!*] yells the good, old President of *PI* [*Philippine Islands*] at Colombia's Gaviria for "lecturing" him on the war on drugs.[18]

If you don't believe what President Gaviria says, dear reader, consider this analogy. Even if we kill **all** poor people in the Philippines, I tell you, this country will remain poor. It will *not* become rich. In short, eliminating the poor from the face of the earth will not solve the problem of poverty in this forlorn land.

In the same way, even if we slaughter **all** drug suspects, drug addicts, drug pushers/dealers, and drunkards—and feed their mangled bodies to fishes and squids in Manila Bay, as Duterte promised during his Presidential campaign—it will *not* solve the drug problems in this country. *Gets mo?*

It is actually the poor and the powerless who suffer most from Duterte's terrible war on drugs. They comprise the vast majority of victims of EJKs' executioners who, like angels of death, boldly prowl the poor neighborhoods and slums of Manila, hunting down their prey under the cover of darkness.

Why, are all drug dealers and drug users to be found in those pitiful slums in Caloocan and Bulacan? And *who*/*where* are the bigtime, moneyed drug lords who easily slip tons of *shabu* in Maersk-containers right in front of Customs officials' noses?

The all-too-familiar images of EJK victims are just too depressing to visualize and contemplate: Drug suspects in their *tsinelas* sprawled dead in the pool of blood. And we are not yet even talking here about the impoverished families of EJK victims who neither have the means nor the muscle to seek either justice or exact vengeance and who bear the insufferable pain of losing loved ones.

The God of the Old Testament and the Act of Killing a Human Being

Back to Abulad the philosopher.

In elucidating his thesis on the ethical issue of EJKs, Abulad also dips his hand into the well of theological controversies. He claims that

> [h]ad Abraham killed his son, Isaac, on the command of Yahweh, *that would not have been a bad thing*. A reading of the Old Testament shows a God who has *no qualms* about killing if that would be tantamount to good (italics mine).

Let us first discuss the philosophical aspect of Abulad's contention in order to understand his line of thinking.

There is a long-running discussion in philosophy of religion whether the notion of the *good* (i.e., *goodness as such*) can be detached from our understanding and knowledge of God.

The argument for God's existence from the standpoint of morality claims that ethics (or the virtue of being *good*) is intrinsically linked with the belief in God. According to theists, God's existence must be presupposed, so that ethical obligations and principles can hold traction in practical life; otherwise, all

moral values and precepts will be deprived of their objective meaning and universal grounding.

Religious skeptics contend, however, that the idea of *goodness* is not necessarily united with God's nature and actuality. They point out that anyone is capable of striving to be *good* even without believing in God, or even if God does not "exist." They also argue that *goodness as such* may be ontologically independent from, and possibly even more metaphysically primordial than God.

Contemporary atheists like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Colin McGinn adopt the strategy of decoupling the concept of the *good* from God's existence in order to undermine the argument from morality. The claim that *goodness as such* or *being good* does not in any way depend on God's actuality.

The entire debate therefore hinges on the question whether *goodness* is desirable precisely because God loves *goodness*, or *goodness* is desirable because God tells us to be *good*. The former entails that the notion of *goodness* is independent of God (i.e., its "existence" is separate from God's); the latter implies that *goodness* depends on what God wants us to do.

As a Christian believer and religious missionary, Abulad hews to the latter view—i.e., *goodness as such* depends on God's nature, actuality, and dispensation. This is the background of his statement that "had Abraham killed his son, Isaac, on the command of Yahweh, *that would not have been a bad thing*" (italics mine).

However, Abulad commits a grave logical fallacy or *non sequitur.*

Although for Christians all *goodness* (or love) originates from God and depends on God's nature and actuality; although we all believe that God is all-powerful, and that nothing is impossible for God's will and power, it does not follow (*non sequitur*) that God will order us to do something out of caprice. That is to say,

God *cannot* tell us to do something that may controvert God's own perfections and attributes.

For instance, God *cannot* urge me to cheat my business partner because deception is an imperfection, and it contradicts God's very nature. God cannot even persuade us that 2 + 2 = 5 or the capital of Japan is Ulan Bator because God is *truth* and in God there is no shade of error, no shadow of fraud. Needless to say, God cannot command us to do something evil or bad, and then humor us that it is something *good*.

Now, dear reader, do you think that, biblical exegesis aside, God will command Abraham to murder his own son Isaac just for fun or amusement? Analogically, can you imagine God telling a young, pregnant mother, abandoned by her lover, to abort her unborn child just to test her faith and then, if she obeys, applaud her spirit of obedience?

To say that murdering Isaac is *good* (or "not a bad thing") if God sanctions it is like saying that cheating on one's wife is fine and *good* if God tells us so.

Abulad also makes an erroneous biblical exegesis when he claims that the God of the OT "has *no qualms* about killing if that would be tantamount to good." His view essentially coincides with that of Manny Pacquiao, the *Boxer Champion-turned-Eisegete*, who, in his maiden speech in the Senate, calls for the restoration of the death penalty because, according to his *Honor*, it will bring a lot of good to the Filipino.

"[The] death penalty is lawful [and] moral . . . Having read the Bible on a regular basis, I am convinced that God is not just a God of mercy, but He is also a God of justice," Pacquiao pontificated with the same fire and confidence as John the Baptist.[19]

He then went on to cite, among others, the following OT biblical verses to support his grand vision for the nation: a.) Genesis 9: 6: "Whoever sheds human blood, by human shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind;"

b.) Exodus 21:12: "Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death."

The question is, "Is it true," as Abulad and the *Eisegete* Pacquiao would claim, "that the OT God is a harsh and relentless God who metes out punishment and death 'without qualms,' without pity or mercy?"

The answer is, no.

Fr. Randolf C. Flores, SVD, a bible scholar, in his masterful article "The Digression on Mercy in the Book of Wisdom (11: 17-12:22)," [20] refutes the common perception—or misconception—that the OT God is a stern and sullen God who is quick to strike down the wicked, punish the faithless, and damn the unbelievers.

Analyzing the historical context and textual structure of the *Book of Wisdom*, Fr. Flores paints for us a reassuring and wonderful image of the OT God who "overlooks the sins of human beings 'for the sake of repentance'" (Wis., 11: 23); who "loves all his creatures" (11: 24b); who reproves "little by little" in order to remind people of God's divine plan and to admonish them to trust God (12, 2d); who spared the lives of the Canaanites, the traditional enemies of Israel, because they are human beings (12: 8a), even if they are merciless killers of children and devourers of human flesh (12: 5); who cares for everyone (13a); who is liberal in giving "amnesty" to sinners "out of divine freedom and prerogative" (12:11); who manifests divine power with clemency and forbearance (v: 18), etc. [21]

In short, the OT God—the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac—is a merciful and forgiving God, "slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion" (Psalm 103: 8). The true visage of the OT God is far from the image of God which Abulad depicts for us: the face of a God "who has *no qualms* about killing if that would be tantamount to good" (italics mine). The book of *Ben Sira* tells us that God "shows his power in forgiveness" (Sir., 16: 11 LXX).[22]

Conclusion: Of Christians and Philosophers

Let us now bring this essay to its conclusion.

As of this writing (December 2018), the most recent death toll of Duterte's bloody campaign against drugs has hit the mark of 5,000 lives. According to Derrick Carreon, the spokesperson for the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), the number of victims killed at the hands of the police, between July 2016 and November 2018, is officially 5,050. This is the statistics released by Philippine authorities.[23]

Of course, the number of casualties is certainly much higher, since many cases of drug-related fatalities are not reported at all, and independent investigators find it difficult to have access to police's records on anti-drug operations. Chito Gascon, the Chairman of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR), puts the number at around 27,000 fatalities, both the direct victims (many of them were tagged as "high-value targets") and collateral casualties.

If the CHR's figures are reliable, then the number of the EJK victims is almost three times higher than the number of fatalities of Super Typhoon Yolanda that hit the country in 2013. This is an astonishing number of deaths!

The great historian Edward Gibbon is right in his observation that human beings have much more to fear from the passions and actions of their fellow-creatures than from the tantrums and convulsions of Mother Nature.

Beyond the figures and facts of Duterte's violent war on illegal drugs, however, are the lives lost and personal stories forgotten of nameless, faceless, and hapless Filipinos—the youth and the old, men and women and children—who were slaughtered without mercy, without warning, without trial.

Come to think of it: 5050 deaths (if we refer to the official police records of the death toll of Duterte's drug war.) and counting! Despite what the honorable Alan Peter Cayetano says,

it defies logic and statistics to believe that ***all*** these victims are guilty or *nanlaban* (who fought back). To believe so would not only be counterintuitive; it would also be naïve.

It is most likely that you, dear reader, have not heard any name and seen any face of these individual human beings who perished at the hands of unrelenting executioners. Nor, most probably, are you acquainted with the personal background, the private circumstances, the familial story, and the social status of a single EJK victim. It would be awful if you, dear reader, were not concerned by what's happening in the country today.

But perhaps the tragedy of our nation is not only the horrifying death toll of Duterte's vicious war on drugs; it is also the widespread coldness and indifference of many Filipinos to the nocturnal murder of tens of thousands happening in trickles daily in the slums and poor communities of Manila and its neighboring cities.

This pathetic and apathetic attitude of many Filipinos can be explained by the fact that many of them are unaffected by the terror of EJKs. (Recall Bishop's *Ambo* lady cook). The dark image of a drug suspect—the dominating picture of Duterte's war on drugs—adds in no small measure to the sense of unconcern and even nonchalance of the citizens.

But why would any Filipino bother about the EJK victims, anyway? The answer is simple. *Lives of human beings are being snuffed out*.

And the overwhelming majority of the victims are indigent and defenseless human beings. This means that the main target of Duterte's drug war, intentionally or not, is just one sector of human society: the poor.

The poor have nothing. They don't have power. They don't have access to legal remedies. They cannot defend themselves. In fact, it is the poor who suffer most from the illegal drug trade; but they are the ones who bear the full brunt of the terror of Duterte's drug war.

This grim reality should singe our collective conscience as a Christian nation. A foreign observer once wondered aloud why the EJKs are happening in a country of peace-loving and devout citizens. Of course, he is only looking at things and events from an outsider's point of view. He is not well-acquainted with the social realities and political conditions of the country.

But he will certainly be shocked to find out that even a good number of Filipino priests, nuns, religious, and seminarians, *do* support the menace of EJKs as a distinct feature of Duterte's drug war—not actively and openly, but silently, nonchalantly, implicitly, playfully, appreciatively, gamely, placidly, flippantly, informally, teasingly, vocally, jokingly, emotionally, smugly, ideationally, ideologically, politically, and yes—ethically and philosophically.

It is not our aim to cast aspersions on anyone; nor do we make any personal judgment on anybody.

However, we would like to contend, philosophically, that anyone who professes to be a Christian is under an ethical-philosophical estoppel to reject EJKs either as a concept or policy or practice. This is because the specter of EJKs is diametrically opposed to the primary precepts, principles, and presuppositions of the Christian Faith.

In the strictest and truest sense, I—as a Christian and religious—cannot truthfully declare that I am a Christian believer and follower of Jesus Christ, that I love my neighbor and, at the same time, condone, even passively or informally, the killing of a defenseless and poor drug addict by the police in my town or *barangay*. The two standpoints are logically and mutually exclusive.

The declaration will make me a hypocrite and a liar before the *Prince of Peace* to whom I pronounce my unswerving loyalty and devotion.

One cannot even invoke St. Thomas's principle of self-defense as a guiding, one-size-fits-all template in Duterte's war

on drugs because of its high-voltage intensity and power that causes incalculable collateral casualties (mostly poor people).

For St. Thomas, one's act is determined by the object or end of such an act. In self defense, the end is one's survival, *not* another person's death; although the death of the other might result from one's act of defending oneself. But the specter of EJKs has the death of a human being for its object, end or *finis*. "Slaughter them all," roared Duterte.

Parenthetically, St. Thomas will never agree with the suggestion that his theory of self-defense may be used to justify EJKs.

We can now understand why Abulad only suggests, at the philosophical level, that the EJKs taking place under Duterte's regime "might actually be morally justifiable." This is because, as a Christian and religious, Abulad *cannot* endorse EJKs personally and openly because he is under a moral estoppel.

He only insinuates it as a possibility to the philosophic mind.

We find it, however, irresponsible and injudicious of Abulad to suggest to his readers (mostly philosophy students and seminarians) that EJKs under Duterte's regime "might actually be morally justifiable." And we have given and explained the reasons which have led us to form an opinion on the ethical issue of EJKs contrary to that of a distinguished Filipino philosopher whose judgment we so highly respect.

Like the prophets of old, philosophers are men and women who guide and lead their people to the sunny uplands of truth and enlightenment. They are like lantern-bearers who show the way to those who follow them under the darkness of the night. They are also like lighthouses whose unmistakable lights steer ships safely to the port.

It is therefore their noble task to read, discern, and interpret the signs of the times for those who look up to them for vision, direction, and inspiration. In discharging such a task, philosophers should be thoughtful and circumspect in their

words and locutions in order to avoid leading—or misleading—others to the slippery slope of error and confusion.

At the end of his short treatise, Abulad bequeaths to us some words of wisdom:

> If the elections were to be held today, I [*Abulad did not vote for Duterte in the last presidential elections*] would already take the risk and vote for this man [*Duterte*], the only man (it seems) who could turn the cultural tide of corruption, crime and drug addiction in country today, all for love of country and in the name of future generations. There is no doubt that this is a President who believes in God, but not in the type of idol who allows for hypocrisy and vicious culture to thrive (italics are mine).

The families of EJK victims—and thoughtful thinkers—will wince at these magnificent words of a philosopher.

But for us, who have not lost a loved one in Duterte's drug war, it will be interesting to know, at the theological-philosophical level, who is this "God" of Duterte whom Abulad is talking about. I don't think it is the Judeo-Christian God because Duterte the theologian once called the biblical God "stupid;" nor is it the Trinity because Duterte finds the mystery "silly;" nor is it the Son of God who offered His life on the cross as a ransom for many because Duterte also finds His sublime sacrifice "absurd."

Whoever the god of Duterte is, I will **never**, ever believe in him.

In conclusion, let me wrap up this disquisition on a personal note. Abulad tells us that in dealing with the issue of EJKs, the question of *context* is of vital importance.

We fully agree with him.

Well, let us now talk about the bloody context of EJKs by enumerating the names of victims mentioned in the *New York Times'* photo-article written by Daniel Berehulak.[24] (You can read the article in the NYT's website and see the graphic pictures.)

Romeo Torres Fontanilla, 37 years old; Michael Araja, 29; the 17-year-old girl Erika Angel Fernandez, 17 and her boyfriend Jericho Camitan, 23; Frederick Mafe, 48, and Arjay Lumbago, 23; Jimboy Bolasa, 25; Florjohn Cruz, 34; Edwin Mendoza Alon-Alan, 36; Ronald Kalau, Joselito Jumaquio, 52; Brothers Danilo Deparine 36, and Aljon Deparine, 23; Benjamin Visda, 43; and Crisostomo Diaz, 51.

They are just a few names of the thousands killed in Duterte's brutal drug war. They joined the young Kian Loyd de los Santos 17, executed on August 16, 2017, like a helpless quarry by two policemen at the corner of a dark alley. In his primal naïveté and sublime innocence, Kian was pleading for his life, uttering his last words in this valley of tears: "Please let me go, I have an exam tomorrow."

RIP *kababayans*!

You never found peace here in this desolate land. May you find everlasting peace in the heavenly abode.

We dedicate this essay to you. We wish it were bigger:

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[21]Flores, "Digression on Mercy," 38-40.

[22]Quoted in Flores, "Digression on Mercy," 40.

[23]*The Guardian,* "Duterte's Philippines drug war death toll rises above 5,000," (December 19, 2018); [news online]; available from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/19/dutertes-philippines-drug-war-death-toll-rises-above-5000?CMP=share_btn_link; 8 January 2019.

[24]Daniel Berehulak, "They are Slaughtering us Like Animals," *The New York Times*, December 16, 2016; [news online]; available from https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/12/07/world/asia/rodrigo-duterte-philippines-drugs-killings.html; 8 January 2019.