

# The Possibility of an Enhanced Filipino Value of *Pakikipagkapwa* through Emmanuel Levinas' Idea of Responsibility

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## ABSTRACT

In the Philippines, *Pakikipagkapwa* is one of the values that every Filipino is very proud of. It emphasizes their strong bond to other existential being and as part of acknowledging each other's relevance. This is evidently seen in the ordinariness of their lives; in family, work, and in community in general, commonly represented by the image of a *bayanihan* where a group of Filipinos are helping each other. This value has formed a lot of Filipinos and somehow been known as part of their identity.

However, this research aims to provide a deeper and clearer perspective to this Filipino value which begins through identifying the problems; What is the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* and its gaps? How can Levinas' idea of Responsibility possibly bridge the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa* that are brought by '*hindi palagay ang loob*' and '*kulo ng dugo*'? In order to systematically provide accurate conclusion and recommendations to these problems, this work uses phenomenological hermeneutics as its approach. The researcher explored on indirect or secondary sources like books, peer reviewed journals and articles about Levinas' Responsibility, and some relatable pieces of literature that are significant in the development of the research. The author also conducted an archival inspection to gather necessary data and information for the research.

With the emerging progression of values and in riding- in with the signs of the times, this Filipino value can still be enriched by identifying some gaps and filling it in through the aid of a philosophical concept on intersubjectivity and responsibility. Emmanuel Levinas' concept can be of great support in enhancing this Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa*. The gaps which are identified in this work are *hindi palagayang loob* at *kulo ng dugo*. These will be more elaborated and discussed especially on how they put walls on the essence of *pakikipagkapwa*.

As a result, this work develops a more enriched concept of *pakikipagkapwa* which can be more applicable to the society today. It affirms of something lacking which needs to be addressed supplemented by Levinas' philosophy of responsibility. Through the identification of the gaps, the Filipino value of *Pakikipagkapwa* has now the possibility to be more authentic. Instead of walls of *hindi palagay ang loob* at *kulo ng dugo*, bridges are built through Levinas' philosophy.

## INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the possibility of enhancing the Filipino concept of *pakikipagkapwa* using Emmanuel Levinas' idea of responsibility. This must be studied and developed because this value forms and transforms the life of every Filipino. Thus, this work showcases the Filipino concept of *pakikipagkapwa* by finding the

link between the two concepts and eventually elucidating it more. It identifies the gap which feebleness of my powers, but my ability barred Filipinos to experience and attain a more meaningful *Pakikipagkapwa*.

*Pakikipagkapwa*, in its essence, has already been a good concept because it concerns the relationship between the 'I' and the 'other'. It pertains to the possibility, phenomenon or existence of intersubjectivity as a kind of humane interpersonal relationship—'*makataong pakikitungo*'. [1] The concept of *kapwa* as shared inner self turns out to be very important philosophically, as well as psychologically. A person starts having *kapwa* not so much because of a recognition of status given him by others but more because of his awareness of shared identity. [2] However, such concept may still be enhanced by highlighting the gap that this study has identified and filling that gap using Levinas' idea of responsibility.

Thus, the gaps had been identified as *Hindi Palagay ang Loob* and *Kulo ng Dugo*. In a daily *Pakikipagkapwa* encounter of every Filipino to his/ her *kapwa*, there are times that he/ she may feel unease when coming across to his/her *kapwa* (*Hindi palagay ang loob*). There are also times wherein out of nowhere, a Filipino has this unexplainable annoyance to his/her *kapwa* (*Kulo ng Dugo*). Moreover, such gaps were known by considering this phenomenon that the Filipino Psychology has used in discussing the Levels of Interaction [3]— it is when the '*ako*' (ego) and the '*iba sa akin*' (others) supposedly be one but separate. Once '*ako*' starts thinking himself as separate from *kapwa*, the Filipino "self" gets to be individuated and in effect, denies the responsibility of *kapwa* to the other as well as the self. [4] It is through these gaps which draw the chasm of the self and the others. But still, whether belonging to the *ibang tao* (outsider) or *hindi ibang tao* (one of us) it is still be grouped under the heading of *Pakikipagkapwa*. It is the only Filipino concept which embraces both the categories of outsider and 'one of us'. [5] Even though it is still under the superordinate concept of *pakikipagkapwa*, it would be hard for every Filipino to experience a smooth interpersonal relationship with these gaps. Thus, through the concept of Levinas' Responsibility, Filipinos can possibly achieve an enhanced *Pakikipagkapwa*.

Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the "Other" highlighting the "face" is used as an aid to enhance and deepen the understanding of *Pakikipagkapwa*. The concept of responsibility is more understood in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas since his idea of responsibility is phenomenologically expressed through the face of the other. For Levinas, the face of the Other strikes us as a highly ambiguous phenomenon. It arises here and now without finding its place within the world. Being neither something real inside, or something ideal outside the world, the face announces the corporeal absence of the Other.

Levinas chose the face because upon seeing the face of the other, the human person realizes that as human, he stands face to face with the other who has also a face like his. This shows the relatedness of the person facing the face of another human being. The fulfilment of one's existence is through the existence of others. The Face phenomenologically reveals the Other, beyond which epiphany is taking into one's heart a sense of responsibility. As the highest criterion of ethics, there exists the face demanding for a response. And consequently, the ability to respond is the meaning of the term Responsibility (i.e., response-ability). [6]

Moreover, Levinas argues that the fulfilment of one's existence is through living with and for others. As the old epigram says, "No man is an island", we are responsible for the Other. Because of this responsibility to the Other, and because the Other is more primary than one's self, it does not directly mean that the human person should lose his selfness or that he must disregard himself. For Levinas, the dwelling is the possibility of a world which is not merely my world but one which I must learn to share with others, bearing their needs as they bear mine. [7] The Face of the Other is not a rejection of the self but rather a reminder to the "I" that he should not harm, kill and persecute the Other. The presence of the face of the Other does not remove the freedom of the self. We can impose our will or our freedom to the other, but the Face reminds us of our responsibility and obligation to others.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study provides a discussion on how Levinas' idea of responsibility enhances the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*. Thus, it pursues to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is Levinas' idea of Responsibility?
2. What is the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* and its gaps?
3. How can Levinas' idea of Responsibility possibly bridge the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa* that are brought by '*hindi palagay ang loob*' and '*kulo ng dugo*'?

## Significance of the Study

The world we live in today is caught in a dilemma whether to remain in our individual world or to live with and for others. The reality though is that we are both individual and social. We live as individuals but we cannot also live without the Other. We both have responsibilities towards ourselves as well as towards others.

A person tends to neglect his responsibility towards the Other when he becomes self-centered. With this, the researcher would like to lay to the readers and highlight the relevance of this paper. First, the study is significant because it introduces readers about the enhanced Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* in the light of Emmanuel Levinas' idea of responsibility. This study is an elucidation of *Pakikipagkapwa* as it is complemented by Levinas' concept. Secondly, the study also contributes to the further understanding of man's responsibility. Through this research, the researcher suggests the right approach to respond and to be responsible towards the Other. The study lays the foundation and importance of the Other as part of one's existence. Finally, this research is an invitation to both the researcher and the reader to respond suitably to call for a radical responsibility towards the Other. By educating the readers about the enhanced Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* using Emmanuel Levinas, the researcher helps the reader become aware of the responsibility he has toward the Other. The goal of this paper is to prompt the readers about their obligation towards the Others as a grand goal for the benefit to our modern society towards becoming a better one.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

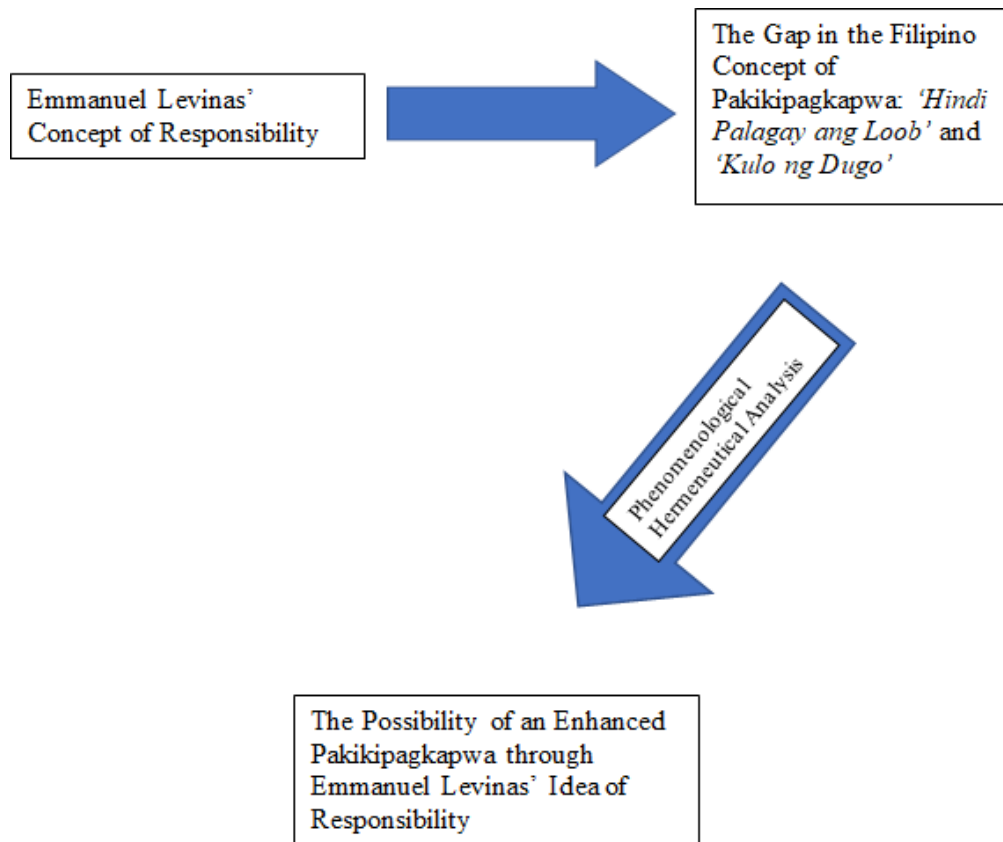
This study is qualitative in nature. It employed phenomenological hermeneutics as its approach. It investigates the lived experiences of the Filipinos in a descriptive manner. Furthermore, instead of collecting opinions from every Filipino around the country, the investigation was conducted to capture and describe essential elements of the Filipinos and to understand their encounters with the identified gaps through a documentary analysis. In doing this, the researcher probed on indirect or secondary sources<sup>[8]</sup> like books, peer reviewed journals and articles about Levinas' Responsibility, and some relatable pieces of literature that are significant in the development of the research. The researcher conducted also an archival inspection to gather necessary data and information for the research.

This research is essentially hermeneutical in nature because it is a dialogue between the texts and the researcher.<sup>[9]</sup> It is descriptive in approach and used documentary analysis as an aid to the methodology.<sup>[10]</sup>

This research is divided into four sections. The first part focuses on the background of Levinas' concept of responsibility; the influences that led him to formulate the idea. Furthermore, it also deals with the significance of intersubjectivity and interpersonal relationships. The second section discusses the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*; its cultural background, and its identification to the gap. The third exposes enhanced Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* using Levinas' concept of Responsibility. The fourth is

conclusion, findings, suggestions and recommendations for further studies.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The diagram above shows that the research direction starts from Levinas' concept of responsibility and then the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* wherein the gaps of such value are identified. Through the aid of Emmanuel Levinas' concept of responsibility, such gaps are filled. Consequently, this study achieves an enhanced Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* using Emmanuel Levinas' concept of Responsibility.

### Scope and Limitation

This study aims to enhance the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* using the concept of Emmanuel Levinas' idea of Responsibility. The discussion of Levinas' idea of responsibility consists of the presentation of Ethics of the Face, self-responsibility, responsibility towards the Other, and the act of responsibility. The researcher discusses also the following subtopics in relation to main topic: The importance of the term "responsibility" of Emmanuel Levinas to the Filipino concept of *pakikipagkapwa* as a connection of each individual in helping one another. There are many related topics about Emmanuel Levinas' philosophy, but the study discusses only the social and ethical aspect of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas particularly his idea of responsibility.

*Pakikipagkapwa* is also a broad concept for the Filipinos and this research focuses on the gap of such concept in particular the '*Hindi palagay ang Loob*' and the '*Kulo ng Dugo*'. Thus, *pakikipagkapwa* (shared inner self) is being understood as bridging of the self to the kapwa. However, such value of *pakikipagkapwa* starts with a gap (*hindi palagay ang loob and kulo ng dugo*) which needs to be negated through the aid of Levinas' concept of responsibility, in that way, the Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa* is enhanced in maintaining a smooth interpersonal relation.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

“Banal and Implied Forms of Violence in Levinas’ Phenomenological Ethics” by Fleurdeliz R. Altez explains the importance of Levinas’ infinite responsibility which this research delves in. It explains how this concept serves as a catalyst to the standing theory and, ethically to any responsible Self. This work contributes in discoursing the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. [\[11\]](#)

“Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being” by Elisabeth Loise Thomas traces the movement in Levinas’ work from a critical attempt to rethink the relation of human subjectivity and being to the notion of the human as an excessive concept of a singular universal, beyond being. This work also focuses on the discussion of Levinas’ concept of justice in opposition with Heidegger. Nonetheless, this book supplements the concept of responsibility in this research. [\[12\]](#)

“Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics,” by Joshua James Shaw showcases the relevance of a face to face encounter by giving some of his experiences, claiming that our relationship to the other tends to be obscured in our everyday lives, not aware of others as *others*. This work contributes in discussing the depth and importance of responsibility especially to every Filipino. [\[13\]](#)

“Ethics, Exegesis and Philosophy: Interpretation after Levinas” by Richard Cohen provides discussion on Levinas’ idea of morality which aims for a not too cynical betterment of selves. This book also provides comparison of Levinas’ concepts between the contemporary philosophers and the ideas where Levinas’ concepts are anchored. This work then contributes in interpreting the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas especially in Ethics and Responsibility. [\[14\]](#)

“The Body and Transcendence in Emmanuel Levinas’ Phenomenological Ethics” by Fleurdeliz Albella discusses Levinas’ notion of corporeality that shows struggling dialectic from a phenomenology of a sensible subject towards an ethics of transcendence. It shows here that the Good is given and received through sensibility held by the body dwelling in the world, that the seeming conflict between the seeming corporeal pull to dwelling as against the Desire to take an ethical flight can be settled when one courageously confronts the following truths about humanity. Thus, this book supplements the concept of transcendence especially in the encounter of the self to the other. [\[15\]](#)

“Loób and Kapwa: An Introduction to a Filipino Virtue Ethics” by Jeremiah Reyes gives profound definition of some Filipino terms such as “kapwa” and other ideas of Filipino values included in this study. This work can be considered as a reminder to the Filipino about their virtue and values, it describes also how an element of “pakikipagkapwa” can be traced in the Filipino culture, and this Filipino Concept of “pakikipagkapwa is a product of a deep relationship the self and the Other. This article is ideal to students, professors and researchers that would want to understand the Filipino Virtue and Culture. [\[16\]](#)

“The Filipino Value of Pakikipagkapwa-Tao vis-a-vis Gabriel Marcel’s notion of Creative Fidelity and Disponibilite” by Jove Jim S. Aguas explains the relationship of pakikipagkapwa-tao in Gabriel Marcel’s idea of Creative Fidelity and Disponibilite. Though it is different from Emmanuel Levinas’ idea of responsibility, the concept of “pakikipagkapwa” is given resemblance in this study. This article helps the future reader in familiarizing information about “pakikipagkapwa” and other Filipino values that are relevant and similar to the present study.

Margarita Certeza Garcia’s “Towards “Kapwa” Theory of Art: Working Towards Wholeness in Contemporary Practice” explains the concept of ‘kapwa’ in relation to the Other which coincides with its comparison to the Western concept of the Other. The linguistically unique concept of kapwa carries an ethical charge as it requires an attitude of inclusivity and an obligation to treat others as part of one’s



identity and self which helps the reader in understanding the concept of pakikipagkapwa. [17]

Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr.'s *Ang Metapisika at Etika ng Pakikipagkapwa- Tao* discusses the concept of Pakikipagkapwa referring to a kind of human interaction where the personhood of humans is respected. The analysis is done in the areas of metaphysics and ethics. This work contributes to the discussion of pakikipagkapwa in connection with the concept of Levinas' responsibility. [18]

Virgilio Enriquez's *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience* explains different Filipino cultures and behaviors in the psychological perspective. This work is an expansion and an update of the monograph entitled *Indigenous Psychology and National Consciousness* which is mainly based on published and unpublished *sikolohiyang Pilipino* materials and documents. This work contributes in explaining the concept of Pakikipagkapwa and its gaps. [19]

Rogelia Pe-Pua's *Filipino Psychology: Theory, Method and Application* discusses different phenomena and experiences in the Philippine context applying the theories and methods in psychology. This book contributes ideas in elaborating more the concept of pakikipagkapwa. [20]

## EMMANUEL LEVINAS' CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBILITY

This chapter primarily discusses Emmanuel Levinas's idea of responsibility; the influences that led him to formulate the idea, and the significance of intersubjectivity and interpersonal relationships as the main thrust of his philosophy as well as the main anchor of this research. This serves as the philosophical grounding of the paper's discussion on the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*.

### Biographical sketch

In order for us to understand the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, it is important to know his foundation and roots. Emmanuel Levinas was a Jew and lived during the German Holocaust. He came up with the *Ethics of the Face* and *Ethics as the first philosophy* due to the influences that he had during his lifetime.

He was born on January 12, 1906 in Kovno or Kaunas, Lithuania in accordance to the Julian calendar used in the Russian empire at that time, on December 30, 1905. He was the eldest of three brothers: Boris and Aminadab, both murdered by the Nazis. The Levinas family belonged to Konvo's large and important Jewish community, whereas Levinas later recalled, to be Jewish as natural as having eyes and ears, the first language Levinas learned was Hebrew, although Russian was his mother tongue, the language of his formal education and remained the language spoken at home throughout his life. [21]

In 1972, he obtained his license in philosophy through the help of Gabrielle Pfeiffer. He began a close study of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and eventually chose Husserl's theory of intuition as his dissertation topic. The following year until the year 1929 he spent the academic year in Freiburg, Germany. There he also gave a presentation in Husserl's seminar and he also attended Heidegger's *Being and Time*. [22]

### The Nazi Horror

The period of the Nazi horror is full of violence. [23] It is during this period that Levinas conceived his philosophy *Ethics of the Face*. One can better understand the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas in the context of violence. It is present in almost everyday life of Emmanuel Levinas. This violence is rooted in the desire of man to be higher than the Other but Levinas saw a different perspective in this kind of situation. He was able to extract the good side in a ruthless situation.

His life was dominated by remembrance of the Nazi horror. "Otherwise than Being: Beyond Essence" is

dedicated to the memory of those who are closest among the six million murdered by the National Socialists besides the millions and millions of human beings of all confessions and all nations, victims of the same hatred of the other humans, of the same anti-Semitism[24] but what is notable about Levinas during this time was he was able to see the foundations of ethics and put the Other above the Self.

Levinas saw a defect in western philosophy that would give emphasis to the self, to Being. He opposed ontology or the study of the self. It is what metaphysics is trying to teach us, that everything must start from oneself. He argued that ethics is the first philosophy and not metaphysics. It is a reversal of the ontological perspective to the subject.

### **The Bible and Rabbinic Commentaries**

As a Jew who values his religion very much, Levinas is also a philosopher who values reason and rational thinking. There is a notion that reason and faith are two things that are very different from one another but in *Ethics and Infinity*, he claims that his philosophy can also be traced in the Sacred Scriptures. Taking the Jewish perspective as a basis, we can see an initial depiction of encounter with the Face of the Other and the starting point of responsibility towards the other. The first depiction of an encounter with the face of the Other can be traced back from Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament which narrates the story of Cain and Abel.

In the story, Cain answered “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” This statement reminds us of our responsibility toward the Other. On the other hand, Cain failed to see this responsibility especially towards his own brother. The moment he was asked if he is his brother’s keeper, it is in that moment that he failed to answer the call for radical responsibility because it is already given that the I is responsible for the Other.

### **The Face of the Other**

Emmanuel Levinas’s thought represents a breakaway from Western philosophy’s ontology and proposes the innovative conception of ethics as the first philosophy. His critique of Western thought is directed not only to the classical texts of philosophers but also to the whole ideology implicit in the “western life-style, planning, practice, and technology.[25] For Levinas, Western philosophy is a way of thought that reflects a particular attitude and perspective which he calls “egology”. His philosophy gives importance to the Other. Ethics, for him, is beyond the same or self, but primarily it is not conceived as a set of norms or a system of values, which are implicitly lived in a community. It refers to a concrete relationship with irreducible alterity which manifests in the face of the Others. The self is greater than something and it is the Other.

The emergence of modern thinking created a division between the subject and the object. There is a division because we always see the Other as an object. The Other is separated from the ‘I’ making the Other as an object rather than as a subject. It is what metaphysics is trying to teach us, that everything must start from one’s self but Levinas tells us that before there is the consciousness of the self, there is first a consciousness of the Other. You are first being conscious of the existence of the Other before being conscious of your own existence. That is the reason why Levinas argues that Ethics is the first philosophy.

Levinas attacks the idea of Solipsism, having a high regard in oneself, because it focuses on egoism which negates the Other. He regards the Other as higher than the I which is an asymmetrical relationship. The significance of the face in Emmanuel Levinas is an ethics of responsibility. For him, being ethical is being responsible for the other.[26] Focusing on the Other makes one authentically human. Thus, focusing on the being: being which has a face that is very distinct, one can easily identify the differences of the human face. It is only the human face that can be changed according to the feelings or moods of the human person. The face of the human being is unique in its own self.

The self usually classifies persons he/ she encounters through their noses, the eyebrows the eye color and the lips. Everything which the face possesses. In other words, the face of the Other, whether masked by make-up, earrings, artificial coloring, scarves, and so forth encounters the self directly and profoundly and most especially intimately. Face to face encounter with the Other reveals the Other's weakness and impermanence as Levinas wrote: "Naked and destitute, the face commands: Do not leave me in solitude." [27] The self is called to take care of the Other. He/ she ought to be welcoming, be hospitable to the Other whom he/ she encounters as it was, from beyond, from a transcendent dimension, from "out of the blue." He or she is the stranger who comes to us in his ordinary, self-centered existence demanding from us a "Here I am." That challenge includes the "Thou shalt welcome the stranger in thy midst," of Jewish Law. [28]

Levinas chose the face because it has a distinct characteristic. In every event, occasion or experience the self undergoes, it is the face that he remembers the most. It is much easier to remember the face than the name of the other. This shows the relatedness of the person seeing the face of another human being. [29] The face speaks a lot about the person. Although others should not be judged by their physical appearances, the face allows the self to recognize the Other. The face speaks of the identity of the person. For Levinas, Ethics is putting the ego or the self into question. It is important to note that the same refers not only to the subjective thoughts, but also to the objects of those thoughts. [30]

When Levinas speaks of human face, he is telling us that whenever we see the Other it is the face that we see first. The face is a living presence in which we are recognizing the existence of the Other. [31] The self needs the existence of others in order to affirm his/ her own existence. By being aware, the self should be sensitive and respect the existence of others too. Being aware of another's existence is treating them with outmost respect and love. There is a need to listen and communicate to the message the face is trying to send. He/ she is also reminded not to inflict violence towards the Others since in every encounter, the face of the Other is exposing itself, it is vulnerable and trying to express itself by being present and recognizing one's "Living Presence". [32]

By "face", Levinas means the human face (or in French, visage), but not thought of or experienced as a physical or aesthetic object. [33] Rather, the first, usual, unreflective encounter with the face I as the living presence of another person. Living presence," for Levinas implies that the other person (as someone genuinely other than myself) is exposed to me—that is, is vulnerably present—and express him or herself simply by being there as an undeniable reality that cannot reduce to images or ideas in my head. [34]

But how is Ethics of the face possible if the sense of sight is lacking? Emmanuel Levinas does not limit encounter with the face of the Other to the sighted. The Other's face is "seen" in different ways, the encounter does not only pertain to the seeing of the Other's face by the sense of sight. The 'I' can see the face of the Other through tactile sensations, from a sense of presence, indirectly. For example, Hellen Keller [35], though blind and deaf, through feeling her teacher's lips, tongue, mouth, eyes, nose, and vocal cords encountered the command and authority of the Other. This encounter made communication and learning possible. Encounter is not just limited physically, it can be in different forms; virtual, online as long as technological advancement is concerned. More essentially, encounter does not only mean seeing each other whether physically or virtually but it is more than that. [36] Thus, it transcends beyond the physical aspect of the self. As human beings, the self is responsible for receiving the others as they are, without reducing and imposition, but he/she is also responsible for others' destitution. The self cannot watch others suffer or die without moral pangs and a sense of guilt. If he/ she does nothing in the face of others' suffering, he/ she is accomplice to their suffering.

In his Ethics of the Face, Emmanuel Levinas uses the term "Epiphany". He wrote:

The face resists possession, resists my powers. In its epiphany, in expression, the sensible, still graspable,



turns into total resistance to the grasp. This mutation can occur only by the opening of a new dimension. For the resistance to the grasp is not produced as an insurmountable resistance, like the hardness of the rock against which the effort of the hand comes to naught, like the remoteness of a star in the immensity of space. The expression the face introduces into the world does not defy the feebleness of my powers, but my ability for power. [37]

It is the phenomenon where the Face shows or presents himself to the same. It is the encounter of the self with the Other. It is the manifestation or the showing of the face. Another term that he used is “Metonymy” which is simply described as a part which is being substituted for the whole.[38] When riding an airplane, the pilot in the place would not ask how many passengers he has. Rather, he would ask the flight attendant, “How many souls are on board?” The term soul is a substitute term for passenger. The soul stands for the passenger. When Emmanuel Levinas speaks of the face, he is speaking particularly to the whole of the person. So, to see the face of the Other is seeing the Other as a whole person not just the face.[39]

Levinas speaks of the face as an important part of the body since it is what we use to communicate with the Other without speaking or uttering word. The moment the same or the I see the face it already resists its possession. It means that when one sees the face of the Other, he immediately loses his selfness.[40] Because in its epiphany it then delivers a message, a message of the obligation. The Other’s invitation for an obligation is difficult to resist by the same or the I but this expression does not defy the weakness of the same or the self. It does not negate the I or its freedom. Rather, it is the manifestation of the other. Therefore, the encounter of the face transcends beyond on what is sensible and always speaks of man’s responsibility to the Other.

### **Transcendence as the Need to Escape vs Transcendence as Responsibility**

In the preliminary part of Levinas’ philosophical endeavors, he reckons transcendence as a need for escape from existence, and work out a diverse investigation of an existed time. His first original essay, *On Escape*, he examines the relationship between the embodied self and the intentional ego from the perspectives of physical and affective states including need and pleasure.[41] Levinas gave priority to lived moods and physical states that exposed existence as oppressive and unstipulated. He emphasizes the relevance of the sentient aspect of the self which can be liberated as a form of escape. Indeed, in escapism and its various aesthetic expressions, the self discovers humans’ failed attempts to get away from the being that they themselves are.[42] Escape is the need to get out of oneself, that is, to break that most radical and unalterably binding of chains, the fact that the I is oneself.[43] Levinas’ youthful venture come up to transcendence materialistically, in light of humans’ complex urge to get past the restrictions of their physical and social circumstances. His transcendence is less a question of cognition reaching reality or humans seeking to pass ‘beyond’ themselves than transcendence attempted through sensuous evasions.[44] This quite materialist approach to transcendence is nevertheless motivated by the question of our mortality and finite being, but unlike Heidegger, it also examines the enigma called infinity.[45]

According to Levinas, the self presupposes that he/ she could considerably establish a better conception of being, wherein existence was in some sense self-sufficient.[46] What Levinas calls the “insufficiency of the human condition” simply denotes the limitation of our existence, whose transcendence, when understood as escape, promises that we might somehow surpass it, as if through an infinite experience. When transcendence is removed from theological or metaphysical frameworks, the self grasps it in its historical context-dependency, as the illusions of a finite being pondering pure self-sufficiency.[47] That is why Levinas asks, is the need for escape not the exclusive matter of a finite being? Would an infinite being have the need to take leave of itself?[48] In this case, it is our first response to impermanence and humanity but not the urge to take leave of our existence.

His concept of transcendence provides his readers a useful point of departure in *Totality and Infinity*. He

aligns transcendence with exteriority, in the sense of what lies outside myself but eludes the comprehensive knowledge: the other person.[49] The encounter with the other is an encounter with a perceptible thing. But this other speaks to the self, beseeches or orders him/ her. This is the ground of ethics or indeed the concern with ethics as the good of the other person.

As Levinas argues, when ethics goes in search of its existential ground, before any consideration of utility, virtue, or duty, it discovers the intersubjective enactment of responsibility, which resists being integrated into accounts in which the other is a universal other to whom it is an infinite duty.[50] Levinas is pointing to the common lived origin in the irreducibility of the face-to-face encounter wherein it moves towards each other's transcendence as a responsibility. Thus, transcendence as the need to escape is not actually against the transcendence as a responsibility. The former gives aid for the latter to reach out for its goal, that is to become responsible to the others through escaping from the I as a mere I. Escapism serves as an initial response of a finite being to grow *beyond* and discover the other finite who also needs to be grown, i.e. to be responsible.

### **Idea of Responsibility**

For Levinas, the responsibility towards the other begins at encounter with the face; this face-to-face encounter or the epiphany of the face is the start of his philosophy and also the start of ethical relation. He argues that philosophy begins with this relation, and this relation comes with an ethical request, an obligation towards the Other, man has to help the Other, man shall not kill the Other.[51] In this case, Levinas speaks about “phenomenology” of the face, since phenomenology describes what appears.[52] He thinks rather that access to the face is straightaway ethical. If one turns him/herself toward the Other as toward an object when you see a nose, eyes, a forehead, a chin, he/ she can describe them.

The best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes.[53] When one observes the color of the eyes, one is not in social relationship with the Other. The relation with the face can surely be dominated by perception, but what is specifically the face is what cannot be reduced to that.[54] There is first the very uprightness of the face, its upright exposure, without defense. The skin of the face is that which stays most naked, most destitute. It is the most naked, though with a decent nudity.[55] It is the most destitute also: there is an essential poverty in the face; the proof of this is that one tries to mask this poverty by putting on poses, by taking on a countenance. The face is exposed, menaced, as if inviting us to an act of violence at the same time, the face is what forbids us to kill.[56]

The moment the ‘I’ sees the face of the Other, he/ she cannot escape from this obligation or moral responsibility. It is inescapable. The I cannot just ignore the face of the other when it shows itself to him, and this response always comes with our responsibility for the other. For Levinas, to be responsible is to be responsible for the other.[57] Coming face to face with the Other is a non-symmetrical relationship. We have the responsibility for the Other without knowing that the Other will reciprocate. Whether or not Others reciprocate, the Other is still entitled to this responsibility. Thus, according to Levinas, the self is subject to the Other without knowing how it will come out. In this relationship, Levinas finds the meaning of being human and of being connected with justice.[58] It tells to put the Other first.[59]

### **Self- Responsibility**

The self cannot be responsible for the other if he/ she is not first responsible to him/ herself. Before one can be responsible to Others, one must be first responsible to him/herself. It always starts from within and then from there the self can now go beyond the self or the same as Levinas would call the self. If one is not first responsible of him/ herself, he/she would not become effective in responding to the call for radical responsibility to the Other.

Responsibility has been taken as a key concept. It is clearly reoriented in the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas. It invites everyone to respond to the call for radical responsibility which is present and innate in Others. When one talks about responsibility, the idea that crosses one's mind are the words, accountability, and obligation. Responsibility comes from within, it starts in the self then towards the Other. Being able to respond to the call for radical responsibility starts from caring and being responsible for one's self.

### **Responsibility towards the Other**

The Ethics of the face tells the self about his/ her responsibility towards the other which also highlights the primacy of the Other. This responsibility is not necessarily losing one's selfness or that one must disregard him/ herself. It is not an annihilation of the self or of one's identity. It does not also necessary follow that one's self is considered less important. The face of the Other is not an exclusion of the self. The presence of the face of the Other does not remove the freedom of the self.

Free will is still present even during the face-to-face encounter with the Other. A perfect example of this is a man facing the Other during war.[\[60\]](#) Man's responsibility during a war is to win the war and survive. Because of this, man now is facing an indirect obligation. The self now needs to kill in order to live. The Ethics of Face tells us that the Other is still speaking to us. The responsibility for the Other is an immediate responsibility. It is not only a matter of seeing the Face or a perception.[\[61\]](#) As soon as the Other looks at us, it is expected of us to be responsible to them. There is no need to undergo reflection in order to answer to that radical call for responsibility. And this call can neither be refused nor simply ignored. This responsibility is somehow endless. It always starts in the Epiphany of the Face. There is an obligation even though there is the assurance that it would not be reciprocated.

Responsibility comes "through the Other".[\[62\]](#) The other in addressing one's self makes him/ her aware of his/ her responsibility. What is most original in this interpretation of responsibility is that I am not only responsible for what I do but even for what I do not do, for what I do not decide, for what I meet as Face.[\[63\]](#) Without having chosen it, I am responsible for the Other who comes my way. Responsibility then is essential to my being. It is not an added luxury. To be human is to be responsible for the Other whom I do not choose.[\[64\]](#) What one gives, what one takes reduces itself to the phenomenon, discovered and open to the grasp, carrying on an existence which is suspended in possession- whereas the presentation of the face puts me into relationship with being.[\[65\]](#)

The Other pertains to another being other than oneself. It is a collective term that is used in his ethics to differentiate oneself to another being.[\[66\]](#) The Other is what I myself is not. The Other is this, not because of the Other's character, or physiognomy, or psychology, but because of the Other's very alterity.[\[67\]](#) The Other is the weak, the poor, 'the widow and the orphan', whereas I am rich and the powerful.[\[68\]](#)

Accepting the Other puts the I's own freedom into question. It involves a fundamental responsibility that should function in all interpersonal relationships. Above all, it entails the command, "thou shalt not kill."

Encountering the face of the Other, when the Other is your officially-designated, mortal enemy, creates problems for military personnel and operations. It is so much tougher to follow an order to shoot or spike a person when you are looking him in the eye in hand to hand combat. This is the common crisis soldier's faces. Clearly such "faces" were added to make it possible for young soldiers to overcome the "Thou shalt not kill" which is real faces express. As Levinas puts it, war makes us play roles in which we no longer recognize ourselves. War rescinds the unconditional imperative connected with the Other; war suspends morality.[\[69\]](#)

Infinity presents itself as a face in the ethical resistance that paralyses my powers and form the depths of

defenseless eyes rises firm and absolute in its nudity and destitution.[70] The ethics of the face entails that the face is the most exposed part of the human body and yet it shows the fragility of the Other. It is in the face that the 'I' sees the Other's emotions or hidden plans or their prejudices. The face also shows something that the I usually takes for granted – that the Other is a being that needs others in order not only to exist but also to live. The face to face encounter shows the intimacy of human beings. In the Philosophy of man, the question, "Who am I?" can't be answered by man himself alone, others play a big role in answering that question. The ethics of the Face shows the relevance of others to man. It shows the importance of others in the society. The face, still a thing among things, breaks through the form that nevertheless delimits it. This means concretely: the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation is commensurate with a power exercised, be it enjoyment or knowledge.[71]

Responsibility means that the I is ethically accountable for the Other in every way. This responsibility is an obligation prior to anything else, prior to the self. It is a responsibility that commits the Self to the Other. The "for" in the responsibility *for* the Other must be understood as substitution. It means that the self is substituting the Other by being one with the suffering of the Other. There is a sense of belongingness and relatedness. The Other does not enforce the self to help because responsibility wouldn't be responsibility at all, but rather, the Other enforces it to the Self.[72]

Responsibility for the Other cannot be disregarded. When one refers to the Other, he usually says "the I and the Other" or "the same or the Other." [73] These are always together. The Other may not approve the Same but it does not follow that he is already contradicting the Same or against the Same. The Other and the Same are two terms that cannot be separated. The I is always connected to the Other. There is always a relatedness and connection between them, because of their ethical relationship.[74] The subjectivity of the 'I' is a subjectivity in the reference to the Other.

### **The Act of Responsibility**

In one's day to day living, it is clearly seen that the other is more primary than oneself. Whenever we encounter the Other through our daily activities there is something happening to us,[75] let us say for example when a student greets the teacher or when a gentleman opens a door for a woman or offers a seat for her. These daily activities are signs of one's recognition of the Other. The encounter with the other face to face awakens our empathy to the other. To be a gentleman and stand aside to offer a seat is a gesture which Levinas studies and imparts in his philosophy, particularly in his ethics. Levinas believes that the 'I' has an innate empathy, which can be seen in our simple daily activities.[76]

Modernity had taken place in our everyday activity and the 'I' becomes busy in unlocking the secrets of the universe and thus achieving and experiencing different advances.[77] One of these advances is in the field of technology. The self is now living in a technological age. The use of technology today especially the internet is widely manifested. Due to this affection of the encounter with the Other in social media the relationship is poor. One is only seeing the other by their profile pictures and by the thoughts they post online. The self has a problem with communication thus making it hard to reach out to the Other. It is hard since primarily, the language of the face begins with the encounter of the living presence of the Other by meeting him face to face. The self now is living in a fast-paced world unconsciously swayed by the standards of the external, materialistic society. When the 'I' encounters the other, there is an unconscious categorization of the other.[78] There is already a choosing of sides which is improper. When the I tends to seclude the other under the notion of utility, the other might be treated unequally and unjustly.[79] Prejudice divides the I and the Other every time they put their biases first before responsibility. The 'I' now tends to come short in answering the call for radical responsibility towards the Other. The danger here is when one only responds or helps those who needs assistance just because they are hoping for reciprocity to the help they extended. Levinas reminds us that our responsibility towards the Other is infinite regardless if he is a complete stranger or a friend or a family member.[80] The 'I' helps regardless of the social status, ideology,

and race of the Other. When the 'I' is able to give his/herself to the other, it is only then that he/ she can say that he/she truly owns life.[\[81\]](#)

The self can impose his/her will or his/her freedom to Other but the face reminds him/her of his/her responsibility and obligation. The challenge now for the self is to be responsible enough to follow that reminder of the face. The 'I' is called to respond to the call for radical responsibility. The self must remove all prejudices and all first impressions so that he/she gets the message of the face the Other. The 'I' needs to learn to go beyond the obvious in order to see clearly what is truly inside. Thus, this must be clear especially to every Filipino who always encounters their *kapwa* as a manifestation of the living value of *pakikipagkapwa*.

## THE FILIPINO CONCEPT OF PAKIKIPAGKAPWA AND ITS GAPS

This part discusses the concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*, its cultural background and the gaps identified by using Levinas' idea of responsibility.

### The Filipino Values Alive

Filipino philosophy is concerned with the harmony with oneself, with others, with the visible and invisible world. That is why, the Filipino value system arises from our culture or way of life, our distinctive way of becoming human in this particular place and time. We speak of Filipino values in a fourfold sense.

First, although mankind shares universal human values, it is obvious that certain values take on for us a distinctively Filipino flavor. The Greek ideal of moderation or *meden agan*, the Roman in *medio stat virtus*, the Confucian and Buddhist "doctrine of the Middle", find their Filipino equivalent in *hindi labis, hindi kulang, katamtaman lamang*.[\[82\]](#)

Secondly, when we speak of Filipino values, we do not mean that elements of these Filipino values are absent in the value systems of other peoples and cultures. All people eat, talk and sing, but they eat different food, speak various languages and sing different songs. Thus, we easily recognize Filipino, American, Chinese, Japanese or any other foreign food, language or music. The difference lies in the way these elements are ranked, combined or emphasized so that they take on a distinctively Filipino slant or cast. For instance, in China, honesty and hard work may rank highest; Chinese and Japanese cultures give great value to politeness and beauty; American culture to promptness and efficiency; and Filipino culture to trust in God and family centeredness. In this sense of value-ranking and priority of values, we can speak of dominant Filipino values.[\[83\]](#)

Thirdly, universal human values in a Filipino context (historical, cultural, socio-economic, political, moral and religious) take on a distinctive set of Filipino meanings and motivations. This is true not only of the aims and goals, beliefs, convictions, and social principles of the traditional value system of the lowland rural family but also of what calls the Filipino "nationalistic" tradition (*pagsasarili, pagkakaisa, pakikisama, pakikipagkapwa-tao, and pagkabayani*).[\[84\]](#) A Filipino value or disvalue does not exist alone, in isolation or in a vacuum. Filipino values like *bahala na, utang na loob, hiya, pakikisama, pakiusap* are clustered around core values like social acceptance, economic security, social mobility, and are always found in a definite context or set of circumstances.[\[85\]](#)

Fourthly, we can speak of Filipino values in the sense that the historical consciousness of values has evolved among our people. The Filipino concept of justice has evolved from inequality to equality, and to human dignity; from the tribe, to the family, and to the nation. Filipino consciousness of these different values varies at different periods of our history. [\[86\]](#)



These values give us a better picture of Filipino identity although some are negative, these still make Filipinos unique among other peoples around the world. These dynamic values we have present us with the 'beating heart' of the Filipino system.

### Manifestations of *Pakikipagkapwa*

Filipinos are known for being family-oriented, hospitable, friendly, and for their endearing traits that can be easily observed. Everyone is welcomed and very much taken care of. Filipinos are also known for maintaining a good relation with Others in *pakikisama* and because of the "*kapwa*" concept, Filipinos deal with each other in a special way. It is more than just joining or conforming to somebody or something; it is adjusting our lives in order to establish mutual trust and bonding towards each other. Related to *pakikisama* or good relations with others are other life promoting values such as *pakikipagkapwa-tao* is a manifestation of our love of neighbor, *pagdadamayan* or sympathy to a person in need, *pagtutulongan* or service to one another, and *bayanihan* or service to the community which is akin to an ancient connectedness of feeling one with all creation.[87] These values affirm the importance of *mabuting-loob* as they enable Filipinos to attain communion with the other members of society.[88]

Generally, this *Pakikipagkapwa* is manifested in Filipino values as a happy nation as long as they can relate and connect with a family, with a community, a group of peers in the neighborhood, school, Church, or workplace. Filipinos continue to nurture and sustain one another through the community as a family relationship, togetherness in prayer, through clan reunions, through shared meals and through mutual support in times of sickness, death, and other tragedies. There can be no doubt that the Filipino family in the community plays a vital role in the life of the individual and society. *Pakikipagkapwa* is being responsible to his fellow. Cultural values such as *pagmamalasakit*, the popular Filipino *bayanihan*, the value of *pakikipagkapwa*, to name a few manifests how one considers the Other as himself.[89]

### The Filipino Term '*Pakikipagkapwa*'

Human interaction as observed and practiced in a day-to-day life divulges a lot about the people's social life and world view especially in the Philippines— *Pakikipagkapwa*. It is a meaningful emphasis of enquiry in the method of recognizing and scrutinizing basic concepts of Filipino personality and intersubjectivity, and social-moral philosophy. Thus, to gain a deeper appreciation to this Filipino moral value of *Pakikipagkapwa*, it is appropriate that this term is classified.

*Pakikipag* indicates an "action performed with someone".[90] To further dissect the word *pakikipag*, the affix "pa" connotes either a command or a request to be performed in which the word *paki* signifies a favor asked by a person to the Other. On the one hand, the affix *pakiki* indicates insistence or an act that is continuous. Hence, another meaning of this compounded affix, *pakikipag* can be, "a joint action in intense or continuous manner".[91] *Pakikipag* can likewise be an "action involving intentionality or initiative" (*kusang-loob*)[92] that comes from a desire within (*loob*)[93] a person that benefits the Other. For Filipinos, the Other or fellow-being is his/her *kapwa*.

The *kapwa* is generally a concept that centers both "the other" and "shared identity", who is both an outsider and insider. Coming across our *kapwa* demands us to distinguish their presence before us.[94] It is interesting to note that in analyzing the term *kapwa*, a richer understanding unfolds. The word *kapwa* is a shortened version of *kapuwa*. When divided into *ka* and *puwa*,[95] the affix *ka* means "shared", while *puwa* is the root word of *puwang*. [96] The Tagalog term *puwang* can be a sort of a hinge of two opposed meanings. When taken negatively, it means "separateness", "space", "something missing" or "gap". The term becomes positive when the affix *ka* is added, which could mean "bridging" or "connecting the gap", "filling up the in between space". Therefore, the term *kapwa* changes the condition from separation to

oneness, or solidarity to some extent.

Further, *kapwa* reflects a relationship that bridges a gap or eliminates a space between two beings. That being so, the term *kapwa* appeals to accept the Other fellow-being who is “similar” to me, and at the same time “different” from me.[97] A Tagalog phrase that can best capture this concept of *kapwa* is “*hindi iba sa akin*” (not different from me). The clause, “*hindi iba*” means “not different”, while “*sa akin*” can be a phrase pointing to the “self” or as “owning”. Thus, taken together, the phrase can mean that the self is “willing to share a space we both live in” or “to be in union with the one whom I consider no longer an outsider, but one with the self”. According to Virgilio Enriquez, *kapwa* is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others. It is closely bound to concepts such as intersubjectivity.[98] In fact, the word *kapwa* bears a declaration of the word ‘together’ that indicates responsibility to someone by being with the Other in times of trouble in times of distress and any kind of adversities. The *kapwa* reflects the Filipino intimate psyche and way of life, which carries the ethos of sharing, oneness and caring for the “Other” as oneself.[99] Hence, there is the unity of the self with the Other. This implies that the person accepts, and deals with the Other as an equal, not as a rival. An intimate reading of *kapwa* could be that the person accepts a deeper sense of responsibility for one’s fellow who is not different from me (*hindi iba sa akin*). Therefore, it acknowledges a dimension of justice and responsibility for our *kapwa*.

Pakikipagkapwa as a conviction emanating from a shared inner self does not simply imply either pakikitungo (amenities), pakikisama (adjusting), or any of the other modes and levels of interaction. Pakikipagkapwa is much deeper and profound in its implications. It also means accepting and dealing with the other person as an equal. The company president and the office clerk may not have an equivalent role, status, or income but the Filipino way demands and implements the idea that they treat one another as a fellow human being (*kapwa-tao*). This means a regard for the dignity and being of others. Aside from the socio-psychological dimension, pakikipagkapwa has a moral and normative aspect as a value and conviction. *Situations change and relations vary according to environment. For example, pakikipagkapwa is definitely inconsistent with exploitative human transactions. Giving a Filipino a bad deal is a challenge to kapwa (-tao).*[100]

However, the above-mentioned scenario is not always the case, most of the times it goes otherwise. *Kapwa* has become the antagonist in the Philippine society. In this present time, the question in the midst of this confusion remains; *who might be considered as my kapwa? (Sino nga ba ang aking kapwa?)*

### **The Gaps— “Hindi Palagay ang Loob” and “Kulo ng Dugo”**

The *kapwa* (fellow being) is the core value of the Filipinos. Although the Filipino is not individualistic, he/she has always to balance the demands between himself and others. He strives for harmony, but since life is never static, conflict occurs not rarely. Every culture has its theme and countertheme. So, the process between conflict and harmony is part of a constant balancing act. The intricacy of interactive relations is recognized in the Filipino adage: “*Madali ang maging tao, mahirap magpakatao*” (Easy to be a human being but it is hard being human). It is an interplay between Human Being and Being Human. The concept is manifested through an act of generosity and kindness (*kabutihan*). A person begins establishing the relationship of a *kapwa* not because of an acknowledgement of status given to him by others but because of his consciousness of shared identity as long as the *ako* (self) is not being out-group to the other— ‘*Hindi ka iba sa akin*’.[101]

Nonetheless, once ‘*ako*’ starts thinking himself as separate from *kapwa*, the Filipino “self” gets to be individuated and in effect, denies the responsibility of *kapwa* to the other as well as the self.[102] That is how the gaps were identified in consideration of the Levels of Interaction in the Filipino Psychology[103]— it is when the ‘*ako*’ (ego) and the ‘*iba sa akin*’ (others) supposedly are one but separate. Thus, it is through these gaps which draw the chasm of the self and the others.

## “Hindi Palagay ang Loob”

The concept of *'kagandahang loob'* entices the depth and the meaning of the term *'loob'*. The idea of *loob* is one of the significant concepts of Filipino culture. The personhood of every Filipino has *loob* (internality) and *labas* (externality) and the former is the one that receives more at the level of care. [104] The *loob* portrays the internal aspect of the self and its totality. It is in control in the relationship and social dimension of every person. That is why the term *loob* is used in describing the different values of Filipinos such as *'lakas ng loob'*, *'utang na loob'*, and *'kagandahang loob'* which are somehow contributing to a confrontative characteristic of a Filipino. [105]

With these, the *loob* also has the state of restlessness and being *'unease'*—non confrontative quality. The value given to this is *'kapayapaan'* or peace which differs from silence. The latter portrays only the absence of noise while the former penetrates *'within the loob'* which connotes to the negation of anxieties, grudges, and resentments. A person can be in silence but not in peace—*hindi palagay ang loob*.

According to Virgilio Enriquez, the concept of *katarungan* and *kapayapaan* are accommodative, as indicated by two characteristics of this concept—the value of *kapayapaan* along with *katarungan*. [106] For example, this happens when someone experiences injustice inflicted by others. This is sometimes resolved with a statement, *'Diyos na lang ang bahala sa kanila'* (Leave it all to God.)

The pervasiveness of resorting to settlements or mediation of disputes despite the existence of formal litigation system also underscores the significance ascribed to *kapayapaan*. Settlements, aside from being quicker and cheaper than court litigations, increase the likelihood of reestablishing amicable and cordial relationships between disputants. The often-heard plea for *"maski kaunting katarungan lamang"* (a little justice) is reflective of this graded justice. Thus, it is never the case that a situation is either *'makatarungan'* or *'di- makatarungan'*. These two exist as extremes. Between these two are levels with which one has to be satisfied as a compromise, having in mind some other value—*kapayapaan*. [107]

Peace plays a very important role in *pakikipagkapwa*. Without such, it hinders the encounter of the self and the other because of the gap and the separateness it brings to the both. Santiago Gepigon and Virgilio Francisco in *"Pagdalaw at Pakikipag-palagayang Loob sa Mamumulot ng Basura"*, [108] tackled poverty being experienced by scavengers. [109] It also discusses the gaps and the shortcomings of the society through visitation to the site, observation and *'pakikipagpalagayan ng Loob'* which is one of the important tools in realizing the innerness and the goal of the scavengers. [110]

The researchers found out that it is easy to interact and talk to children. They had simple conversation with them answering the question of what, which and where. Furthermore, while wearing only white shirt and a faded jeans, they were able to make an impression that they are one with the people and that they are also approachable which led to the process of *pakikipagpalagayan ng loob*. Consequently, the weekly visit of the researchers resulted to the development of their relationship with the locals. The locals' cautiousness (*alinlangan*) and shyness (*hiya*) were diminished as seen in their faces, based on the observation of the researchers. This is the point wherein the researchers concluded that the scavengers felt at ease with him and had a smooth interpersonal relationship. [111] *Hiya* and *alinlangan* build *'Hindi Palagay ang Loob'* which consequently hinders the *Pakikipagkapwa* encounter. This concrete example from the research of Gepigon and Francisco showcases the importance of setting aside this said gap.

## Hiya

Armando Bonifacio was right when he called attention to the fact that *napahiya* (being ashamed with) is not *nakakahiya*

(shaming of) and certainly not *ikinahihiya* (must be ashamed for).[\[112\]](#) The concept of *hiya* is always boxed as shame or embarrassment. Aside from *na-* and *nakaka-*, the argument also has *napa-* and *kina-*. Such affixation is supported in the analysis of internal and external dimension of Filipino value.

The *loob* aspect of *hiya* is related to qualities and the foundation or terminal value of *karangalan* as in *mahiya*, *kahiya-* *hiya* and *hiyang-* *hiya*. The *labas-* related meanings also have a social dimension, pertaining to social interaction such as *pakikitungo*, *pakikisalamuha*, *pakikibagay* and *pakikisama* which has an implication of being non- confrontative to the other. The *loob* related meanings have an emotional dimension, pertaining to the intensity of one's feeling of *hiya*. The *labas-* oriented affix, aside from its social dimension, also denotes that *hiya* can be a voluntary, conscious act (*sinasadya*), or involuntary, beyond one's volition (*di-* *sinasadya*). [\[113\]](#)

Thus, the *hiya* that is being experienced in the gap, *Hindi Palagay ang Loob*, belongs in the *labas-* related meanings which also has a social dimension so much so to be omitted when it comes to *Pakikipagkapwa*. Whether it is voluntary or beyond one's free will, such concept must be diminished for the purpose of eradicating the gap and not for diminishing it for worst.

### Alinlangan

Lyn Bostrom, one of the first researchers who study the inculcation of *bahala na*, compared one of the most important Filipino cultural values, '*bahala na*' with American fatalism. She wrote "knowing the possible deeper meaning of *bahala na* is not so significant as the fact that it is definitely an expression of fatalism." [\[114\]](#) Fatalism here is a passive acceptance of the turns in the patterns of life, indicated by a dislike for planning and taking responsibility for one's actions.[\[115\]](#)

On one hand, Camilo Osias affirms a more balanced view that *bahala na* is a combination of fatalism and determinism. It is expressive of courage and fortitude, a willingness to face difficulty and a willingness to accept the consequences.[\[116\]](#)

The *bahala na* culture of Filipinos implies that in a scenario full of uncertainty, we have to face the situation, accept the nature of things, and change the present problematic situation, if there is. Therefore, despite surrendering with the statement '*bahala na*', it presents to us the existence of '*alinlangan*'; what would it be, how would it be. This culture is both confrontative and non-confrontative. Confrontative in a sense that very few would avoid predicaments. On one hand, non-confrontative because of the existence of *alinlangan* wherein before uttering of the statement *bahala na*, lack of information, hesitation and uncertainty are being faced which results then as a form of escape. More so, this also happens in our *Pakikipagkapwa* encounter, mindful of the prejudices that this *kapwa* might just bring harm to the self or this might jeopardize the other— *may alinlangan*, which hinders the encounter of *pakikipagkapwa* and establishes the gap *Hindi Palagay ang Loob*.

Recently, in Capas, Tarlac, Philippines, 30 repatriated Filipinos from China have been transferred to the New Clark City (NCC) hereafter their chartered plane arrived at Clark Air Base. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said 29 adults and an infant from Wuhan City in Hubei, China is immediately subjected to a 14-day quarantine for COVID-19 inside the NCC's Athletes' Village.[\[117\]](#)

However, before the repatriation, there was a commotion which tried to hinder the transfer of returning Overseas Filipino Workers in Capas, Tarlac. Netizens in the social media continuously bashed the Capaseños and even its municipal mayor, Reynaldo Catacutan with this statement.

"While it is true that I, as a Filipino, am in favor of the repatriation of OFWs from the province of Hubei, China, I feel perturbed by the fact that Department of Health (DOH) did not at all, in any way, involve the



Capas LGU in its last-minute decision for New Clark City Capas to be used as quarantine zone for these Persons under Monitoring (PUMs). We acknowledge that the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) has full jurisdiction over NCC, but I, as the Mayor of Capas, appeal in behalf of all Capaseños to our dear President Rodrigo Duterte and DOH Secretary Francisco Duque to consider another place or facility as isolation area.”[\[118\]](#)

Initially, *alinlangan* dominated the position of the Capaseños towards their fellow Filipinos. They experienced the gap, *Hindi Palagay ang Loob*, mindful and anxious of what would these people bring to their community and what would be the implication of this. That is why they did not welcome them well and what concurs with their *hindi pagkapalagay ng loob* is their outrage—*Kulo ng Dugo*.

### “Kulo ng Dugo”

The experience of anger and furiousness portrays the gap, *Kulo ng Dugo* and this gap falls under the concept of *Pakiramdam*. According to Virgilio Enriquez, the function of *pakiramdam* is to act as the processor, or pivot, which spins off the surface values from the core value of *kapwa*.[\[119\]](#) Thus, a person without *pakiramdam* nor misdirected with it cannot possibly have *pakikisama* and the encounter of *pakikipagkapwa*.

“Perhaps the value system can be best illustrated in the popular Filipino conception of the *masamang tao* (bad or evil person). The *masamang tao* can be characterized as one who does not exhibit the accommodative values of *hiya*, *utang na loob* and *pakikisama*. The person characterized as *walang pakiramdam* is of course worse off than any of the three evil characters; *walang pakikisama*, *walang utang na loob*, *walang hiya*. It is definitely unfortunate, to put it mildly, to be afflicted with such an inadequacy. This particularly sad state is captured in one Filipino Word: *manhid* (numb, absence of feeling).”[\[120\]](#)

Using *pakikiramdam*, a person seeks to clarify an ambiguous and therefore critical situation which is actually not present in the gap, *kulo ng dugo*. Such gap despite having a strong emotion, suffers from numbness in a given situation.

Going back to the turmoil faced by the Capaseños in relation to the repatriated OFWs, the strong emotion lingers to every individual but numb to the call of the need of their *kapwa*. It is indeed true that *pakikiramdam* is the pivotal value of shared inner perception. The tendency to go either closer or away to the core value of *kapwa* remains. Thus, this gap, *kulo ng dugo* is a mere misdirected *pakikiramdam* to the *kapwa*.

In the daily encounter of the self to the *kapwa*, it cannot avoid to experience this gap; in just a simple longing for something or someone that cannot be satisfied can already be a preliminary point for this gap to exist. Also, the prejudices the self has to the others might possibly and greatly contribute into the expansion of this gap. Thus, tolerating such condition jeopardizes the possible encounter of the self to the *kapwa*.

Rita Mataragnon characterizes *pakikiramdam* as “feeling for another”, a kind of emotional a priori wherein *pakikiramdam* is an active process involving great care and deliberation manifested in “hesitation to react, inattention to subtle cues, and non-verbal behavior in mental and social role-playing (If I were in the other’s situation, how would I feel).[\[121\]](#) It is necessarily tied to the Filipino values. Regarding *pakikisama*, Mataragnon writes, “a person who knows how to get along well with others is one who is ‘*magaling makiramdam*’ (good in sensing cues).[\[122\]](#)

*Kulo ng dugo* necessitates its subject to act accordingly in a given situation. It cannot be retained within one’s *loob* or else at some point in time it might reach its thoroughgoing level. It must not consume time within one’s being otherwise the self will be consumed. Let the blood that circulates within be calmed and let the value of *pakikiramdam* finds its right path. The self must be reminded that this is just a mere gap



which requires something that is appropriate to be filled which opens up for a sense of responsibility.

## ENHANCED FILIPINO CONCEPT OF PAKIKIPAGKAPWA USING LEVINAS' CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBILITY

This part discusses how Levinas' concept of Responsibility bridges the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa* that are brought about by *Hindi Palagay ang Loob* and *Kulo ng Dugo* which results to the possibility of an enhanced Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa*.

### The Finite Self towards the Infinite Other

Levinas idea of infinity is a form of transcendence of the relation to the Other. Infinity is produced as a revelation to the self of the idea of infinity.[\[123\]](#) The idea of infinity does not proceed from the self but is revealed to the self.[\[124\]](#) Infinity is revealed as the infinite being of the absolutely other. The Other is everything other than the self. The Other is infinite being which overflows the idea of infinity. Thus, the Other is an infinitely transcendent reality.[\[125\]](#) Insofar as infinity denotes what is non-limited, non-circumscribable, it refers to the unpredictable quality of a face's expression. [\[126\]](#) As he writes, to think the infinite, the transcendent, the Stranger, is hence not to think an object. But to think what does not have the lineaments of an object is in reality to do more or better than think.[\[127\]](#)

Infinity feeds our desire for sociality. The idea of infinity is moral which is an idea of what the finite being lacks in relation to infinity.[\[128\]](#) Thus, the self can transcend this relation by a welcoming of the Other. Welcoming of the Other is shown in hospitality and as evident in the Filipino culture, Filipinos are some of the most hospitable people on the planet. The Filipino version of hospitality does not look into the otherness of the Other but to the being human of the Other. Indeed, to have the idea of infinity is to have already welcomed the Other. The welcoming of the Other is the beginning of moral consciousness.[\[129\]](#)

In here, Levinas' affiliation to religion must be taken into consideration. Levinas affirms in his interview that philosophy can be traced into Sacred Scriptures. The I has the obligation to help the Other because in helping the Other, is also helping the Absolute Other – God. By the face of the Other, the I sees and trace the face of God. What the I does to this Other, he is also doing it to God who is the Absolute Other.[\[130\]](#) The dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face.[\[131\]](#) The face of the Other does not only reveal itself to the Self but it also imparts that beside from his face there is much greater than him. It opens the I to the notion of having an Absolute Other. By seeing the face of the Other face, the I sees not only the face of the Other but also, he is able to see the image of himself. And most of all he is able to see the face of the absolute Other.

Such phenomenon describes how subjectivity arises from the idea of infinity, and how infinity is a product of the relationship of self to another. Thus, through the other and the recognition of the face, the infinity can be revealed to the finite self which fills the gaps of *Pakikipagkapwa*.

### Filling In the Gaps

From the very start of the encounter of *Pakikipagkapwa*, inevitably, every Filipino might face the gaps, *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. However, with this situation, the Filipino self is being always reminded that these gaps have always some space to be filled in, as an attainment of *Pakikipagkapwa* in its real essence.

The *hindi pagkapalagay ang loob* is a non- confrontative value because the self does not attain the peace within. The *loob* is in the state of resentment. Thus, there is no encountering of *Pakikipagkapwa*. Same with the issue of repatriated OFWs who were quarantined in Capas, Tarlac, the Capasenos were stuck in their

being *hindi palagay ang loob* because of their *alinlangan* on what do these fellows of theirs would bring to their community.

More so, the gap, *kulo ng dugo*, is also misdirecting the self in the value of *pakikiramdam* as a pivotal value of shared inner perception. The self is being moved away from the core concept of *kapwa*. Consequently, the ideal notion of *kapwa* is being replaced due to the implications that these gaps are bringing. Same with the outrage felt by the Capasenos due to the alleged harm or virus brought by the OFWs. With this manner, 'Who might be the *kapwa*?', if the self continues to hide itself with these gaps.

Thus, with the Levinas' concept of the Face and of Responsibility, the Filipino self is being prompted that every time the self encounters the other, it is actually a revelation of infinity wherein the face that the self encounters brings a transcendental reality to the self. By recognizing the others, *sarili* also shows co-responsibility. By recognizing the others, it transcends the self. But, is it necessary for every Filipino to know first the concept of Levinas in order to attain this kind of Transcendence? In one way or another, if they become aware of the Levinas' concept of responsibility, it might contribute and be of great help. However, whether conscious or unconscious with it, the self knows within the responsibility that calls him/her upon seeing the face of the other [132] and this does not negate the self. Rather, it brings the self through the other into a moral consciousness.

With the scavengers' encounter with the researchers, *pakikipagkapwa* was enhanced upon the diminished of being *hindi palagay ang loob*. It is when the gap between the both scavengers and researcher were filled- in with the sense of responsibility brought by the encounter of the self and the face of the other which results then to an open conversation freed from *hiya* and *alinlangan*. With the disorder brought about by *kulo ng dugo* between the Capaseños and the OFWs, upon seeing the face of the OFWs in the news after some days, the Capaseños decided to open up their community to welcome the repatriated OFWs to be quarantined wherein their sense of responsibility was recalled. It is responsibility which calls the self every time he/ she is in the encounter to the face of the other, filling in the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa* brought about by *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. These are some of the many possibilities of an enhanced *pakikipagkapwa* through Levinas' responsibility and the Filipinos are continuously struggling to enhance for more.

The Filipino values presented, manifest the struggle of every Filipino self to transcend towards infinity which include always the self (*sarili*). This means that it is much wider than *loob*. *sarili* or the whole self is that which possesses the *loob*. Self is the whole self, which includes body, soul, and spirit and all its properties. It is the oneness of the whole person. It connotes harmony of the faculties. [133] A person can speak of his own self because he is conscious of himself/herself. Selfhood guarantees being fully authentic and human. This selfhood exercises itself in its use of personal freedom. It includes the things/properties as extensions of oneself. And, being conscious of oneself implies consciousness of others, the world, and the environment in which one lives. The *sarili* also affirms the value of the others (*kapwa*). Thus, the self with *labas* and *loob* are always integrated (*magkatambal*). The outside shall mirror accurately what is in through the outside wherein it requires this concept of sensitivity (*pakikiramdam*) which relates to the concept of concreteness of every person.

Thus, Levinas affirms that the onset of the other—as the expression of the face—interrupts our free activity (and willing) and calls us to account for ourselves, [134] something Levinas calls “goodness”. [135] Second, in thereby responding, the subject approached by the other engages in an act that opens the possibility of dialogue. [136] The unfolding of dialogue expands the social relationship, and Levinas argues that social life preserves a residuum of the initial “ethical” encounter with the face. Intersubjective dialogue entails conversation, teaching, and at a more general level, literary or philosophical discourse. [137] With this, the Filipino self which has the gaps which includes *alinlangan* and *hiya* encumber the fullness of

Pakikipagkapwa which always requires an intersubjective dialogue, as what Levinas claims.

### **Pananagutan as the Enhanced Pakikipagkapwa using Levinas' Responsibility**

In its most basic sense, *pakikipagkapwa* means being with others, being one with the suffering of the other, being responsible for the other. In the social interaction context, *pakikipagkapwa* means “sharing yourself or identity with others but in the most intensive sense *pakikipagkapwa* has an obligation to the other. [138]

Sensitivity is a sense for the concreteness or particularity of a person or a situation. [139] Being sensitive creates more human, more ethical relations between people. Aforementioned, Levinas also thinks the bodily existence of the human being as incarnate, in short, it means separating as existing or the transcendence as the need to escape. Togetherness with others and being as being in the world are primarily thought in the terms of life. Taking the word ‘*sensitivity*’ as goodness, one can say it is goodness that makes truth possible. As Levinas says, we are humans before we are learned and we will remain humans even after we have much forgotten. [140]

The moment the self encounters the face of *kapwa* there is a conversation that is already happening. The other is communicating to the self and it is a prerequisite for self to respond. Thus, for Levinas that infinity comes to the relationship of the self and the other. Conversely, it is not the self who seeks it. But it is “coming” to the self and it is not a disclosure that is comprehended in the light of Being and time. Thus, *pakikipagkapwa* is a starting point in order to fulfill the basic obligation towards the Other. Self's encounter with the face of the *Kapwa* is a conversation, there is a communication between the self or the same and the Other. [141] Thus, the Filipino concept of *pakikipagkapwa*, possesses that quality of uniqueness and that element of timelessness which gives Filipino an enduring value and makes them relevant to anyone in any place at any time.

In our everyday life, we face different situations such as when someone is approached by a beggar or someone who needs or asks for help. The self recognizes the other through the face that is being shown in the selfhood of the other. The first thing the self does to look at his pocket for a small amount of bill and give it to the person. But there is another approach. If one does not have a smaller bill, he/ she would refuse to give alms or to help Other because when he/ she gives a big amount, he/ she would suspect that there is an ulterior motive behind the act. Someone may not give alms in fear of the first one that would profit is not the one asking for alms but the one superior to him or her. Because of this fear, he/she chooses not to help or not to fulfill his responsibility. His/her response is inadequate. But behind that refusal, the I oftentimes ask for forgiveness because he/she was not able to help. The term ‘*patawad po*’ or ‘I am sorry, I do not have a change’ tells us that the self is really sorry because he was not able to fulfill his responsibility for Other. Why does the Self feel sorry even though the Other is a complete stranger? Because everyone is responsible for the Other, we all have ‘*pananagutan*’. Upon seeing the face of the other, the self is being reminded of the responsibility which is infinitely calling him/her.

The word sensitivity is associated with the Filipino word *Pananagutan*. Such *pananagutan* happens when one realizes that the *kapwa* is also like him/her, a *kapwa*. In this regard, it is not something rooted as a *utang na loob*. It is a notion grounded on the recognition that the other person is also the same as the self. In a way, *pananagutan* concerns more to the other and looks back as they both reveal one another. The human self finds fulfillment in its inter-relationship with others: selfhood then implies the collective self of society. According to a proverb: ‘*Walang taong nabubuhay para sa sarili lamang*’ (no man lives for himself alone). ‘*Bayan muna bago ang sarili*’ (The country above oneself). That is also the reason why a Filipino hero is called a *bayani* (bayan-i)—his/ her fellowmen come first before the I because the Filipino self with *pananagutan* believes that it is his/ her responsibility to escape from his/her self to discover the responsibility that he/ she needs to fulfill.

Given these situations, responsibility for the Other is both religious and ethical. Levinas stresses the idea that to be truly oneself is to be good. Responsibility for truth essentially implies an underlying responsibility for goodness and also the Bible speaks. The Christian tradition gives emphasis on *pakikipagkapwa* that moves towards a *communio personarum*, a communion of persons, which Filipinos call oneness or *pagkakaisa* the highest level of *pakikipagkapwa* interaction possible' and 'the full realization' of a relationship with the kapwa[142] Levinas's presupposition that we are ethically responsible for the Other depends for its validity that we actually experience ourselves as ethically responsible for each other.[143] It is through our *pakikipagkapwa* that we find ethical responsibility within this phenomenon. Levinas maintains that our ethical obligation to the other is within the relationship between *Kapwa* and, hence, can be discovered and described not only religiously but also purely phenomenologically.[144] In Levinas, the dimension of the other is moreover the Face. That means that the other in his/ her nakedness is at the same time the teacher, the judge.

In the language of Levinas' later works, that means that 'I am' is answerable in the radical sense.[145] *Pakikipagkapwa* carries a deeper level to the Self as responsible subject that committed to life of goodness. Levinas stresses the idea that to be truly one's self is to be good and goodness lies at the very basis of all expression and truth. Responsibility for truth essentially implies an underlying responsibility for goodness. When the self devotes its life to goodness, it actually attaches itself to the very source of all goodness, i.e. the Infinitely Transcendent Other, the good and beyond being, or the God that the Bible speaks. *Pakikipagkapwa* deepens our understanding of a radical responsibility by showing the ethical structure of Filipino values.[146] This structure refers to a relationship between the Self and the Other, who manifests himself in the things which are discoverable in the intentionality of the body as well as in that of thought. This ethical relation, likewise, reveals the non-phenomenal reality of the transcendent and infinite Other, who conveys to the Self the Self's essential identity and who also signifies to the Self itself as the Other in its role as ultimate source of all truth and meaning.[147] The presupposition is that we are ethically responsible for one another.

The responsibility of the self is a phenomenological fact of human existence, that human experience themselves as ethically responsible for one another. We experience ourselves as responsible for the other person. Our *pakikipagkapwa* begins with the encounter with the Other/*kapwa*.

One argument for the greater importance of *kapwa* in Filipino thought and behavior is the shock or disbelief that the Filipino registers when confronted with one who is supposedly *walang kapwa*. If one is *walang pakisama*, others might still say, "he would eventually learn" or "let him be; that is his prerogative, if one is *walang hiya*, others say, "his parents should teach him a thing or two." If one is *walang utang na loob*, others might advise, "avoid him". But if one is *walang kapwa tao*, people say "he must have reached rock bottom. *Napakasama na niya*. He is the worst. [148]

*Pakikipagkapwa* with its gaps is not almost the terminal point because there would always serve as a make-up. As what Enriquez stresses, the danger of the Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa* is the negation of *kapwa* which puts the self in the rock bottom. Thus, to continuously enhance the values of *pakikipagkapwa* through filling the gaps by Levinas' concept of responsibility moves the Filipino self away from this rock bottom.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final part embodies what has just been discussed in the entire paper. Herein lies a summary, a conclusion and a recommendation to anyone who is interested to write a paper relative to this philosophy.



## Summary

The main concern of the study is to discuss how Levinas' idea of responsibility enhances the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*. To do this, the researcher addressed the following sub-problems:

1. What is Levinas' idea of Responsibility?
2. What is the Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapwa* and its gaps?
3. How can Levinas' idea of Responsibility possibly bridge the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa* that are brought by '*hindi palagay ang loob*' and '*kulo ng dugo*'?

On the first question, the researcher exposes the biographical sketch of Emmanuel Levinas to have a better understanding of his foundation and roots together with what influenced him to come up with his philosophy; the Nazi Horror and his association with the religion. It follows then the discussion of his philosophy particularly his ethics of the Face and primarily, the Idea of Responsibility. Based on the presentation, Levinas breaks away with the traditional notion and claims that Ethics is the first philosophy. In here, the researcher presented the critique of Emmanuel Levinas on the western philosophy. Then, the exposition of an overview of the face of the Other in the context of the Ethics of the Face of Emmanuel Levinas. As what presented, Levinas chose the face because upon seeing the face of the other, the self realizes that the other he/ she encountered with, has also a face like his/her. This shows the relatedness of the person facing the face of another human being. And also, the discussion of the self-responsibility, the responsibility for the Other and lastly the act of responding for the Other. The responsibility of the Other always begins from the self, being responsible for the Other must act and concretize his/ her responsibility by reaching out to the Other.

On the second question, the researcher presents the Filipino values in a fourfold sense; Filipino values share in universal human values, the distinctive character of Filipino values, universal human values in a Filipino context (historical, cultural, socio-economic, political, moral and religious), and the evolution of Filipino values. After such, the manifestations of *pakikipagkapwa* as seen in the everyday living and the living tradition of the Filipinos are tackled. In this part, there can be no doubt that the Filipino family in the community plays a vital role in the life of the individual and society. The analysis of the term *pakikipagkapwa* follows then the discussion together with the different cases of the *kapwa* inflicting the other *kapwa*. Based on the discussion, an intimate notion of *kapwa* could be that the person accepts a deeper sense of responsibility for one's fellow who is not different from the other (*hindi iba sa akin*). Afterwards, the gaps are identified as *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. The former connotes the lack of peace of within, preoccupied with resentments and anxieties brought by *hiya* and *alinlangan* while the latter speaks of the misdirection of *pakikiramdam* value of Filipino. But both put gap in the encounter of *pakikipagkapwa*.

On the third question, the researcher develops the fill- in using Levinas' concept of responsibility to the gaps of *Pakikipagkapwa* brought about by *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. Based on the presentation, Levinas claims that the welcoming of the other by the self opens up the door for moral consciousness which results to the transcendental reality brought about by the other. And this happens through an encounter of the face. With this Levinas' concept, it negates then the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa* which gives way to *pananagutan* as an enhanced Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa*.

## Conclusion

Emmanuel Levinas' concept of Responsibility is generally identified with his philosophy of the Face of the Other. This serves as a reminder for the Filipino to regain the real value of *Pakikipagkapwa*, free from any gaps, that is to have this radical responsibility to others which opens up for a moral consciousness and to a



transcendental reality.

Indeed, Filipinos are rich in values. But they have the tendency to place their relationship to others at the least. And, sometimes they are being cluttered due to the natural calamities and because of unceasing wars happening right now whether in the society or within themselves; war on drugs, war on pandemics, personal wars within the Filipino self. Such scenarios might affect their relationship to the *kapwa* and might just establish the gaps of *pakikipagkapwa*; *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. Worse comes worst, when they are unaware of such gaps which hinders the value of *pakikipagkapwa* and results to a longevity of time preoccupying the inner aspect of the self. Thus, reaching- out and helping the Other are the ones being neglected because of the gaps *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. The self then abandons his/ her responsibility towards the Other.

In that manner, this might also result in looking at things through one's self perspective and imposes things according to the personal will. Manifesting right now, the self becomes less selfless because the kind of thinking that he/ she has is that one self is primary or greater than the other. But it must go otherwise because the Other is more primary than one's self and it is the way the Other reveals itself. Because like the Other, the self is also the Other for the Other.

When the self and the other reach out, there should be an intimacy. It should be a personal encounter with the face. The ethics of the face of Emmanuel Levinas tries to encourage us to recall our responsibility to others. The self can experience that intimate encounter when there is a face-to-face relation, by being knowledgeable and aware of the responsibility he/ she has towards the Other. A Filipino now would be less selfish and begin to be more selfless.

The concept of responsibility Emmanuel Levinas serves not only a reminder but also an eye opener to every Filipino, that he/ she is not just the one who is living in this world but there are also Others like him who is an infinitely transcendental reality. It inculcates to the inner self that he/ she does not only live for him/ herself, but he/ she is also living for Other. The self does not own his/ her life alone. By being compassionate and by being able to relate himself to Others, he/ she now can speak to the language the face is speaking to him/ her. Every Filipino can now fulfill his/ her responsibility towards the Other—free from the gaps—arriving at an enhanced Filipino value of *Pakikipagkapwa*.

## Recommendations

This study is just one of the many attempts which presents Levinas' concept of responsibility as a fill- in to the gaps of Filipino value of *Pakikipagkapwa*. It focused only to the concept of responsibility of Levinas through the Ethics of the Face and the value of *Pakikipagkapwa* with its gaps identified as *hindi palagay ang loob* and *kulo ng dugo*. Thus, the study recommends the following:

To the future researchers, the researcher has realized that Levinas' concept of Responsibility transcends our shallow notion of inter-relationship. It would be a good study for future researchers to venture on this theme especially now that our notion of friendship, partnership and other forms of relationship have gained a new meaning due to the advent of the internet.

To every Filipino, parents, teachers, and those who deal with young individuals, they must not lessen the practicing of the value of *Pakikipagkapwa* to the youth and children. In many cases, these young individuals are the ones who are subject to the danger of negating the *kapwa* due to the influences of the social media environment.

The study also recommends the following topics to be explored:

1. **Responsibility in a Virtual World of *Pakikipagkapwa*** —this topic discusses the relevance of the concept of responsibility especially in this time of having a rare encounter of the self physically. From this, one can see that the concept of responsibility arises upon the encounter of the face of the other not just physically but transcends towards the other.
2. ***Pakikipagkapwa* as a Struggle for Shared Inner Self**— this theme deals with the Filipino self as a determining subject longing for a meaningful and efficacious relationship with his/ her kapwa. Nowadays, the value of *pakikipagkapwa* gradually diminishes due to the different factors; technology, influences of the youth, that hinder such to make it happen.

Finally, the researcher humbly admits that this research work does not exhaustively encapsulate the whole of Levinas's mind and understanding, same as with the concept of *Pakikipagkapwa*. This paper is also subject to human finitude. On the other hand, the researcher strongly suggests future researchers to look and read more references about Emmanuel Levinas and his philosophy and the concept of *pakikipagkapwa*. Most importantly, all of the ideas discovered must be acted upon by the researcher and the readers.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### “Kapwa Model’s Value Structure”

(Adapted from Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*. University of the Philippines Press: Diliman, Quezon City Philippines)

|                                      |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Colonial/Accommodative Surface Value | <i>hiya</i><br>(propriety/<br>dignity)                              | <i>utang na loob</i> (gratitude/<br>solidarity) | <i>pakikisama</i><br>(companionship/esteem) |
| Confrontative Surface Value          | <i>bahala na</i><br>(determination)                                 | <i>sama/lakas ng loob</i> (resentment/guts)     | <i>pakikibaka</i><br>(resistance)           |
| Pivotal Interpersonal Value          | <i>Pakiramdam (pakikipagkapwa-tao)</i><br>(shared inner perception) |   |   |
| <b>CORE VALUE</b>                    | <b><i>KAPWA (Pagkatao)</i></b><br>(shared identity)                 |   |   |
| Linking Socio-Personal Values        | <i>Kagandahang-loob (Pagkamakatao)</i><br>(shared humanity)         |   |   |
| Associated Societal values           | <i>karangalan</i><br>(dignity)                                      | <i>katarungan</i><br>(justice)                  | <i>kalayaan</i><br>(freedom)                |



## Appendix B



### “Emmanuel Levinas”

(1905- 1995)

By: Richard Wolin

(Accessed from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emmanuel-Levinas/additional-info#content-1>, Accessed on: July 20, 2020)

Emmanuel Lévinas, (born December 30, 1905, Kaunas, Lithuania—died December 25, 1995, Paris, France), Lithuanian-born French philosopher renowned for his powerful critique of the preeminence of ontology (the philosophical study of being) in the history of Western philosophy, particularly in the work of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976)

Lévinas began his studies in philosophy in 1923 at the University of Strasbourg. He spent the academic year 1928–29 at the University of Freiburg, where he attended seminars by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Heidegger. After completing a doctoral dissertation at the Institut de France in 1928, Lévinas taught in Paris at the École Normale Israélite Orientale (ENIO), a school for Jewish students, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which tried to build bridges between French and Jewish intellectual traditions. Serving as an officer in the French army at the outbreak of World War II, he was captured by German troops in 1940 and spent the next five years in a prisoner-of-war camp. After the war he was director of the ENIO until 1961, when he received his first academic appointment at the University of Poitiers. He subsequently taught at the University of Paris X (Nanterre; 1967–73) and the Sorbonne (1973–78).

The principal theme of Lévinas’s work after World War II is the traditional place of ontology as “first philosophy”—the most fundamental philosophical discipline. According to Lévinas, ontology by its very nature attempts to create a totality in which what is different and “other” is necessarily reduced to sameness and identity. This desire for totality, according to Lévinas, is a basic manifestation of “instrumental”



reason—the use of reason as an instrument for determining the best or most efficient means to achieve a given end. Through its embrace of instrumental reason, Western philosophy displays a destructive and objectifying “will to domination.” Moreover, because instrumental reason does not determine the ends to which it is applied, it can be—and has been—used in the pursuit of goals that are destructive or evil; in this sense, it was responsible for the major crises of European history in the 20th century, in particular the advent of totalitarianism. Viewed from this perspective, Heidegger’s attempt to develop a new “fundamental ontology,” one that would answer the question of the “meaning of Being,” is misguided, because it continues to reflect the dominating and destructive orientation characteristic of Western philosophy in general.

## FOOTNOTE

[1] Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr., *Ang Metapisika at Etika ng Pakikipagkapwa- Tao*, (De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, 2018), 21.

[2] Rogelia Pe-Pua, *Filipino Psychology: Theory, Method and Application*, (University of the Philippines Press: Diliman, Quezon City Philippines, 1982), 203.

[3] See the discussion of Levels of Interaction on Virgilio Enriquez, *“From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, (University of the Philippines Press: Diliman, Quezon City Philippines, 1992), 39.

[4] Virgilio Enriquez, *“From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 43.

[5] Ibid, 42.

[6] Fleurdeliz R. Altez, *Banal and Implied Forms of Violence in Levinas’ Phenomenological Ethics*, (KritikĒ, Vol. I, Number 1, June 2007). 63.

[7] Elisabeth Loise Thomas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being*, (Routledge, New York City, USA, 2004), 80.

[8] The researcher pertains on the data that are already existing.

[9] Hermeneutical analysis includes the researcher’s critical interpretation.

[10] Documentary analysis is “qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give meaning and voice around an assessment topic.” Glen A. Bowen. “Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Methodology.” *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol. 9 Issue: 2 (2009). <http://www.emeraldinsights.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.3316%2FQRJ0902027> (accessed February 12, 2020)

[11] Fleurdeliz R. Altez, *Banal and Implied Forms of Violence in Levinas’ Phenomenological Ethics*, (KritikĒ, Vol. I, Number 1, June 2007).

[12] Elisabeth Loise Thomas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being*, (Routledge, New York City, USA, 2004).

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[14] Richard Cohen, *Ethics, Exegesis and Philosophy: Interpretation after Levinas*, (Cambridge University

Press: UK, 2001).

[15] Fleurdeliz Albella, *The Body and Transcendence in Emmanuel Levinas' Phenomenological Ethics*, (KritikĒ, Vol. V, Number 1, June 2011, 36-50).

[16] Jeremiah Reyes, *Loób and Kapwa: An Introduction to a Filipino Virtue Ethics*, (Logos Publication: Manila, 2012).

[17] Margarita Certeza Garcia, *Towards "Kapwa" Theory of Art: Working Towards Wholeness in Contemporary Practice*, (Bahaus University Weimar, 2011).

[18] Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr., *Ang Metapisika at Etika ng Pakikipagkapwa- Tao*, (De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, 2018).

[19] Virgilio Enriquez, *"From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, (University of the Philippines Press: Diliman, Quezon City Philippines, 1992).

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[24] Bruno Dey, 'We were indifferent to the horror': Nazi camp inmate to give testimony at trial', 2017, (Accessed on: August 2, 2020), Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/27/indifferent-horror-nazi-reistance-fighter-bruno-dey-stutthof>.

[25] A. Peperzak, *Jewish Existence and Philosophy, Beyond: The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, 86.

[26] A. Peperzak, *Jewish Existence and Philosophy, Beyond: The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, 15.

[27] A. Peperzak, *Jewish Existence and Philosophy, Beyond: The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, 69.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Joshua James Shaw, *Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics*, 88.

[30] Ibid. 90.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Fleurdeliz Albella, *The Body and Transcendence in Emmanuel Levinas' Phenomenological Ethics*, 37.

[33] Richard Cohen, *Ethics, Exegesis and Philosophy: Interpretation after Levinas*, 57.

[34] Joshua James Shaw, *Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics*, 49.

[35] Biography.com Editors, “*Helen Keller Biography*”, A&E Television Networks, April 2, 2014, (Accessed on: August 2, 2020), Retrieved from: <https://www.biography.com/activist/helen-keller>.

**Helen Keller** was an American educator, advocate for the blind and deaf and co-founder of the ACLU. Stricken by an illness at the age of 2, Keller was left blind and deaf. Beginning in 1887, Keller’s teacher, Anne Sullivan, helped her make tremendous progress with her ability to communicate, and Keller went on to college, graduating in 1904. During her lifetime, she received many honors in recognition of her accomplishments.

[36] Joshua James Shaw, *Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics*, 49.

[37] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 19.

[38] Ibid.

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[40] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Trans. by A.Lingis, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Sean Hand, *The Levinas Reader: Emmanuel Levinas*, 87.

[46] Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers of Emmanuel Levinas*, 134.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 1969, 114.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Elisabeth Loise Thomas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being*, 114.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid, 115.

[56] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 34.

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid, 121.

[60] Fleurdeliz R. Altez, *Banal and Implied Forms of Violence in Levinas' Phenomenological Ethics*, 46.

[61] Ibid, 47.

[62] R. J. Festin, *Mindfulness*, (Logos Publication: Manila, 2012), 111.

[63] Elisabeth Loise Thomas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being*, 122.

[64] R. J. Festin, *Mindfulness*, 111.

[65] Elisabeth Loise Thomas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being*, 122.

[66] Ibid. 123.

[67] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 64.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Fleurdeliz R. Altez, *Banal and Implied Forms of Violence in Levinas' Phenomenological Ethics*, 52.

[70] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 1969, 62.

[71] Ibid, 63.

[72] Elisabeth Loise Thomas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics, Justice and the Human beyond Being*, 130.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid, 131.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Joshua James Shaw, *Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics*, 80.

[77] K. Guia, *Kapwa: The Self in the Other Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture Bearers*, (Anvil Publishers: Pasig, 2005), 78.

[78] Joshua James Shaw, *Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics*, 104.

[79] Ibid, 105.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid, 106.

[82] Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J., *Understanding the Filipino Value System*, 2007, (Accessed on: August 4, 2020).

Retrieved from: [http://www.crvp.org/book/series03/III-7/chapter\\_vi.html](http://www.crvp.org/book/series03/III-7/chapter_vi.html).

[83] Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J., *Understanding the Filipino Value System*, 2007, (Accessed on: August 4, 2020). Retrieved from: [http://www.crvp.org/book/series03/III-7/chapter\\_vi.html](http://www.crvp.org/book/series03/III-7/chapter_vi.html).

[84] Frank Lynch, *Social Acceptance: Four Readings in Filipino Values*, ed. IPC Papers no. 2, (Ateneo de Manila University Press: Quezon City, 1961), 19.

[85] Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J., *Understanding the Filipino Value System*, 32.

[86] Ibid. 33.

[87] Dionisio Miranda, *Pagkamakatao: Reflections on the Theological Virtues in the Philippine Context*, (Divine Word Publications: Manila, 1987), 68.

[88] Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 53.

[89] Ibid, 76.

[90] Frederik De Vos and Fiona de Vos, *Learning Tagalog: "Tagalog Noun Affixes"*, April 2018, (Accessed on: June 16, 2020), Available from: [http://learningtagalog.com/grammar/nouns/noun\\_affixes/pakikipag.html](http://learningtagalog.com/grammar/nouns/noun_affixes/pakikipag.html).

[91] Agnes M. Brazal, *"Reinventing Pakikipagkapwa: An Exploration of Its Potential for Promoting Respect for Plurality and Difference" in Pluralism and Fundamentalism in the Church* (Manila: Dakateo, 2003), 56.

[92] Frederik De Vos and Fiona de Vos, *Learning Tagalog: "Tagalog Noun Affixes"*, April 2018, (Accessed on: June 16, 2020), Available from: [http://learningtagalog.com/grammar/nouns/noun\\_affixes/pakikipag.html](http://learningtagalog.com/grammar/nouns/noun_affixes/pakikipag.html).

The "u" is vocalized as u in "pool", and the "o" is vocalized as o in "soil". Thus, the word is pronounced as *koo-sung lo-ob*.

[93] Ibid. Pronounced as *lo-ob*.

[94] K. Guia, *Kapwa: The Self in the Other Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture Bearers*, 75.

[95] Frederik De Vos and Fiona de Vos, *Learning Tagalog: "Tagalog Noun Affixes"*, April 2018, (Accessed on: June 16, 2020), Available from: [http://learningtagalog.com/grammar/nouns/noun\\_affixes/pakikipag.html](http://learningtagalog.com/grammar/nouns/noun_affixes/pakikipag.html).

Shortened to *pwa* It is pronounced as, *poo-wu*.

[96] Ibid. The "ng" is vocalized as ng in "bang", thus is pronounced as *poo-wu-ng*.

[97] Agnes M. Brazal, *"Reinventing Pakikipagkapwa: An Exploration of Its Potential for Promoting*



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*Respect for Plurality and Difference” in Pluralism and Fundamentalism in the Church, 57.*

[98] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 65.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 65. Italicization for emphasis.

[101] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 43.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid, 39.

The discussion on the Levels of Interaction is as follows: The Filipino language provides conceptual distinction in several levels and modes of social interaction. At least eight behaviorally recognizable levels under two general categories in Filipino were identified:

**Ibang Tao or “Outsider” Category** includes: Pakikitungo (Level of civility), Pakikisalamuha (Level of ‘mixing’), Pakikilahok (Level of joining/ participating), Pakikibagay (Level of conforming), Pakikisama (Level of adjusting).

**Hindi Ibang Tao or “One of Us” Category** includes: Pakikisangkot (Level of getting involved), Pakikiisa (Level of Fusion, oneness and full trust)

They are levels of interaction which range from the relatively uninvolved civility in pakikitungo to the total sense of identification in pakikiisa. The domain of interpersonal relations has proved to be theoretically fertile and lexically elaborate in Filipino. The ako (self) and the iba sa akin (other) are and the same in kapwa psychology. Once ‘ako’ starts thinking himself as separate from kapwa, the Filipino “self” gets to be individuated and in effect, denies the responsibility of kapwa to the other as well as the self.

[104] Charles Kaut, *Utang na Loob: A System of Contractual Obligation among Tagalogs*, (Southwestern Journal of Anthropology no. 17, 256- 72, 1962), 266.

[105] Charles Kaut, *Utang na Loob: A System of Contractual Obligation among Tagalogs*, (Southwestern Journal of Anthropology no. 17, 256- 72, 1962), 266.

[106] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 43.

[107] Ibid, 45.

[108] Rogelia Pe-Pua, *Filipino Psychology: Theory, Method and Application*, 194- 200.

[109] Scavenger is the term used by Fr. William Reyes which pertains to the *Mamumulot ng Basura* in his work, *Manila Scavengers: The Struggle for Urban Survival*, (Ateneo de Manila University Press, Institute of Philippine Culture Research series No. 1, 1974).

[110] Rogelia Pe-Pua, *Filipino Psychology: Theory, Method and Application*, 194- 200.

[111] See the whole research on Rogelia Pe-Pua, *Filipino Psychology: Theory, Method and Application* (195-202)

- [112] Armando Bonifacio, *Hinggil sa Kaisipang Pilipino; Ulat sa Unang Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Pambansang Samahan ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Lunsod Quezon) 28.
- [113] Virgilio Enriquez, *“From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 67
- [114] Lyn Bostrom, *Filipino bahala na and American Fatalism* (Siliman University Journal no. 51, 399-413)
- [115] Virgilio Enriquez, *“From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 71.
- [116] Carmilo Osias, *The Filipino way of Life: The Pluralized Philosophy* (Boston: Ginn) 321.
- [117] Maria Adelaida Calayag, *“Repatriated OFWs transferred to New Clark City for 14-day quarantine”*, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Feb. 9, 2020, (Accessed on: August 4, 2020), Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1226234/repatriated-ofws-transferred-to-new-clark-city-for-14-day-quarantine#ixzz6UJXHPHUr>.
- [118] Coconuts Manila, *“Capas town mayor speaks out against plan to quarantine repatriated OFWs in New Clark City”*, February 7, 2020, (Accessed on: August 4, 2020), Retrieved from: <https://coconuts.co/manila/news/capas-town-mayor-speaks-out-against-plan-to-quarantine-repatriated-ofws-in-new-clark-city/>.
- [119] Virgilio Enriquez, *“From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 61.
- [120] Rita Mataganon, *“Pakikiramdam in Filipino Social Interaction”*, *Foundations of Behavioral Sciences: A Book of Readings*, (Social Science Committee: Diliman Quezon City, 1987) 26.
- [121] Rita Mataganon, *“Pakikiramdam in Filipino Social Interaction”*, *Foundations of Behavioral Sciences: A Book of Readings*, (Social Science Committee: Diliman Quezon City, 1987) 26.
- [122] Ibid, 28.
- [123] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 1969, 46.
- [124] Ibid.
- [125] Ibid, 47.
- [126] Ibid, 5.
- [127] Ibid, 49.
- [128] Ibid.
- [129] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 1985, 87.
- [130] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 1969, 48.
- [131] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 1985, 89.
- [132] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 1985, 90.
- [133] Rita Mataganon, *“Pakikiramdam in Filipino Social Interaction”*, *Foundations of Behavioral Sciences:*

*A Book of Readings*, 34.

[134] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 1969, 198- 291.

[135] Ibid, 200.

[136] Ibid, 85.

[137] Ibid, 251–52, 295

[138] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 65.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 64.

[143] J. Manning, *Interpreting Otherwise than Being: Emmanuel Levinas’ Ethics as First Philosophy*, (Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1993), 102.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 66.

[147] Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr., *Ang Metapisika at Etika ng Pakikipagkapwa- Tao*, 24.

[148] Virgilio Enriquez, “*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology; The Philippine Experience*, 61.