



## DOING FILIPINO THEOLOGY AMIDST GLOBALIZED TECHNOCRACY

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*The first component of this paper reflects on how the hegemony of technocratic rationality has become the prevailing discourse in today's globalized context. This rationality appears to be the over-arching horizon whereby social, economic, cultural and information systems are judged and valorized. The second section of the article is a critical look at some of the challenges technocratic rationality presents to theology. The technocratic obsession for the measurable and quantifiable seems to result in objectifying everything in its way, including humanity for the service of profitable performativity that drives the capitalistic engine. This paper asks and tries to discern in its third part whether there might be resources within the theological discourse that may expose the hegemonic pretension of technocratic rationality. This section further asks whether the capitalistic performativity discourse is the only discourse on performance and performativity that can serve as a currency of value and ethical judgment. Taking all of this into consideration, this article is a plea to a recuperation of the "excess" beyond the market business relationships – an excess only grace can bestow. This excess finds its performativity in the sacramental performance of the eschatological gift that every Eucharist celebrates.*

**T**heology as *fides quaerens intellectum* is tasked at an ever-continuing reflexive practice in critically-articulating truth-claims as the faith-community continues its agentic response in the drama of salvation history. One indispensable dynamic in the 'quaerens' aspect of theology is that it is at once context-content driven. As the title suggests this paper aims to contribute in this aspect of theologizing.

This paper seeks to articulate: 1) some critical dynamics of globalization in relation to the enterprise of theological knowing and doing; 2) the challenges that theology faces in the context of



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technocratic rationality; and 3) some possible theological foundation towards a Filipino performative theology that subverts the market-based performative legitimation of social systems in a context of globalization.

## **GLOBALIZING KNOWLEDGE**

The everyday person appears to be surrounded by texts, subtexts, newsbytes, tweets, timeline updates reminding him/her that s/he is part of ‘one’ world whether through “natural disasters, human-generated crises, commercial messages to consume, media and technology-assisted connectivity, or as part of the on-going everyday movement of ideas, people and things within and across borders.”<sup>1</sup> This summarizes what the everyday global person experiences. The fluidity of data, mobility of financial and human resource and the ubiquitous presence of an all-seeing media are impacting many aspects of our lives.

In his report on knowledge – *La Condition Postmodern*, Jean-Francois Lyotard points out that in the postmodern condition there is an increasing predominance of performativity as criterion of legitimation for research and knowledge. For example, in technical research, the invention of gadgets – from Siri in iPhones to the prosthetics of Oscar Pistorius – the researchers follow one principle – that is – the principle of optimal performance or maximizing output and minimizing input. Technology in its contemporary sense of meaning no longer refers to crafts which relate to the true, the just, or the beautiful as the ancient Greeks would take τέχνη to mean.<sup>2</sup> Technology is at the service of efficiency: a technical innovation is effective when it gives a better output despite a minimum input.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kumari Beck, “Globalization/s: Reproduction and Resistance in the Internationalization of Higher Education,” in *Canadian Journal of Education* 35 § 3 (2012): 133-148, 134.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of technai: dancing, carpentry, guitar playing, beer brewing. Technology as we understand it now is a rather late development of meaning.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, MN, 1999), 44.

In modernity, the proof-based scientific knowledge replaces the traditional knowledge derived from revelation. Science replaces theology. However, scientific knowledge inquiry for efficiency requires additional expenditures. The equation now seems to be “no money, no proof, no verification – no truth.”<sup>4</sup> The solution proffered by capitalism is to directly finance research developments in private companies. And the main drivers in this financial arrangement are performativity and commercialization. In short, research is done in order to increase the probability of rolling out applications and technologies which are highly innovative and highly profitable.

The production, transmission and utilization of knowledge are influenced by this mindset. In a social system arranged according to the criterion of performativity, its sub-systems are measured according to how they contribute to the overall efficiency of the totality. In the case for example of the sub-system of education as the transmission and production of knowledge, the desired goal becomes its optimal contribution to the highest performativity of the social system. Education will have to create the skills that are indispensable to the system. On the one hand, knowledge is gained and utilized in order to tackle the world competition and on the other, education provides the social system with the skills needed in addressing its professional needs.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the new currencies of judgment in knowing provide a platform of judgment which evaluates practitioners and institutions solely in terms of their productivity and their performance.<sup>6</sup> Productive individuals, new kinds of subjects, are the central economic resource in the reformed, entrepreneurial public sector. Given this dynamic, it is easy to understand why theology subjects in Catholic universities even if trumpeted as core subjects, are given least importance by students because theological knowledge has difficulty justifying its performativity in a market-driven social system.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 45.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 46.

<sup>6</sup> S. Ball, *Education Plc: Understanding Private Sector Participation in Public Sector Education* (London: Routledge Press, 2007), 186.

## DYNAMICS OF TECHNOCRATIC RATIONALITY

The preceding reflections seem to point out to an over-arching technocratic rationality that appears to regulate, discipline and mediate negotiations of meanings and values in today's context. Donald Schon defined technical rationality as an "epistemology of practice derived from positivist research that holds practitioners as instrumental problem solvers who select technical means best suited to a particular purpose."<sup>7</sup> In today's context, this means basically the particular purpose defined by globalized market discourse.

There appears to be several dynamics at work here. First is the tendency towards homogenization of functions and outcomes of various subsystems of society mediated by one overriding discourse that can become a prescriptive requirement for a meaningful participation in the lifeworld.<sup>8</sup> For example, universities tend to formulate educational outcomes to meet institutional requirements of benchmarking and performance indicators to align to the corporate-industrial demands. In the end technocratic rationality seem to be overly obsessive in valuing productivity and outcomes which are measurable, regulated and quality controlled. In other words, the compelling justification for the production and transmission of knowledge is hinged on the economic value and its role in international market competitiveness.<sup>9</sup> The whole framework of liberal standardization enshrined in ASEAN Economic Community of 2015 where a single market and production base are envisioned is characterized by the free flow of professionals, skilled workers, goods, investment and capital. This process seems to manifest what technocratic rationality stands for. The sub-system of education is tasked to prepare the human resource of this integration and their outcomes and standards are buttressed through mutually agreed upon

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<sup>7</sup> Donald Schon, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 3.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the inescapable marketability-factor in publishing dissertations into book forms.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Roberts, "Encounters with Existential Intelligence: Possibilities for Today's Effective Educator," in *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* 5 § 7 (2010): 241-252, 245.

qualifications reference frameworks. In the country, this is manifested in the vaunted PQF or Philippine Qualifications Framework which will determine curriculum, content, research and educational outcomes of all the educational institutions of the country in the foreseeable future.

The second dynamic seems to be based on some form of an epistemological-metaphysical dynamics of *adequatio*. It appears that the whole techno-scientific rationality is based on a certain epistemological arrangement defined according to the binarial subject-object opposites. This arrangement has been the subject of the Nietzschean critique that liquidates the epistemological claim that reifies truth as the correspondence between reality and human thinking. For him this claim is born out of the human will to power. As Vattimo argues, Heidegger takes over the Nietzschean idea, although for him nihilism announces the end of metaphysics which identifies Being with the objectively given. This critique which was shared by the avant-garde philosophical and literary thinking of the early twentieth century had an ethical basis. The metaphysics of objectivity culminates in a kind of thinking that identifies the truth of Being with the calculable, measurable and definitely manipulable object of techno-science. This conception of Being as a quantifiable object conceals the presupposition of the world as total organization where even the human subject tends to be regarded as a raw material – a part of the general mechanism of production and consumption.<sup>10</sup> The corporate buzz-words of measurable, calculable outcomes, key result areas and performance indicators seem to bring to mind the importance of never-forgetting the lessons of modernity.

The third dynamic seems to relate to the preceding critique where humans tend to become faceless individuals in the face of globalized mass culture of consumption and production. One only thinks of the thousands of sweatshops in Southeast Asia as outsourced cheap labor resource servicing the corporate manufacturing needs of industrial giants like Apple and Nike. Bauman for example laments that what is being trumpeted as the beneficial mobility of capital investment, people and information in reality has only benefited a

<sup>10</sup> Gianni Vattimo, *Belief* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 31.



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particular sector of society. He claims that globalization has continued to create an ever-widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. The global connectivity only emphasizes the digital divide and it seems from his perspective that it has not brought humans closer to their freedom and communion. We can only, according to him, watch as boundaries, institutions and loyalties shift in rapid and unpredictable ways leaving humans bereft of sense of stability and security.<sup>11</sup>

## **THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES**

In a context of industry-determined and market-based production and transmission of knowledge, doing theology once again finds itself in the underside of history to use Pedro Trigo's term. One only needs to look at the research-funding made available to theologians. It appears that as far as technocratic rationality is concerned, theology is at best arcane and at worst irrelevant.

The discursive relevance of theology comes to the fore if one reflects upon the dynamics of technocratic rationality. With the apparent homogenizing tendencies in the industry-driven context, it seems that theology is challenged to bear witness to the heterogeneity that may have been glossed over, forgotten or intentionally ignored because they do not fit into the parameters set forth by the industry outcomes. The heterogeneous maybe social or cultural, but for theology the heterogeneous may be the 'excess' and what cannot be accounted for by technocratic categories – what may not be quantified in measurable performance indicators. Lyotard calls this *differend* that which interrupts universalizing tendencies present in globalization. It seems to me that the challenge of theology lies in looking at its own discursive resources in order to look for categories that bear witness to difference.

Related to this is the seeming challenge for theology regarding the existential questions that humans face in the context of globalization. Amidst the dynamic of numeric anonymity where humans are accounted for in terms of internet protocol addresses

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<sup>11</sup> Confer Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

or of numerical passport controls, theology seems to be challenged to make bodies matter. The doctrine of incarnation plays a vital role in this context. “The particularity of incarnation resonates with the contemporary concern that the political economy of global capitalism unhinges the dialectical bond between empirical referents and the formation of discourse (e.g. women, natives vis-à-vis genderization and racialization).”<sup>12</sup> Theology’s defence of the concreteness of faces and bodies of human persons is not only doctrinally important. The framework of particularity and locality is also given importance here. “[W]hen the Word became flesh, the Word did not take on an all purpose, generic, one-size-fits-all human nature. Such a view would not take seriously the radical historicity of both human nature and divine revelation.”<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, theology is challenged to bring into mind the call towards transcending our desperate and bleak existences, not by piling on progress, but pondering our purpose amidst the dehumanizing effects of industrialization and technology. Theological knowing can provide critique on the false sense of security in the outcomes-based digital age and the quantitative proliferation of things. Theology can help men and women reflect on the fragility of the being that leaves us modern men and women insecure about our existence on earth. It can remind us of green pastures of peace when the global person feels that s/he is no longer capable of saying that s/he is really at home on this earth. Theological discourse can recuperate God’s abundant grace when the global human finds him/herself lost in a desert. Theology can help replenish the spirit when the human is caught in a certain homelessness that does not just consist in the lack of houses.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Randy Odchigue, “E-mergence of the Post-human: Irrelevance of Incarnation,” in *Landas: Journal of Loyola School of Theology* 26 § 1 (2012): 1-15, 12.

<sup>13</sup> John Meier, “The Present State of the ‘Third Quest’ for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain,” *Biblica* 80 (1999): 459-87, 486.

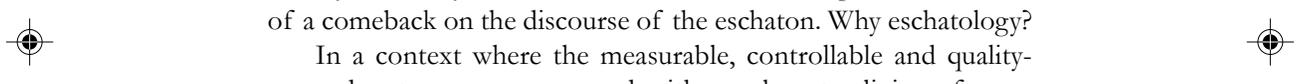
<sup>14</sup> Cf. Remmon Barbaza, *Heidegger and a New possibility of Dwelling* (Peter Lang: Frankfurt Am Main, 2003), 140.



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Moreover, amidst the globalized professional corporate image, theology may be challenged to a conscious effort to extrude meaning and value from the choices human persons make their professional and personal lives. Theology can encourage humans to remember we are works in progress, we are not finished, and that “we are what we are not yet” and that there is so much possibility for meaning giving beyond the pre-determined industry outcomes dictated by the market. Theology can bring back that sensibility which may have been lost in the daily grind of information overload and give us hope when we realize our present plight is not the final, authoritative word.

**ESCHATON: THE FORGOTTEN RESOURCE IN AN  
OUTCOMES-BASED CONTEXT**



The foregoing reflections on ‘excess’, grace, hope, transcendence, already-and-not yet character of existence seem to point to the need of a comeback on the discourse of the eschaton. Why eschatology?

In a context where the measurable, controllable and quality-assured outcomes are pursued with an almost religious fervor, eschatology provides a critique and a perspective. In the ‘eschaton’ discourse, one also talks about outcomes but an outcome that exceeds the manipulable and controllable. It talks about outcomes where puny attempts in strategic management plannings could not even begin to capture. It is about grace-filled outcomes – where human designs falter and human ideologies crumble. This proposal finds its resonances in the intuitions of Balthasar and Marion where they insist that God must be purely *a posteriori* in order that the human may not be able to claim any stake or any power over against grace. Both authors argue that the task of theology is to articulate the arrival of grace like a lightning bolt, that interrupts and shatters categories, intuitions and performances in every day living.<sup>15</sup> This means that the

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<sup>15</sup> See, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-logic: Theological Logical Theory*, vol. 1, *The Truth of the World* trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 53; Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Towards a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2002).

presence of the eschaton in history guarantees openness in the discourse of technocratic rationality because it points to something beyond what is manipulable - it points “to the unobjectifiable, uncontrollable, extraordinary ‘beyond’.”<sup>16</sup> More than being a polemic directed against unconditional linear historicism, eschatology helps us to articulate the challenge that any narrative must be attentive to the ‘movement of the Spirit’ beyond the disciplined boundaries and quality controlled parameters ever present in a technocratic society. This narrative openness secures the space of a personal eschatological Other who interrupts history.

In the discourse of the eschaton, differences in emphasis between the Eastern and Western Christian theologies matter. It seems that Western theology conceives of eschatology as *orientation* or *outcome*. As orientation, eschatology appears to be the result of historical process and the climax of mission. The Eastern theological understanding conceives of eschaton as a *state of existence*. As such, eschaton confronts history with a presence beyond history. In the latter case, eschatology requires an iconic understanding.

From a phenomenological point of view, the contrast between the idol and the icon as two modes of “apprehension [or reception] of the divine in visibility” is reflected upon by Jean-Luc Marion.<sup>17</sup> For him, ‘idol’ is not so much forgery or illusion but something that presents to the ‘gaze’ its own intention: “The gaze makes the idol, not the idol the gaze—which means that the idol with its visibility fills the intention of the gaze, which wants nothing other than to see.”<sup>18</sup> The icon on the other hand, is independent from the ‘grasp’ of the gaze. Rather, the icon provokes the gaze towards a vision which is neither accountable nor submissive to any measure excepts its own transcendent and “infinite excessiveness.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> John Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimension of the Church,” in *International Catholic Review – Communion* 1 (1974): 142-158, 156.

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being* trans. Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 9, 23-24.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 20-21. Marion uses St. Paul’s formulation that Jesus Christ is the icon of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) as the example par excellence for this explanation.



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The theological import of icon is developed at length by eminent Orthodox theologians like Zizioulas, Lossky and Ouspensky. On one level, Zizioulas clarifies the role of iconic understanding in relation to history and eschatology. This clarification seeks to avoid on one hand, a purely historical approach that reduces the reality of the kingdom to ethical engagement, and on the other, a purely Platonic approach which abandons engagement and restricts truth “to ideas or to an object for contemplation.”<sup>20</sup> In relation to epistemology and history, Zizioulas argues that in the iconic understanding, truth is not a product of the mind but is a “‘visit’ and a ‘dwelling’ of an eschatological reality entering history to open it up in a communion-event.”<sup>21</sup> This truth is iconically manifested free from conceptual manipulation. In Zizioulas’ perspective, the iconological language, “liberates truth from our ‘conception’, ‘definition’, ‘comprehension’ of it and protects it from being manipulated and objectified.”<sup>22</sup> On this point Zizioulas shares the critique of the avant-garde philosophical and literary thinking of the early twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> Zizioulas further contends that while history is conditioned by eschatology, it does not wait in passive contemplation for the fulfillment of eschaton. Through the agency of the icon, eschatology bursts through and penetrates history. “It does not simply interrupt sameness, the status quo, political ideologies, or meta-histories; it sanctifies history with God’s presence and transforms its being.”<sup>24</sup> Zizioulas believes that an iconic and sacramental approach can have important ethical implications. Iconic approach means that “institutions have to be

<sup>20</sup> Robert Turner, “Foundations for John Zizioulas’ Approach to Ecclesial Communion,” in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 78 (2002): 438-467, 452.

<sup>21</sup> John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1985), 100.

<sup>22</sup> John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 100.

<sup>23</sup> Whether this is intended by him or not, this reflection of Zizioulas has an ethical implication. The metaphysics of objectivity culminates in a thinking that identifies the truth of Being with the calculable, measurable and definitely manipulable object of techno-science. This conception seems to prevalent in the globalized appropriation of tech-scientific experimentation which impacts, genetics, industrial application and technological innovation that relate to human ethical issues. For further elaboration on this type of appropriation of Heidegger see, Gianni Vattimo, *Belief* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 40.

constantly reconstituted and cannot be taken for granted as historical necessities” and this “has tremendous political implications.”<sup>25</sup> The meaning of this relates to the prophetic role of the Christian community – the church. As the sign of eschatology that reveals the limits of history, the prophetic Christian community has the task to prevent “every worldly claim from becoming totalitarian.”<sup>26</sup>

### PERFORMATIVE SACRAMENT OF INFINITE EXCESS

In his theology, Zizioulas regards the *θεια ευχαριστια* as an *εικονα* of the Kingdom of God, an *εικονα* of the eschaton (*τον εσχατον*).<sup>27</sup> Conflating the iconic meanings of Zizioulas and Marion, one can say the Eucharist is the icon of infinite excess of the eschaton. The repetitive performance of the Eucharist as icon - impinging, questioning, liberating history from its own bondage – is a continual beating of the presence of the Spirit of grace and the unmanipulable graciousness of God.

In a globalized context characterized by Promethean efforts at assuring quantitative outcomes measured and evaluated by its market performativity, the performative significance of the ‘inclusive’ and ‘excessive’ Eucharist provides a praxial critique against a disciplinary technocratic regime the excludes those whose productivities do not “measure up” or are not “aligned” to the set parameters of the global industry.<sup>28</sup> But it also provides a militant hope of what can be for those who are excluded in the great digital, cultural and capital divide in globalization.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 69.

<sup>26</sup> John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Douglas Knight (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 127.

<sup>27</sup> John Zizioulas, “Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *Sourotch* 38 (1994): 1-12, 1. Also cited in Aristotle Papanikolaou, “Ontology and Theological Epistemology,” 39.

<sup>28</sup> For example, the aging and the sick; the unequipped for globalization; the indigenous peoples; the discriminated, etc. The same can be said about the tactical practices found among devotees of the icon of the perpetual help in Baclaran – ‘sinners’ ‘prostitutes’ ‘living in sin’ who appear to have not measured up to the ‘parameters of the holy’ set forth by rigoristic moral standards by the society.

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The ancient church's wisdom to look at the Eucharist in terms of "doing" (*eucharistiam facere*) or "performing" the mysteries (*mysteria telein*)<sup>29</sup> has never become more relevant than in the context legitimations through performativity. Cavanaugh writes on Dix's point: "The word *anamnesis* had the effect not so much of a memorial, as one would say kind words about the dead, but rather of a performance. The emphasis is thus on the entire rite of the Eucharist as action..."<sup>30</sup> It is through a performance that the community by the breaking of the bread becomes the body of Christ in such a manner that those who are incorporated into this body cannot remain "insensate to the sufferings of the weaker members."<sup>31</sup>

We need to reiterate that Eucharistic performative reflection is not a proposal that reduces salvation to linear historical causality. Consistent with our theological methodology, the Eucharist as a performative anamnesis is a praxial posture in view of "the future fulfillment of Christ's work through the Spirit."<sup>32</sup> The Eucharist is therefore the *icon* of the eschatological banquet and the *action* where this banquet proleptically irrupts into history – empowering its participants to an engagement to the world following God's vision of the future.<sup>33</sup> A paraphrase of our point is written by Cavanaugh: "The Eucharist is the imagination of the church, but it is not our imagination in the sense that Christians build the church. The Eucharist is God's imagination of the church; we participate in that imagination insofar as we are imagined by God, incorporated into the body of Christ through grace."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982[1945]), 599.

<sup>30</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 230.

<sup>31</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 231. See St. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991), 124 [VII.X (16)]: "I am the food of the fully grown; grow and you will feed on me. And you will not change me into you like the food your flesh eats, but you will be changed into me." As quoted in William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 232.

<sup>32</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 234.

<sup>33</sup> Cavanaugh quotes Zizioulas' idea of the memory of future in the eucharist as the converging point between the past, the engagement of the present and eschatological church of all times. See, William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 234; John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 180.

<sup>34</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 272-73.

As the performance of the excess and unmanipulable, we find two main areas for contextual theological proposal for the Eucharist. First, appropriated in the Filipino context, this means that the Eucharist as the event of meal-sharing becomes a moment where dialogical sharing as well as dialogical questioning happens. Kasper argues that through sharing in the one Eucharistic body we become an ecclesial body. But this becoming an ecclesial body through the fellowship of Christ's body has an important ethical dimension because we cannot share the Eucharistic bread without also sharing our daily bread.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, every Eucharistic meal is and becomes an inquest why some of God's children have large portions in their daily bread while others languish in deprivation and abject poverty. It is an event of inquiry why there is a hellish division between the "haves" and the "have-nots" – the few who are enjoying the fruits of globalization and those who are languishing in its underbelly. The Eucharistic event should be an event of the image of God's Kingdom of inclusivity not of diabolical exclusivity.<sup>36</sup>

Following Cavanaugh's re-appropriation of Zizioulas, we contend that the "simultaneity of past and future in the present which characterizes the Christian eschatological imagination of time"<sup>37</sup> as experienced in the performative action of the Eucharist, opens up a space of protest and resistance. The Eucharistic performance of the dangerous memory of Jesus having life-changing meal fellowships (cf. Luke 19:1-10) 2000 years ago effects a transformation of historical time into eschatology. The past actions of Jesus reveal the irruption of the vision of God about the heavenly banquet. Through the

<sup>35</sup> Walter Kasper, *That They May All be One* (London and New York: Burns and Oates, 2004), 58.

<sup>36</sup> See, John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 138-139: "The real danger of altering the image of the Church is that, rather than an image of the completion of history by the kingdom of God, it becomes a picture of hell... For example, if we were to perform a Eucharistic service for white people but not black people, or for men but not women, or for the educated but not the illiterate, or the rich but not the poor, or just for students, or just for lawyers or any other group, then that service would be the very opposite of the Eucharist. Every time we segregate ourselves from our neighbour through criteria of this kind, we receive a foretaste of hell. The Church can very easily be turned into the image of hell without even noticing that this has happened."

<sup>37</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 277.



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iconic Eucharist, the eschatological banquet interrupts the historical time and opens up spaces for critique against social and economic inequalities.<sup>38</sup> The Eucharist experienced this way empowers the participants to respond “to the hunger for justice and peace” as “there are no distinctions around the Table of the Lord.”<sup>39</sup>

The second proposal is on appropriating the Eucharist from the perspective of the Filipino who loves celebrating and being excessive in celebrating.<sup>40</sup> We propose that through the Eucharist, the Christian community fulfils its ‘enacted identity’ as bearer and witness of the anticipatory celebration of the banquet of God.<sup>41</sup> But while it questions the unjust set up of the Philippine society, the cultural trait of the Filipino celebration and fondness of eating together that is brought into the meal sharing of the Eucharist becomes also the icon of God’s vision and the Filipino’s longing in the midst of want and abject poverty. It becomes an icon of tactical resistance for the poor.

The celebratory and even the “fiesta” character of the Eucharist becomes an event where the poor resists the unjust socio-economic and cultural configuration by their “memory of the future” celebration in the Kingdom where economic and material disparities are banished from the banquet of the Lord. If this application is correct then in the Eucharist, the poor are given the vision and empowered to act on that vision. This vision becomes an interpretative key in expressing the yearning for a better and inclusive future while standing in the pain and suffering of history – neither an interim sedative nor a comforting fantasy – but as an expression of a hope that determines the praxial stance of the present. Dorothy Sölle writes about the “strength of the weak”:<sup>42</sup> the eschatological celebration impinging

<sup>38</sup> For a parallel point on the critical potential of the Eucharist against torture, see, William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist*, 277.

<sup>39</sup> CFC § 1711.

<sup>40</sup> CFC § 53; 1704.

<sup>41</sup> I borrow the phrase ‘enacted identity’ from Philip Rossi, “Sojourners, Guests, and Strangers: The Church as Enactment of the Hospitality of God,” Unpublished paper delivered at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, Nov. 7-10, 2007.

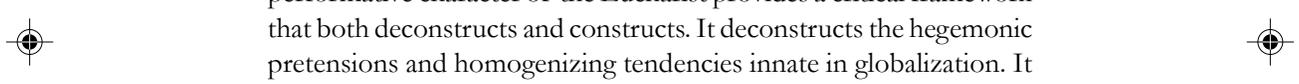
<sup>42</sup> Dorothee Sölle, *Suffering*, trans. Everett Kalin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 127.



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upon the present through the iconic performance of the Eucharist becomes the strength of the weak in order for them to articulate an ethical engagement towards the fulfillment of such vision. Appropriating some ideas of Marcuse, the value of the Eucharist (as icon of celebration) lies in its potential to be an event of resistance of the unjust set up of the present “in its refusal to forget what can be.”<sup>43</sup> This memory of the future – of what can be – opens up spaces in order to recreate various possibilities that will serve as road map in one’s praxis.<sup>44</sup> Finally, the capacity to celebrate in the iconic Eucharist functions as a kind of a “stubborn hope” which cannot be extinguished by the despair of the present.

### (NOT A) CONCLUSION



In a context where market performativity dictates the behavior of a social system and disciplines its members by its mechanism of inclusion or exclusion through set parameters of productivity, the performative character of the Eucharist provides a critical framework that both deconstructs and constructs. It deconstructs the hegemonic pretensions and homogenizing tendencies innate in globalization. It exposes the limits of the promise of a better quality of life. It unmasks a deceptive connectivity that has only brought dehumanization, alienation and loneliness to many.

The performance of the Eucharist constructs an ethos of hopeful praxis for those who are in the underbelly of globalization, for those who find themselves in the underside of history and for those who are marginalized in the success-driven capitalistic world. This ethos celebrates hope and resistance where the divine values of graciousness, compassion and justice interrogate the present set up of affairs.

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<sup>43</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization. A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1974), 148.

<sup>44</sup> John Kekes, “Moral Imagination, Freedom and the Humanities,” in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 28 § 2 (1991): 101.



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The performative legitimation of the Eucharist is none other than the repetitive performance of the memorial through which a bleeding God wants to reach out to his/her bleeding people. The performance of the Eucharist is the re-presentation of the anamnestic future of what could be for the suffering and the excluded who stand in need of God's grace – for the last, the least and the lost.

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