

# The philosophy of the human person

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But the outcome of any philosophical inquiry is determined by its starting place" relates to the question of horizon, a limit of what can be seen from a definite perspective consisted of a subjective and objective fixed point of reference. Horizon is not a figure of speech but our framework to understand something and to make a decision. It is a framework of choices. It is our awareness of the choices among the philosophies in life. Choice connotes freedom. We are free to choose a philosophy that is best for us and apply it. If what we chose as a philosophy is inapplicable, then we choose another philosophy and change our perspective.

As stated by Professor Florentine Horned, " Our horizon affects the choices we make about what life is. When one's horizon is bigger, the choice is more difficult. " How do we know our horizon? It poses an inquiry, " Do we believe in anything? " And the answer depends on our choices of what to believe or not to believe. Ultimately, the question " Who am I? " will be answered in determining our horizon. William Shakespearean Hamlet line, " To be or not to be, that is the question" finds application in the starting point of one's horizon. Likewise, we adopt Socrates' statement " Know Thy Self" which is an examination of one's life and purpose.

For example, we examine if our purpose is to serve others, if it is, then our horizon is about selfless service. We are inclined to offer ourselves for humanitarian causes. We are engrossed in helping others in need and in distress. We are engaged in an active social work as a volunteer. Another example, an elementary grade pupil named Lily who dreams of becoming a lawyer like her father. The philosophical inquiry of Lily is " what is Justice? "

The outcome of this inquiry is determined by her horizon. Obviously, Lily's idea of "Justice" is narrow and limited.

She, by reason of her tender age, can be influenced easily by his parents' or schoolteachers' definition of Justice. When she saw a neighbor being arrested and handcuffed by the policeman, she heard that her neighbor shot another and she immediately concluded that her neighbor is a criminal who deserves to be jailed not knowing that there is a legal process for it known as a trial. She lauded the act of the swift arrest by the policemen on her neighbor who was not doing anything other than resting in his house. She says that there is Justice in the country because what she heard from her teacher, "A Justice delayed, is a Justice denied. In the case of her neighbor, there was no delay of Justice because of the abrupt arrest. When she became a high school student, her idea of Justice changes. Her horizon broadens because she watches TV programs and reads newspapers. When she became a law student, her horizon further broadens because she is studying Justice in its legal sense. She now knew that the neighbor's arrest was illegal because said neighbor was not in the act of committing a crime or has committed it. There was no warrant of arrest presented to her neighbor, a constitutional violation under Article III, Section 2, Philippine Constitution.

She learned that her neighbor was a victim of injustice. So, she wanted to defend him or someone like him who is a victim of injustice. After passing the bar, Lily became a lawyer who was accepted as a public attorney, a paupers' counsel who represent and defend them for free in court. Then, Lily came across a case similar to her neighbor. She defended him well contending the illegality of his arrest. When the decision was pronounced,  
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she witnessed the crying and anguish of the family members and relatives of the victim shot by her client. The court acquitted the man because of the able defense and trial skills of Lily.

However, outside the courtroom, the man admitted the killing and thanked Lily for defending him to escape punishment even he is guilty. Because of this experience, Lily's horizon expanded. She saw the injustice committed on the victim and the family members because of the acquittal of the man, she thought was innocent but actual a guilty one. When Lily was promoted as a public prosecutor, her experiences as a public attorney is carried to her new role, thereby, giving her evolved notion of what Justice is. And finally, when Lily became a Judge, she has a different view of the philosophical inquiry of " what is Justice? And its outcome is determined by its starting point, that is, the horizon of Lily as a Judge. Her horizon is not only looking at the east side of the sky as a public attorney or its west side as a public prosecutor but looking at the entire sky to answer the philosophical inquiry of " what is Justice? " Our basic drive is to know. Our human knowing is through our senses like seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. The rationality of knowing consists of inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing evidence.

The enlightenment of knowing are Judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking and writing. " The intrinsic objectivity of human cognitional activity is its intentionality' can be restated to be the essential external reality of knowing is its purpose. Our goal of our knowing and perceiving is in its intention. We are living questionnaires by nature. When we experience things, we ask question like " Why it is so? " that leads to the <https://assignbuster.com/the-philosophy-of-the-human-person/>

formulation in definition, hypotheses ND theories. Accordingly, the intention is a dynamic structure of knowing.

This intention is unrestricted and limitless because there is nothing that we cannot question. The same intention is comprehensive because our questioning probes every aspect of everything. As answers stand to questions, our cognitional activities stand to the intention of our being. Our answer is to a question because both have the same intention. Thus, the intrinsic relation of the dynamic structure of human knowing passes from the side of the subject (intention intendeds) to the side of object (intention intent). For example, the question, what is this? Ends an information to our mind the words " this" and " is". The " what" refers to " this". This sending of an information did not settle any issue but it did raise an issue described by Bernard Lonelier, SO to be " neither knowledge nor ignorance of the essence and existence but it is the intention of both. " What the essence is and if the essence exists are questions not answers that unites the side of the subject (intention intendeds) to the side of object (intention intent) in our knowing and perceiving. To explicate this, let us take a case at a police station.

There are three suspects for investigation by the police Homicide section. A man was killed by an unidentified assailant. The three suspects interposed the defense of denial and alibi. The first suspect said that he was at their province when the crime occurred. The other was attending a fiesta. The last suspect claimed to be at his brother's house. The witness identified the three to be perpetrators of the crime. They were indicted by the public prosecutor. During the trial, the cross-examination by a prosecutor is a cognitional activity.

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The object of such is either to build up the theory of prosecution or to destroy the theory of defense. So, every question is loaded with a purpose.

Otherwise, the truth will be elusive that will result to injustice to all the parties. " Why is this crime committed? " the prosecutor in knowing this passes from the side of the subject (intention intendeds) to the side of object (intention intent). This intention is unrestricted and limitless because there is nothing the prosecutor cannot question to the accused at the witness stand.

From our viewpoint, we can no longer think of life as a mere and pure spontaneity. We can no longer think of reflection as our life's antagonist. It is essential to adopt that reflections are part of our life. " Reflection is one of the life's ways of rising from one level of being to another. " Reflection is a process of recalling or re-examining our past experiences in order to understand them. It is either a primary reflection or secondary reflection. The primary reflection examines its object by abstraction, by analytically breaking it down into its constituent parts.

It is concern with definitions, essences and technical solutions to problems. It answers the question " What am I? " while the secondary reflection is synthetic that unites than vides and answers the question " Who am I". As stated by Professor Florentine Horned, " The primary reflection is a pragmatic solver of problem like posing a question, if you do not know how to make a living, how can you feed the hungry? There must be a solution too problem. " The balancing of primary reflection (" What am R") and secondary reflection (" Who am I") is the existential fulcrum.

To reflect is to ask oneself something that occurred and to go back in time and recall the moment. We exercise it on things that are worth reflecting about. We reflect on our experiences. The richer is our experience, the more is our reflection. When we experience obstacles and adversities, our reflection occur being checked by a certain break in the continuity of experience that it becomes necessary to pass from one level to another. In passing from lower level to higher level, we recover from the higher level the unity that was lost on the lower level.

For example, when a judgment was rendered at a Regional Trial Court, there was a reflection made by the Presiding Judge on the evidence presented by the prosecution and defense and their respective arguments. When the Judgment was appealed, the decision was reviewed y Court of Appeal Justices. There is another reflection on the case to arrive at a judgment whether to affirm or reverse it. When the Judgment is reversed, the reflection is raised up from one level, the reflection of a Judge in the Regional Trial Court, to another level, may be a higher one, the reflection of a Justice in the Court of Appeals.

When the Judgment of the Court of Appeals is brought up to the Supreme Court, the Judgment rendered by the latter is a reflection that is raised to the highest level, which everyone, must respect and abide for our Supreme Court is a final arbiter of a case. There may be a fresh set of Jurisprudence created out of this reflection. " Each symbol gives rise to comprehension by means of interpretation. " Signs are expressions that carry out meaning revealed through the intention of the signifying that is conveyed by words. Not every

sign is a symbol. A symbol suggests "something". All symbols are full of meaning.

Different people interpret symbols differently. Every symbol is subject to different interpretation. Hence, a symbol can have different meanings. How can the symbol be a starting point for thought without leading back to the same old interpretations? The answer lies in the relationship between symbols and hermeneutics. This interpretation is both in the symbol and beyond. There are three (3) stages of this interpretation which are: (1) phenomenology which is the comprehension of the symbol by the symbol or by a symbol as a whole. Professor Florentine Horned said, "The things should be interpreted by going back to the things themselves.

The realities should be studied not contemplated. The whole should give meaning to the parts while the parts should give meaning to the whole. "His example is the image of the Mama Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. She symbolizes purity, spotless or cleanliness, thus the description "Immaculate" Mary from a root word "Macaulay" meaning a spot or stain. Her description is attributed by the story in our Bible that she conceived Jesus Christ, the son of God, without having engaged in a sexual intercourse, which the act itself is viewed to be dirty or unclean.

Another example our Professor Florentine Horned discussed is the word "extrapolation. " "Ex", meaning out, Nina" meaning way which is the truth. For him, "there is a road and there is an outside to the road. Our world has the inside and outside. It has a right side and wrong side. Sometimes, we get lost due to equal value of things. We do not know what philosophical side to



take even though philosophy is simple. We complicate it. " ; (2) the hermeneutics which is the interpretation applied in each case to an individual text.

This is a start of intelligent deciphering symbolized by a knot, interpreted as a circle expressed in a statement, "muff must comprehend in order to believe but you must believe in order to comprehend"; and (3) the thought starting from symbols which is finding a philosophy hidden under symbols and the task of philosophy is to promote and shape the meaning in a creative interpretation. To illustrate, the symbol of Justice is a blindfolded lady carrying a scale. This is interpreted by another symbol of a balance or weighing scale known as phenomenology.

When the lady blindfold is removed or the scale carried is heavier at one side than the other, this is an interpretation of injustice, this is known as hermeneutics. There is a message behind the symbol to be deciphered intelligently. When the symbol of lady Justice is changed, thereby promoting and shaping the meaning in a creative interpretation, this is what Paul Ricoeur's referred to as the " thought starting from symbols. What new symbol can represent Justice in our modern times? The thoughts from the symbol of Justice creates a new philosophy giving us new comprehension as to what justice is that is responsive to our times.

We interpret, we comprehend. New symbols are born with this comprehension. Our union of encounter is based on experience. It is a mystery that takes place on the higher level of our human existence. In many cases, we have no physical contact or material contact in our

encounter with others but the result of union is deeper than anything. Deeper than what our bodily contact can produce. Thus, " We have the existential presence which is a common spiritual bond in virtue of which each is present in the other and participates in the being of another. This existential presence differs from spatial proximity or nearness which is indicated in our daily life as " presence". An example is a congregation of lawyers attending in a convention. They are proximate to each other but they are not existentially present to one another unless there is an introspective communion between them. This communion is exemplified by the talking and debating of these congregation of racers in the convention who get the chance to know each other, thus, starting to recognize each other's presence.

The nature of this existential presence cannot be forcibly realized in opposition to spatial proximity. In our example, the congregation of lawyers made their proximity to each other possible even with them objecting to it because there is a rule to follow for them to be proximate to each other like they have their respective seat assignment. This cannot be in existence presence. The lawyers who are seatmates during the convention can choose not to talk to each other. They can choose to completely ignore each other from start to the end of the convention.

One lawyer cannot be forced to be present to others without his liking much more when he is opposed to the existence of the said presence. For existential presence is not subject to a rule unlike spatial proximity.

Engineers Van Greengrocer elucidates this with his example, " I am able to stay near someone against his will and I may compel someone else to

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remain with me. But the communion can be obtained only through the free mutual engagement of the persons involved. I may appeal to the there to be existentially present with me, but if he refuses, I cannot force him.

The very imposition of my will would emphasize the separation between our personal being and destroy even the possibility of an encounter. Similarly, I may offer myself to be authentically with the other but if he does not freely open himself, my insistence is in vain. Existential presence, therefore, cannot be forced. All I can do is open myself to it and welcome it when it is realized.

" As the old saying goes, Mimi can lead the horse to the river, and you can even try to bring the water to the horse, but you cannot force it to drink the water. "