

Filipino Fortitude: Towards a Contextual yet Critical Social Virtue Ethics

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Boston College
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
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FILIPINO FORTITUDE
Towards a Contextual yet Critical Social Virtue Ethics

a dissertation by
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Abstract

Filipino Fortitude: Towards a Contextual yet Critical Social Virtue Ethics

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The dissertation will contribute not only to an appreciation and critical evaluation of fortitude in the Philippine context, but has a wider significance for the practice of virtue ethics. The thesis is that (a) virtue must be analyzed contextually, in specific social contexts, as well as (b) in dependence upon the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of the virtues, that (c) social virtue as well as individual virtue exists, and that (d) this social, contextual, Aristotelian-Thomistic approach to virtue provides a basis for a social-ethical critical evaluation and prescription for particular societies. If virtue ethics is to generate sound social normative claims, its argument needs to be based not merely upon the classical tradition, but also on a socially, historically and culturally aware analysis of the way virtues are fleshed out in context.

This dissertation will argue that the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition still has much to teach us about courage or fortitude, and in dialogue with contemporary social science still provides legitimate moral insights into fortitude today. Second, it will argue that virtue takes on a particular color or texture in specific social contexts, and will argue this in relation to the Filipino context: Philippine fortitude is Thomistic, with unique attributes of resilience and joy. Third, it will argue that it is necessary to engage in a social-ethical critique of social virtue, arguing that there are deficiencies in Philippine fortitude in that it lacks a crucial link with justice. This critical evaluation will lead to the elaboration of

an ethical and social imperative for the Filipino people to develop good anger to fuel a less passive, more assertive fortitude that is ordered to justice.

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FILIPINO FORTITUDE: TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL YET CRITICAL SOCIAL VIRTUE ETHICS

Introduction

Many books on virtue ethics begin their introduction claiming a renewed interest in virtue ethics and in a particular virtue. I can make no such claim with regard to fortitude. Fortitude, which is also known as the virtue of courage, has always been and continues to be a desperately relevant and interesting virtue regardless of time and culture and place.

There is a vast tradition of literature discussing courage and fortitude. Most people are familiar with the work of the classical thinkers on the topic, such as Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas. There are also more recent significant interlocutors such as Peter Geach, Craig Steven Titus, and Amelie O’Rorty. Despite all the literature on it, and the fact that courage is always praised in whatever era and society, courage remains an ambiguous term encompassing a wide range of human expression and action. In the words of Plato’s Laches, “For I fancy that I do know the nature of courage; but, somehow or other, she has slipped away from me, and I cannot get hold of her and tell her nature.”

In this dissertation I am particularly interested in the ways in which the ‘thin’ definition of this virtue is ‘thickened’ as it is appropriated by different people through different times, places and cultures. From Plato’s general musing on courage to Aristotle’s *andreia* where the virtue is integral to his conception of the *polis* and the living of good life, to Thomas Aquinas’ *fortitudo* which sees the need for courage to be stretched further, to encompass the life of a martyr who suffers torture and death for God, and Craig Steven Titus’ study of the virtue and the psychological conception of resilience

as integral to living well in present daily life. Every age and society is presented with their own conundrums of courage, as they live out courage in their life and society in a concrete and specific way that is uniquely their own.

My research project began with the intuition that Filipinos are a people with fortitude, following the contours and nuances of Thomas' *fortitudo* more closely than Aristotle's *andreia*. For Thomas, the paradigm for fortitude is the suffering and ultimately the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Filipinos feel a deep affinity with Christ's suffering. It is not merely sympathy or even empathy for Christ's suffering, but Filipinos experience suffering in their lives and they feel that Christ is with them in their suffering. In turn, they try to walk in Christ's shoes and experience his suffering so that they can truly feel as he did. One need only to read international newspapers on Good Friday to see Filipinos making headlines around the world with their practice of crucifying themselves in imitation of Christ. They do this in order to be with him in his suffering as they feel his presence in their own. They take seriously Christ's exhortation to *anamnesis*, and this cultural affinity with Christ's passion has influenced the kind of fortitude that they are disposed to develop.

This historically unique instantiation of fortitude in the Philippines raises important questions about the social nature of virtue and its relationship to culture, and effectively poses a serious challenge to virtue ethics. Is it possible to accept wholesale Aristotle's or Thomas's understanding of the virtues, even though they lived in very different religious and cultural contexts from our own? Does not a virtue like courage take on specific forms in different cultures? If so, is it possible to critique a particular cultural form of a virtue, such as Filipino fortitude? My sense was that, far from leading

to a normativity-free cultural relativity, virtue ethics had much to gain from a more intentional engagement with a specific social context.

This dissertation is therefore an exercise in, and argument for, a particular approach to social virtue ethics. Firstly, then, this dissertation will argue that the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition still has much to teach us about one particular virtue, namely, courage or fortitude, and in dialogue with contemporary social science still provides legitimate moral insights into fortitude today. Secondly, it will argue for the concept of social virtue: that virtues are not merely dispositions or traits that belong to individuals, but which can belong to groups or even nations. In the renewal of virtue ethics, the tendency has been to analyze virtues as traits of individuals. This is valuable, but incomplete. As we will see, in *The Republic*, Plato was concerned with virtues on both an individual and a social level, concerned with forming just citizens in order to have a just society. Plato believed that a society could be virtuous. Contemporary virtue ethics has yet to fully re-present this political or social aspect of virtue in its own reconstruction of this approach to ethics. Although contemporary theologians have undertaken this challenge to discuss virtue on the level of a structure or a community. Building on the existing understanding of ‘structures of sin’, Dan Daly proposes that calling them structures of vice is more precise than sin. Meghan Clark insists that the virtue of solidarity is both the virtue of the individual and the community. Solidarity is an acquired moral social virtue that the community can practice and develop a firm disposition in. The concept of social virtue is a crucial aspect of this more social approach.

Thirdly the dissertation will argue that virtue takes on a particular color or texture in specific social contexts, and will argue this in relation to the Filipino context: Philippine fortitude is distinctive and notable. Fourthly, it will argue based upon hermeneutic of suspicion of courage it is necessary to engage in a social-ethical critique of social virtue, arguing that there are deficiencies in Philippine fortitude in that it often lacks a crucial link with justice. This critical evaluation will lead to the elaboration of an ethical and social imperative for the Filipino people, to develop a less passive, more assertive courage uses good anger and that is intrinsically ordered to justice.

The dissertation will therefore contribute not only to an appreciation and critical evaluation of fortitude in the Philippine context, but has a wider significance for the practice of virtue ethics. The thesis is that (a) virtue must be analyzed contextually, in specific social contexts, as well as (b) in dependence upon the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of the virtues, that (c) social virtue as well as individual virtue exists, and that (d) this social, contextual, Aristotelian-Thomistic approach to virtue provides a basis for a social-ethical critical evaluation and prescription for particular societies. In the Philippine context, the valorization of fortitude, when critically examined from this perspective, provides the basis for a social-ethical prescription of the need to link fortitude and justice in the life of the Filipino people. More generally, it can be seen that if virtue ethics is to generate sound social normative claims, its argument needs to be based not merely upon the classical tradition, but also on a socially, historically and culturally aware analysis of the way virtues are fleshed out in context. The upshot of my thesis, in short, is an argument for *a contextual yet critical social virtue ethics*.

My assertion that Filipinos are a fortitudinous people is not a scientific claim. It cannot be backed up by statistics, figures, or scientific data. Unlike the book of Craig Steven Titus who puts the psycho-social concept of resilience in dialogue with Thomas Aquinas' virtue of fortitude using psychosocial studies, this dissertation asserts Filipinos are fortitudinous using a variety of sources that are not primarily scientific. If we look at the lives of people we consider fortitudinous, such as Thomas Moore, Nelson Mandela, or Jose Rizal, we believe they are fortitudinous because of the narrative of their life. Thus while I do use a few social scientific studies, I primarily use narrative for making my case, specifically the literature, history and practices of Filipinos.

However, I believe that my portrayal of the Filipino people as fortitudinous is nevertheless well founded, and that this thesis is of value for social ethics of a contextual, socio-ethical virtue approach. It provides a method of doing contextual, social virtue ethics within a particular social context that is easily replicable in other contexts. So someone from a US or African or other Asian context, for example, can gain insight from my discussion about how to do contextual, social virtue ethics within a particular context, and therefore apply a similar method to their very different situations. Otherwise virtue ethics risks being unduly focused on individuals, and even more importantly, blind to social and contextual aspects of the ethical questions involved.

The theoretical approach of this dissertation, therefore, will be one which navigates a middle course between a naive retrieval of fortitude which risks the reinforcement of historical patterns of oppression, on the one hand, and an overly suspicious rejection of fortitude as an irreversible, patriarchal ideal, on the other. The project will attempt to recover what is of value in theological, specifically Christian and

Filipino concepts of fortitude, while recognizing the need to correct and critique distorted and socially negative concepts of the virtue.

‘Courage’ and ‘fortitude’ are near synonyms in the English language and they refer to the same virtue. There are not two different virtues, but rather one virtue with different connotations. Thus, facing Achilles in battle, defying Nero, and defying orthodoxy seem to fall under the category of actions that is referred to as courageous, while setting forth to explore the North Pole or undertaking to raise a child with a physical or mental disability would more aptly be described as fortitude.

There is a connotation of longevity to fortitude while courage connotes immediacy. Albert Borgmann expresses this subtle difference in connotation by saying: “Fortitude refers more to the mental and patient side of encountering dangers well, while courage has a greater affinity to the physical and daring side of confronting perils.”¹ A more dramatic rendering by John Casey depicts courage as great deeds in the public eye and fortitude as quiet deeds in difficult situations. He says: “Indeed the idea that courage displayed in great deed on a public stage, and pursued for the sake of honour, is a greater and better thing than a ‘subjectively’ equivalent fortitude shown in, say patiently bearing sickness and obscure suffering, will strike many people now as not only misguided, but revolting.”²

Both words refer to the virtue whose essence is firmness of mind in the face of great danger or difficulty. The difference seems to lie in the context in which this firmness of mind is displayed. As they refer to the same virtue, I will often use the words

¹ Albert Borgmann, “Everyday Fortitude,” *The Christian Century*, November 14, 2001, 17.

² John Casey, *Pagan Virtue: An Essay in Ethics* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1991), 52..

courage and fortitude interchangeably. Often in discussing an author's exposition on the virtue, I will use the word that they used.

It is my thesis that Filipinos more closely follow Thomas Aquinas' description of the virtue as fortitude as it contains the connotations of suffering and patient endurance which characterizes Filipino fortitude and therefore better describes the type of courage that they possess. Thus I will use fortitude and fortitudinous to refer to Filipino courage. Also when I say that Filipinos are inclined to Thomistic fortitude, I don't mean that Filipinos are Thomists, but rather that they have an affinity with the connotations of suffering and patient endurance which are characteristic of Thomas' description of the virtue.

Outline of the Chapters

Chapter One: Classical Fortitude, Context and Critique

This chapter lays the normative foundation. It explores the historically dynamic aspect of fortitude by studying the development of the virtue from Plato, to Aristotle and then finally Thomas Aquinas on the virtue of courage, focusing primarily on Aristotle and Thomas as having each specified the virtue according to their particular contexts. Though many studies have been done on the virtues in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, the specific focus of this study is to uncover how the differences in their contexts functioned to influence their conceptualization of the virtue. Their concerns thickened the virtue, imbuing it with nuance and distinction. Aristotle was concerned with the virtue of courage that functioned to protect the *polis*. Thomas Aquinas, was concerned with the

ability to hold firm to truth and one's faith in the face of immense pressure and threat to one's life. This chapter compares and contrasts Aristotle's *andreia* to Thomas' *fortitudo*, delineating the virtue and the different acts that embody it. It also examines the semblances of *andreia* and the quasi integral parts of *fortitudo* as these are helpful in clarifying what is the virtue of fortitude and what is not virtue but only resembles it.

Chapter Two: Filipino Fortitude

Chapter two proceeds in two parts. The first part is a discussion of social virtue. Hints are found in Thomas' Summa but there has been recent interest by theologians in the social structures of virtue and vice and how they influence society.

The second part much longer part is descriptive, it is an exploration of the roots and origins of fortitude in the Philippine culture and society. In the Philippines, the kind of fortitude that Filipinos practice is due to the cultural influences that have historical and literary roots. One influencing historical factor is the prominence of the *Pasyon* in Filipino daily life. The *Pasyon* is a creative retelling and enactment of the passion and death of Jesus Christ that occupied a central role in the life of many Filipinos in the nineteenth century. Through the re-enactment of Jesus' passion, they are able to not only feel Jesus' suffering, but also feel that he is truly with them in their own suffering.

Another significant example of Filipino affinity to this particular type of courage, is exhibited in their choice of a national hero. Given a choice between Jose Rizal and Andres Bonifacio, Filipinos chose Jose Rizal who endured exile and martyrdom. Rizal's life more closely followed the example of Thomas' martyr, while Bonifacio's life more closely resembled that of Aristotle's soldier.

A more recent example occurred at the EDSA revolution. Again Filipinos exhibited a type of fortitude that was firm in its pursuit of justice to the point of being willing to suffer death for their liberation.

Not only did Filipinos embrace the concept of Thomas' *fortitudo*, but they further specified it by adding elements that are uniquely Filipino. They bring to fortitude an astonishing ability to express joy and humor in the midst of their suffering. Filipinos have fleshed out their inclination to fortitude, so that while it is grounded on a Thomistic framework, it possesses characteristics that are distinctively Filipino.

Chapter Three: A Constructive Critique of Filipino Fortitude

In this chapter, I will argue that according to the definition of the virtue, Filipino fortitude is often disordered. Fortitude must adhere to justice, and instead, it somehow functions to enable injustice to thrive. In order to foster the true, perfect virtue of fortitude that promotes flourishing, Filipinos need to recover more consistently the connection between fortitude and justice. Chapter three is a critique of Filipino fortitude. Fortitude, and in particular resilience, have become so highly valued in society, that they need to be treated with a hermeneutic of suspicion. We need to critically examine Filipino fortitude and determine whether it is truly a virtue and thus by definition brings flourishing and liberation as it has done in the past or whether it is an imperfect virtue that is not always ordered to justice. Why is resilience and quiet endurance of suffering so exalted and who profits from the silent suffering of so many people? Why are justice and transparency not equally exalted and promoted? While Filipinos have fleshed out the inclination to fortitude, they at times forget that the essence of the virtue is to hold firm for the sake of justice. True fortitude adheres to justice and promotes flourishing for all.

Injustice in Philippine structures, culture and society is rampant and this is in part due to the way that Filipino fortitude has developed. Filipino cultural traditions exalt resilience and silent suffering in a manner that promotes injustice.

Chapter 4: Anger, A Corrective to Filipino Fortitude

Filipino fortitude needs good anger to fuel the movement to practice justice consistently in order to perfect their imperfect virtue of fortitude. This is a difficult prescription, given cultural norms suggesting that displays of anger are inappropriate and anger is best kept in. Yet anger is necessary as it has constructive power that provides the impetus to take action against injustice and restore right relations.

Chapter 1: Classical Fortitude, Context and Critique

Introduction

Every culture has its own specifications as to what constitutes virtues and vices. James Keenan says that “virtue language absorbs local cultural presuppositions.”³ When one speaks of virtue, our understanding of virtue is colored by the way we have seen this virtue played out in our own local, specific contexts. “Courage, for instance, was far more physical and martial in the Athens of Socrates than it is today, where the life of the polis does not depend on citizens holding the battle line against the enemy’s charge. The virtue of courage is recast in the Letter to the Ephesians as spiritual resistance to cosmic forces of evil.”⁴ A virtue like courage has wide social impact and is recognized and validated by the particular society as a virtue which embodies their values. Thus the ideal of courage is conceived differently at different times and places depending on the trials and difficulties besetting a specific community, and on the values the community deems worthy of living and even dying for. Despite this individuation, there is an underlying common thread of ‘courage’ that renders courage in all cultural contexts recognizable. “Insofar as we share a nature we will share virtues, that is, if we live a fully human life.”⁵ Martha Nussbaum argues that this common feature of humanness is predicated on a sphere of common experience that people in all local cultures share:

The reference of the virtue term in each case is fixed by the sphere of experience - by what we shall from now on call the ‘grounding experiences.’ The thin or ‘nominal definition’ of the virtue will be, in each case, that it is whatever it is that being disposed to choose and respond

³ James Keenan, “The Role of Context in Cross-Cultural Theological Ethics,” keynote at *Moral Theology in East Asian Contexts* at Loyola School of Theology, Manila, August 15, 2008.

⁴ William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 33.

⁵ Stanley Hauerwas and Charles R. Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues: Theological Conversations With Ancient and Modern Ethics* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 118.

well consists in, in that sphere. The job of ethical theory will be to search for the best further specification corresponding to this nominal definition, and to produce a full definition.⁶

This dissertation takes up her challenge to search for the best further specification corresponding to the nominal definition of fortitude in order to produce a full definition. Specifically, it seeks a retrieval of fortitude from philosophical, Christian theological, and Filipino contexts that contributes towards the flourishing and equality of all. Fortitude, when allied with the virtue of justice, enables an account of the virtue which does not reinforce patterns of oppression, but, on the contrary disposes individuals and societies to resist injustice.

Inseparable from any discussion on the virtues is the context in which particular conceptions of fortitude flourished. “Virtues take on different meaning in various cultural contexts.”⁷ Progress in contemporary virtue ethical theory is achieved by fleshing out ‘thin,’⁸ nominal definitions of virtue with concrete experiences. A virtue like fortitude is ‘thickened’ through the details and particularities of fortitude in specific, local, cultural instances. Thus, in the discussion on the conceptions of fortitude, particular attention will be given to the context of the thinker.

The section on classical fortitude begins with an exposition of the virtue of fortitude in Plato who provides good nominal definitions of courage that all later thinkers engage. Then it will discuss the contributions of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas who develop a fairly broad framework for understanding courage and fortitude, much of

⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, “Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach” in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, XIII (1988): 33.

⁷ Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise*, 33.

⁸ See Nussbaum, “Non-Relative Virtues,” and Michael Walzer *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (South Bend, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006). Thin descriptions tend to be ideals stripped to the bare minimum. They allow for a sense of universality, such that all cultures can agree on respect for life which is a minimum ideal. How much respect and what constitutes ‘life’ in different cultures fill out and ‘thicken’ the minimal definition.

which continues to influence our conception of courage and fortitude in the present. Along with the exposition on their thought, I offer a critique of the areas where they limited the scope of the virtue. There are aspects to their development of the virtue where they fail to stay true to their initial vision of virtue and excellence. While not comprehensive, I hope to highlight the most significant propositions on fortitude and discuss the major areas of contention surrounding the nature of fortitude.

Plato

Plato's dialogue on courage, *Laches, or Courage*⁹, seems to ask more questions about the nature of courage than it answers. However, it manages to lay out the main points of contention on courage for the later Western ethical tradition. In a conversation between Socrates and two generals, Laches and Nicias, Plato lays out three important definitions of courage which continue to influence present day ideas on the subject. The first is proposed by Laches, that courage is about not running away but staying and fighting. This is a fair definition of courage and one that has become foundational over time. Socrates then points out an inconsistency if the definition is applied to cavalry whose very method of fighting is "flying as well as pursuing". Socrates makes an excellent point that there is a kind of courage that involves running away. And the contradictions in courage being about standing and fighting and courage also being about flying and pursuing contribute to the ambiguity inherent in courage. To complicate matters further, Socrates discusses a variety of contexts where courage is displayed differently. Laches' definition of courage as standing and fighting was courage for

⁹ Plato, *Laches, or Courage*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, n.d., <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/laches.html>. (Hereafter referred to as *Laches* with Stephanus numbers)

heavily armed foot soldiers, but what of other types of soldiers and other situations of danger?

Soc. ...For I meant to ask you not only about the courage of heavy-armed soldiers, but about the courage of cavalry and every other style of soldier; and not only who are courageous in war, but who are courageous in perils by sea, and who in disease, or in poverty, or again in politics, are courageous; and not only who are courageous against pain or fear, but mighty to contend against desires and pleasures, either fixed in their rank or turning upon their enemy. (*Laches*, 191.c-d)

When pressed again for a definition, Laches suggests that a more encompassing description that covers these different circumstances is that “courage is a sort of endurance of the soul” (*Laches*, 192.b). Socrates points out that endurance may sometimes be foolish, and in order for it to be courageous, it must be wise endurance. In fact he notes that endurance may be “harmful and injurious” if not accompanied by wisdom (*Laches*, 192.d). To which statement Laches agrees in theory but not in actuality. This becomes apparent as Socrates continues to question him.

Soc. Again, take the case of one who endures in war, and is willing to fight, and wisely calculates and knows that others will help him, and that there will be fewer and inferior men against him than there are with him; and suppose that he has also advantages of position; would you say of such a one who endures with all this wisdom and preparation, that he, or some man in the opposing army who is in the opposite circumstances to these and yet endures and remains at his post, is the braver?
La. I should say that the latter, Socrates, was the braver. (*Laches*, 193.b)

This illustrates a particularly salient point about the difficulty of defining courage. It seems obvious that courage must be linked to wisdom, and yet one can't help but feel that the soldier going into battle with worse odds is braver than the one who enters with a superior force behind him.

In his final point on courage, Nicias affirms that “courage is the knowledge of the grounds of confidence and fear” (*Laches*, 196.d). This particular definition is the essence

of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas' conception of courage which will be expounded on presently. However, it fails to satisfy Socrates who soon concludes the conversation by agreeing, along with Nicias and Laches that they do not really know what courage is.

Plato makes three important observations about courage: courage is about standing firm in the face of danger, courage is the wise endurance of the soul, and courage is the knowledge of the grounds of confidence and fear. And while he modestly concludes through Socrates and the generals Nicias and Laches, that he does not really know what courage is, his arguments are the foundation upon which subsequent thinkers have built their varied conceptions on courage.

Aristotelian *Andreia*

Aristotle, adopts much of Plato's thought on courage and transforms it to fit his ethic. For example, he uses Nicias and Socrates conclusion about courage being about the grounds of confidence and fear but instead of leaving it at knowledge of these grounds, he explains that *andreia* or courage is "a mean state in relation to feelings of fear and confidence"¹⁰ (*N.E.*1115.a). Not only is courage about knowledge of the grounds of fear and confidence, but the ability to mediate between them. Courage is the mean in between the two dispositions of cowardice which is someone who is overly fearful, and of rashness which is someone who is overly confident.

In clarifying his doctrine of the mean, Aristotle says "I call mean in relation to us that which is neither excessive nor deficient, and this is not one and the same for all... not the mean of the thing, but the mean relative to us" (*N.E.*1106.a-b) The mean is not

¹⁰ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. James Alexander Kerr Thomson, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Penguin Classics, 2004). (Hereafter referred to as *N.E.* with Bekker number)

applied mathematically but contextually, relative to the person. No specific act can be determined to be the mean, or the courageous act unilaterally for all persons. The courageous act is what the courageous man would do, in the right way, for the right motive, for the right grounds, to the right person, at the right time (*N.E.*1106.b). Contrary to what it may seem, that moral standards are being relaxed by making the virtuous act relative to the person, the mean actually makes moral standards all the more rigorous. All the conditions have to be met for the act to qualify as virtuous, and failing to meet even one of these conditions results in the action being vicious instead of virtuous. For example if one is courageous for the right reason, in the right way and towards the right person yet not at an appropriate time, then the act is not courageous. There are so many ways to get it wrong, and only one way to get it right (*N.E.*III.6.1106.b). As Aristotle says: “The man who faces and fears (or similarly feels confident about) the right things for the right reason and in the right way and at the right time is courageous” (*N.E.* III.6.1115b15).

Courage for Aristotle involves having the right attitude towards fear. Unlike contemporary popular culture which admires a sort of fearlessness, he insists that the person with courage needs to fear and that the fearless person does not truly possess courage. The courageous person is afraid but does not let this fear overwhelm or incapacitate or distract him or her from serving the good.

The courageous person is not only able to control fear but to distinguish the right object of fear. Determining the right object of fear continues to be a relevant point in the present day where we have become overcome by a proliferation of phobias.¹¹ What is the

¹¹ See books that discuss fear in present day culture. E.g. Philip Alcabes, *Dread: How Fear and Fantasy Have Fueled Epidemics from the Black Death to Avian Flu* (Public Affairs, 2009).

right thing to fear? Do we display courage in overcoming our fear of spiders, or our fear of open spaces? Aristotle says there are things that ought to be feared and things that ought not to be feared, and not all the things that we fear afford us the opportunity to be courageous. While we properly fear all evil, not all evil gives one the opportunity to be courageous. For example, overcoming fear of poverty and disease does not provide one with the opportunity to be courageous. Yet he asserts that the man who feels no fear in the face of these is not courageous. We should fear them in the right way, yet they do not present one with the opportunity to be courageous because dying from disease or poverty is not a noble end. A key tenet of Aristotle's philosophy is that an act is virtuous only if done for a noble end.

The courageous man is concerned with the most fearful thing in human experience, death. Yet even death does not always qualify as the right object of courage, for example death from disease or from a storm at sea is not grounds for courage according to Aristotle. Death must spring from the right circumstance "this describes deaths in warfare where the danger is greatest and most glorious" (*N.E.* 1115a30). One hears echoes of Laches argument, in this depiction by Aristotle, "courage can be shown in situations that give scope for stout resistance or a glorious death..." (*N.E.* 1115b5). Thus courage is only displayed in situations where death is faced in a noble manner.

Aristotle's Context

Aristotle's depiction of courage is rooted deep within his context and his politics. These two factors play an influential role in determining the nature of Aristotle's courage. Aristotle held that our *telos*, our happiness is found in the rational activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. However, he had a deeply relational understanding of virtue that

is best understood when seen as intertwined with, and supportive of, the ideals of the *polis*. The object of all things in life and indeed, of life itself is the good (*N.E.* 1094a). Aristotle sees the good life as achievable only in the context of the *polis*. "...the city comes into existence as a defense organization, to maintain life, and continues in existence to achieve the good life (when people realize how much better things can be in the new circumstances)."¹²

In light of the staggering importance and at the same time, vulnerability of the *polis*, one better understands why Aristotle held courage as inextricably linked to glorious, heroic death in battle. Living in a time of political turmoil and unrest, defense of the polis was paramount. In his own words: "while it is desirable to secure what is good in the case of an individual, to do so in the case of a people or a state is something finer and more sublime." (*N.E.* 1094.b) Death in battle can be courageous because it serves the polis, but not if the agent fights for base reasons. "For Aristotle the humanness of the good and the happiness and the virtue with which the *Nicomachean Ethics* is preoccupied are things essentially social and political."¹³ This offers a plausible explanation for his insistence that true courage is a virtue that serves the *polis* and thus is displayed in situations that offer the potential for a glorious self-sacrificial death for the good of the city as illustrated by the following.

Thus for the good of the city, I may be required to fight as a hoplite in the line of battle, and to submit myself to the orders of my commander, who may issue the command not to retreat despite a fierce onslaught from the enemy. Meeting that requirement is my social and political duty, which I shall perform as such because I am in Aristotle's sense a just person:

¹² Francis Sparshott, *Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), 149.

¹³ Malcolm Schofield, "Aristotle's Political Ethics," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Richard Kraut (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 311.

someone motivated to act out of regard for the interests of others (here, the community at large), not simply in my own interest.¹⁴

Aristotle's Five Semblances of Courage and a Critique

This insistence that the courageous person act out of regard for the interests of others is most evident when he discusses the first of the five dispositions that resemble courage but lack some requisite element to qualify them as truly courageous. Civic courage, Aristotle holds is most like true courage because civic courage is also a moral virtue. Civic courage is virtuous because it arises from the desire to be noble and to avoid shame (*N.E.*1116.a).¹⁵ It does not fulfill the requirements for true virtue because it is motivated by self-interest. People who display civic courage are acting primarily out of the desire for social approbation and fear of disgrace. The truly courageous person acts not out of self-interest but for the good of the *polis*.

Those [who possess civic courage] who withstand extreme danger for that sort of reason are not thinking primarily about the crucial thing: the good of the community. In fact, they are thinking primarily about themselves – of what might result for them as individuals, not of the interests of others.... Contrast those who face the possibility of death in battle because they accept that that is what the good of the community as interpreted by the *polis* requires. They recognize what it is that is greatest and most admirable about “the greatest and most admirable danger” – they see where the truest honor lies. Their behavior springs accordingly from a courage that is true because it is perfected by justice.¹⁶

For Aristotle, a second disposition that masquerades as courage is displayed by men whose lengthy experience and superior fighting skills gives the appearance of courage. Here he refers to mercenaries or professional soldiers who make their living by fighting and thus have more experience and expertise than regular citizen soldiers. This

¹⁴ Ibid., 315.

¹⁵ Here, there is an ambiguity in Aristotle, as he says that civic courage is virtuous, yet at the same time calls it a semblance.

¹⁶ Ibid., 316–17.

knowledge of their superiority makes them seem more courageous than the citizen soldier. However, when the opposing force is overwhelming, they are the first to desert while the citizen soldiers die at their posts. Aristotle claims that they do not behave as courageous men because they fear death more than dishonor (*N.E.1116.b*).

Certainly, if one is talking of mercenaries, of fighting for money without a particular loyalty or attachment to a place, the motive alone disqualifies it from being considered virtuous courage. However, is experience itself necessarily an impediment to the disposition of courage? Here, it seems that Aristotle is contradicting his own definition of virtue in general and courage in particular. First, in his definition of virtue in general, he specifies that virtue is acquired by habit (*N.E.1103.a*). We do not become virtuous or courageous by performing one virtuous or courageous act. We become virtuous by repeatedly performing virtuous acts that instill in us a virtuous disposition. An experienced soldier may have acquired his experience by performing courageous acts on the battle field. His experience and skill should include not exclude him from the ranks of the truly courageous.

Second, Aristotle defines courage as right attitude towards feelings of fear and confidence and discusses what we ought and ought not to fear. Yet in his description of this facsimile to courage, he implies that the experienced soldier who faces overwhelming odds should stay and face death rather than run away in disgrace. This brings us back to Socrates' critique of Laches; Is courage about standing and fighting no matter the circumstances? Is there any value in retreat? By his own definition, courage is both the correct attitude towards feelings of fear and confidence and knowledge of what to fear, it seems that courage is not only about standing one's ground and fighting but

also recognizing when it would be more *phronetic* to retreat. While standing ground in the face of overwhelming odds in order to die defending one's city is certainly a heroic death, is it in fact, necessarily virtuous?

This insistence that the courageous man face overwhelming odds and pick death over disgrace makes sense when viewed in light of Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of the polis. "Aristotle and other writers thought as they did about courage because they understood man as essentially a political animal, whose virtues must finally be understood in a political context."¹⁷ But this emphasis on death over disgrace is an aspect of Aristotle's account of courage that is an unhelpful maxim in many contemporary contexts.

First in the context of soldiers fighting, death over disgrace is useful as a motivational encouragement, but in actuality, when the odds are truly overwhelming and there is opportunity to retreat, retreat might in certain circumstances be the virtuous thing to do. There is wisdom in the adage "those who run away live to fight another day." Second, in the context of women, to tell women that death is preferable to disgrace is particularly insensitive to the vulnerabilities of their condition. Despite the fact that a woman as a victim of an attack has done nothing disgraceful; many women feel ashamed and disgraced. Some cultures express their preference for death over this kind of disgrace for a female member of their family and there are women who share this sentiment. Yet is this a sentiment that we want to encourage? Must one choose death over dishonor in this situation? Third, a person who loses his wealth in a bad economic turn might prefer death over the disgrace of living with failure and this is merely a form of cowardice.

¹⁷ Casey, *Pagan Virtue*, 52.

Finally, the ideal of death before disgrace encourages a false, machismo kind of courage. What one might interpret as disgrace or dishonor may be trivial. Perceived insult to a loved one is hardly an offense worth dying or killing for, though the death or the killing may be deemed glorious by some. Nor is it courageous to instigate violence over petty things. There is a valuable lesson to be learned from Aristotle's insistence on glorious death on the battlefield for the good of the *polis*. It emphasizes that courage is about important, weighty matters, not paltry squabbles. There are times when true courage requires restraint from aggressive impulses. There is courage in *not* fighting or refusing to fight.

Aristotle identifies 'spirit' as another disposition that resembles courage. Anger or pain provokes a certain spirit that functions like courage. Acting under the influence of anger or pain gives people a semblance of courage. This semblance springs from an animal-like passion, and he uses the example of beasts who charge those who injure them or take away their food. It's the kind of courage born from a gut reaction rather than from a good motive. He says "human beings, too, feel pain when they get angry and pleasure when they retaliate; but those who fight for these reasons, although they may be good fighters, are not courageous, because they are acting not from a fine motive, nor on principle, but from feeling." (N.E.1117.a)

The danger in this sort of blind rage is fairly obvious, one only needs to think of that burst of daring that fuels road rage or crimes of passion that very much resembles *andreia*. There is great danger when emotion wholly takes a person over and makes one lose one's capacity to make rational decisions. Yet Aristotle is careful not to divorce reason from feeling. "The quasi-courage that is due to spirit seems to be the most natural,

and if it includes deliberate choice and purpose it is considered to be courage.” (N.E.1117.a) It is natural to feel anger and pain at the threat of the loss one’s life and one’s city. These are emotions that are appropriate to feel yet emotions must be subject to reason. There are times when men act courageously out of spirit, a sort of impetus that propels one, born of a strong emotion that is nevertheless tempered by reason. This is authentic *andreia*.

The fourth and fifth semblances of courage are very similar. People with these semblances act courageously while under a misapprehension of reality. The fourth semblance is sanguineness or optimism. Whereas true courage is the mean between fear and confidence, the sanguine are over confident. Aristotle uses the metaphor of the drunk person (N.E.1117a). Alcohol gives people a false sense of courage, a feeling of being omnipotent. The sanguine soldier thinks he’s a better fighter than he actually is. He is ignorant about himself, and the extent of his abilities. The fifth semblance is a result of ignorance about the external circumstances. This semblance is similar to the preceding one but the ignorant person lacks the feeling of false self-confidence. The ignorant are courageous only while they are unaware of the true circumstances and once they perceive the reality they readily run away.

These two semblances of courage closely resemble the vice associated with the excess of courage, a rashness of will. Both fourth and fifth semblances depict people who rush in without stopping to acquaint themselves with the actual circumstances of the situation or to take honest stock of their own abilities. In not knowing the particular circumstances, they are unable to make the right decision about how to act rightly in the given situation. They look courageous because they rush in, unafraid. Yet upon learning

the true nature of the danger, their courage is exposed for false bravado. So while this resembles courage, it would be more aptly categorized as instances of its excess, the vice of rashness, which is the result when courage lacks prudence.

A Critique of Aristotle

Aristotle lived in a contested region during a turbulent era. Peace was the necessary condition to live a virtuous life which Aristotle presumes is the goal of every citizen. In order to achieve peace conducive for the good life, the polis must have good soldiers to defend it; soldiers who don't run at the first sign of danger. Thus we come to the heart of his paradigm of the noble warrior, a paradigm that continues to infiltrate present day media as the most prominent embodiment of courage.

Literature through the ages, from classic epics like Gilgamesh and the Iliad to Japanese samurai legends, Westerns, and present day graphic novel superheroes document our obsession with heroes who represent the ideal of *andreia*. There are few paradigms as universal as the noble, courageous warrior, embodied in one way or another in every culture throughout every age. Aristotle's paradigm strikes a chord that resonates in people's hearts. There's a visceral acknowledgement of the virtue of *andreia*, people can look at figures in their history and legends and distinguish the courageous from the cowardly. There is general consensus that courage is good, noble, worthy of praise, and admiration. Philosopher, Amelie O' Rorty says: "We are the inheritors of a history of the transformations of *andreia*: the courage we have been taught to admire and to acquire is a generalized attitude, the descendent of traditional *andreia*, still carrying addictively combative, magnetizing cognitive dispositions."¹⁸

¹⁸ Amelie O. Rorty, "The Two Faces of Courage," *Philosophy* 61, no. 236 (1986): 167.

Yet, despite the universal resonance which the paradigm of the noble warrior engenders and without detracting anything from the validity and goodness of this way of expressing the virtue, I argue that Aristotle's picture of courage is too narrow. His insistence on courage being properly displayed by the willingness to die a glorious death on the battlefield is the weakest aspect of his development of the virtue. To limit the scope of courage to the soldier facing death on the battlefield contradicts the idea that the character or moral virtues such as courage are human virtues that dispose a human to live an excellent human life. Those called upon to exercise courage in Aristotle's sense are few; and even they, encounter situations other than battle that require courage.

Indeed, by Aristotle's own definition, virtuous acts are accomplished by doing the right thing in the right manner, at the right place, in the right time, and towards the right person and about finding the mean – not arithmetically, but relative to the person. By limiting the circumstances to death on the battlefield, Aristotle denies that there are other times and places in which facing death might be deemed courageous. He denies the subjectivity of the mean to the person.

Another reason his picture of courage is too narrow is because he is unwilling to acknowledge courage in the endurance of the tedious banalities of life. Aristotelian courage is displayed only as a public virtue. Its value resides in its importance to the common good. An act is noble and thus courageous because it benefits the *polis*. There is no sense that courage is a virtue that is presently needed most frequently in the *oikos*, the daily grind of our everyday lives.

In the present day, we have all witnessed and acknowledged great courage in many aspects of life not limited to the battlefield. If courage is about facing death, then

there are a multitude of ways in which people face death that has nothing to do with the traditional battlefield. We might call courageous those who face life-threatening illnesses with grace and equanimity, or those who survive natural disasters such as storms that bring great waves and floods, and even those who suffer man-made disasters such as financial ruin without losing all hope. We might even go beyond the strict adherence to facing death and deem courageous those who endure great loss and hardship and find within themselves the strength and determination to rebuild their lives. And ironically, the decision not to take part in a war as a soldier may be more courageous than fighting valiantly, as in the case of conscientious objection to an unjust conflict. We also recognize the great courage in people like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King for working to effect change in unjust political systems and refusing to use violence as a means to achieve their ends.

Aristotle's socio-political context, his concern with the good of the *polis*, is what ultimately thickens his conception of the virtues, particularly *andreia*. Aristotle was concerned with man flourishing temporally. He wanted man to achieve the fulfillment of his human nature through cultivation of the virtues and the *polis* is the most conducive environment for man to live out these virtues. Thus his virtues are those that are geared towards the preservation of the city and the flourishing of man on earth.

This is apparent in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle names the eleven virtues he finds significant. He begins with *andreia* as his primary virtue, which is indicative of its foundational place in the lineup. *Andreia* is the virtue that ensures the defense of the *polis* from attack and destruction and thus allows for a life of flourishing through the virtues. If we were to rank Aristotle's virtues according to Maslow's

hierarchy of needs, *andreia* would place at the bottom of the pyramid as the most elemental virtue that is needed as a precondition for growth and flourishing. A secure city brought about by the courage of the Greek soldier is the perfect environment for the magnanimous man, Aristotle's pinnacle of virtue to emerge.

While much of Aristotle's development of courage is invaluable to understanding courage as a virtue, the practice of his theory has had consequences that are problematic for a contemporary retrieval of courage, specifically, the way he depicts courage as a martial virtue linked to the battlefield and a glorious death. His paradigm of the glorious warrior is iconic and has captured the imagination of people in every period and culture. Unfortunately, Aristotle's glorious warrior is shackled to the battlefield. Aristotle's inextricable linking of *andreia* to the battlefield and the glorious death has implications for the development of personal flourishing as well as the flourishing of a society that exalts this type of courage.

The next section will explore Thomas Aquinas theory of fortitude as he takes and transforms *andreia* into *fortitudo* in a development that frees fortitude from the battlefield and expands its scope for application.

Thomas Aquinas' *Fortitudo*

Introduction

Although he draws extensively from Aristotle ethics, Thomas' virtues are influenced significantly by his Christian worldview. "The world of the courageous Christian is different from the world of the courageous pagan. This is so because of their

differing visions of the good which exceed the good of life itself.”¹⁹ Aristotle believes that a person’s nature is fulfilled by living a life of rational activity in accordance with the virtues. He is concerned with the virtues directing man to his natural end which is a life of flourishing here on earth.

Thomas Aquinas draws on his Christian heritage to both incorporate and expand Aristotle’s theory of the virtues. In keeping with Aristotle, Thomas allows that people have a natural end, which can be attained through perfecting their nature by acquiring the moral virtues. However, for Thomas, this is a necessarily incomplete vision of humanity because it does not account for a person’s relationship to God. John Inglis comments that “while philosophers see the commonalities between Aquinas and Aristotle, they less often consider the fact that Aquinas’s conception of the highest good and its relation to the functional character of human activity led him to break with Aristotle by replicating each of the acquired moral virtues on an infused level, a level that both parallels and extends the work of the acquired virtues.”²⁰ For Thomas, human nature has the potential to receive God’s grace which enhances one’s end, transforming it from an imperfect to a supernatural one. Thus, when human nature is graced with infused virtue, this allows one to reach one’s supernatural end which is to enter into communion with God.

Thomas structures his account of the virtues into three theological virtues and four cardinal²¹ virtues, the hinges on which the virtuous life rests. All other moral virtues are a “potential part” of a cardinal virtue, meaning they are secondary virtues that share in the power or nature of the primary cardinal virtue. Patience, for example, is a virtue annexed

¹⁹ Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues*, 160.

²⁰ John Inglis, “Aquinas’s Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues: Rethinking the Standard Philosophical Interpretation of Moral Virtue in Aquinas,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 27, no. 1 (January 1999): 4, doi:10.1111/0384-9694.00003.

²¹ From the Latin word, *cardinalis*, related to *cardo*, meaning hinge.

to fortitude as a particular form of fortitude that has to do with enduring difficult conditions for a prolonged amount of time without being overcome by despair.²²

The three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity are infused by the grace of God. They owe their origin to God's grace, and by our free choices we can respond and further dispose ourselves to receive grace. So while one receives the gift of faith, the practice of acts proper to faith such as prayer and liturgy can dispose one to receive grace that strengthens one's faith. These infused virtues function primarily to perfect man in his relationship with God.

The four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. For Thomas, prudence is what helps one consider and evaluate a situation to determine the just course to take. Prudence directs the intellect; it helps one in determining the 'mean.' Justice directs the will to what is good and is concerned with giving to each one their due. Fortitude and temperance are virtues whose main function is to preserve justice. Fortitude directs the irascible passions while temperance perfects the concupiscible passions. These are passions of repulsion and attraction respectively. There are things we are repulsed by, things we fear, such as pain or torture or spiders. And there are things we are attracted to, such as food, drink and sex. Fortitude and temperance moderate these passions so that our fear of danger, or our desire for pleasure do not deter us from following right reason and doing the good.²³

The cardinal virtues have traditionally been recognized as acquired virtues. They perfect man in his dealings with people in the world. In this sense, they are very much like the virtues that Aristotle espouses in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which function to

²² Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Christian Classics, 1981). II.II.136.1. (Hereafter referred to as ST with part, question, and article number)

²³ ST II.II.123.12

preserve the *polis* and lead man to flourishing. The cardinal virtues are acquired through habituation of acts proper to virtue. For example, one becomes just by behaving in a just manner, i.e. by dealing fairly with people that one works with.

In most of the Thomistic studies in the last century, the category of infused cardinal virtues has been viewed as ambiguous and largely disregarded. In fact main stream theory that most Thomistic scholars subscribe to is that Thomas appropriated and developed the cardinal virtues from Aristotle and then ‘Christianized’ his system by adding the theological virtues. Recent scholarship on infused virtues²⁴ questions this dominant characterization of Thomas’s work and suggests that while his exposition of the virtues has basic elements from Aristotle, Thomas’ Christian framework significantly modifies the virtues. Although the cardinal virtues may be practiced without faith and grace, their fullest perfection is only attained through grace

Perhaps Thomas draws more from Augustine than is generally acknowledged. In his treatise *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, Augustine unites the four cardinal virtues into love of God.

For if God is man’s chief good, which you cannot deny, it clearly follows, since to seek the chief good is to live well, that is to live well is nothing else but to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind; and, as arising from this, that this love must be preserved entire and incorrupt, which is the part of temperance; that it give way before no troubles, which is the part of fortitude; that it serve no other, which is the part of justice; that it be watchful in its inspection of things lest craft or fraud steal in, which is the part of prudence.²⁵

Similarly, Thomas calls charity, which is friendship with God, the form of all virtues. The virtues are lived to the fullest when they are directed by charity. He manages

²⁴ See Angela McKay’s dissertation on The Infused and Acquired Virtues in the Aquinas’ Moral Philosophy.

²⁵ St. Augustine, *The Morals of the Catholic Church*, n.d., para. 46, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1401.htm>.

to avoid completely sublimating the cardinal virtues to charity, as Augustine does, by developing them as virtues in their own right in the *Secunda Pars*. And yet neither does he allow the cardinal virtues to achieve their most perfect form solely through a person's own abilities as they are in Aristotle. Thomas' dexterity in weaving together the different elements of philosophical and Christian tradition yields an entirely new breed of virtue, the infused cardinal virtue. We acquire cardinal virtues through habituation; though the most perfect form of them is achieved only through grace.

One obvious example is in his treatise on justice.²⁶ He begins by making distinctions between the law of man, natural law and divine law. He says that it is divine law that everything belongs to God, yet God bestowed the use of all things on man. So it is natural for man to own goods and the law of man regards the distribution of these goods. In cases of dire need, divine law in its original intention, which is to provide for all men, takes precedence over the law of man. Thus he says that a man in dire need may take that which is not his (under man's law) for his sustenance as that is God's original intention for the goods of the earth. While this may be called theft under man's law, it is not, rightfully speaking (under divine law) theft. The fair distribution of goods falls under the purview of the cardinal virtue justice, but acknowledging that everything was created by God for the providence of all men and acting on this knowledge elevates the virtue to the level of infused justice.

The following paragraphs will tackle, Thomas' exposition on fortitude, beginning with points of similarity between Aristotle's *andreia* and Thomas' *fortitudo*. Thomas takes much of the basic description of the virtue from Aristotle yet goes far beyond Aristotle's original parameters for the virtue. The most significant divergence is his

²⁶ ST II.II.66

choice of martyrdom as paradigmatic for the virtue, it is at this point that his exposition of fortitude transcends the category of acquired moral virtue into infused moral virtue.

General and Specific Fortitude

The cardinal virtues have two senses, first they are general virtues and second they are specific virtues. As general virtues, they possess elements which are found in all other virtues. Thus fortitude, as a general virtue, is the “steadfastness of mind”²⁷ which is a requisite condition of each and every virtue. General fortitude refers to firmness of character, a constancy of disposition, a resoluteness to hold to the good despite the difficulties surrounding it. For example, for a person to be honest she must be truthful not only on a single occasion but she must regularly tell the truth, particularly in difficult situations. While telling the truth belongs to the virtue of honesty, the power to be persistent and steadfast in telling the truth in the face of the difficulty of telling the truth and great temptation to do otherwise belongs to the general virtue of fortitude.

A special virtue, in contrast, is a general virtue as applied to the matter where it is most needed and praised. Fortitude in its special sense “strengthens the human mind against the greatest of dangers, namely dangers of death.”²⁸

The Mean between Fear and Daring

Like Aristotle, Thomas sees the special virtue of fortitude as moderating fear and daring. Fortitude prevents us from letting our impulses of fear or daring dictate our actions,²⁹ “the task of the virtue of courage is to remove the hindrance which holds back

²⁷ ST II.II.123.2

²⁸ ST II.II.123.5

²⁹ But most particularly fear. Because fear is more difficult to moderate than daring as will be explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

the will from following reason.”³⁰ It is the virtue which belongs to our irascible faculties and its object is the difficult good. Thus when confronted with danger to ourselves, Thomas hopes that our love of ourselves, the impulse to protect ourselves from harm will not override the good we cling to by our reason. This good to which we are to remain steadfast is the good that does justice to our love for God, ourselves and our fellow creatures.³¹ Fortitude is about controlling our initial impulse to run from danger. Instead, it invites us to consider our situation and once we have evaluated our position, to act according to the good. Do we put the lives of others at risk by running? Is it in our power to prevent harm from occurring? Perhaps, we are just as culpable for recklessly risking our lives in battle as we are for cowardly placing our lives above those of others.

Like Aristotle who places courage as the mean between fear and confidence, Thomas’ fortitude is concerned with mediating between feelings of fear and daring. Both the ability to resist fear by standing firm in the face of danger and the ability to attack when appropriate are essential to fortitude. If one allows fear to take over in a dictatorial way, where one makes decisions that are wholly guided by fear, then one becomes fearful or cowardly. If however, one errs on the opposite end of the spectrum, by being so daring that one discounts all dangers, then one is rash or reckless. Both cowardice and recklessness signify disordered love; cowardice when one loves oneself or one’s comfort over the good, and recklessness betrays a lack of love for oneself and often others. Fortitude is the ability to achieve one’s personal mean between fearfulness and fearlessness. If one were to envision a spectrum, the mean would not be in the mathematical middle of the spectrum, but rather it is determined according to the person.

³⁰ ST II.II.123.3

³¹ ST II.II.124.1

Thus, the mean is subjective in the sense that it is subject-relative, not in the sense that it is whatever one happens to think it is. Confronted by the same situation two men may take different courses of action and both courses may be virtuous.

Both Aristotle and Thomas envisioned the mean falling closer to daring because daring is easier to regulate than fear.³² Like Aristotle's description of men who are overconfident, men who are too daring are often so because they underestimate the danger. Once they become aware of the magnitude of the danger that confronts them, they become fearful and run away. Danger is itself a powerful deterrent to daring and attack but has the opposite effect on fear. When someone fearful is confronted with danger, fear is increased rather than diminished. Thus in an extremely dangerous situation where daring and attack have been curbed by the external circumstances, to persevere in fortitude one must perform the more difficult task of reigning in fear.

Importance of Fear

Fear is an essential aspect of fortitude. This may seem like an obvious point, but is in fact a point of disagreement among contemporary philosophers. For example, Philippa Foot and Douglas Walton do not consider the emotion of fear to be a necessary aspect of courage. In their analysis, they point out that courage is directed towards two objects, the objective danger and the subjective emotion of fear. Given two men with varying degrees of fear in a situation of equal danger, they pose the question:

Who is more courageous, the man who carries out a dangerous act fearlessly or the man who carries out an equally dangerous act despite his considerable fear? Clearly the answer depends on whether the obstacle to be overcome, to make the act courageous is the dangerous or difficult circumstance or the fear in facing the danger. If the external obstacle is the thing of foremost importance in defining courage then the fearless man

³² ST II.II.123.6

may seem the more courageous, or perhaps both may be equally courageous. If the internal object of one's own fear is the most significant factor, then clearly the fearful man is the more courageous..... I have so argued because sometimes courage is simply not correlated with the presence or absence of fear at all. Rather, courage is related to the extent of risk, danger, or difficulty. But to some extent, a mark of courage is how one overcomes the obstacle.”³³

Foot and Walton are concerned that the fearful person who overcomes fear is judged to be more courageous than a person who faces and overcomes the same obstacle without feeling any fear. Thus they are reluctant to pin the exemplification of courage on overcoming internal fear, preferring a more objective standard – the external obstacle. Foot says “The emotion of fear is not a necessary condition for the display of courage; in face of a great evil such as death or injury a man may show courage even if he does not tremble.”³⁴ They find it problematic to call a fearful man more courageous than one who is unafraid yet accomplishes exactly the same goal. Thus, they conclude that courage should be defined in relation to the objective danger or difficulty. What is important is the obstacle to be overcome, the person's relation to fear in overcoming that obstacle should not be the gauge by which we determine courage.

Walton says: “A courageous act is one in which, based on the good intentions of the agent in attempting to realize a worthy goal, he or she overcomes great danger or difficulty whether afraid or not.”³⁵ For Walton then, fear is irrelevant. Both Foot and Walton seek to divorce courage from its attachment to fear. They acknowledge that while

³³ Douglas N. Walton, *Courage* (University of California Press, 1986), 92.

³⁴ Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 12.

³⁵ Walton, *Courage*, 14.

the emotion of fear frequently accompanies it, fear is not a fundamental quality of the courageous act.³⁶

In direct contradiction, Pieper asserts that fear is an essential response in the face of real danger and a mark of true fortitude.

It is possible to be genuinely brave only when all those real or apparent assurances fail, that is, when the natural man is afraid; not, when he is afraid out of unreasoning timidity, but when, with a clear view of the real situation facing him, he cannot help being afraid, and, indeed, with good reason. If in this supreme test, in face of which the braggart falls silent and every heroic gesture is paralyzed, a man walks straight up to the cause of his fear and is not deterred from doing that which is good; if, moreover, he does so for the sake of good – which ultimately means for the sake of God, and therefore not from ambition or from fear of being taken for a coward – this man, and he alone is truly brave.³⁷

This debate about fear and its correlation to fortitude is an old one. Thomas insists that “dangers and toils do not withdraw the will from the course of reason, except in so far as they are an object of fear.”³⁸ Fear is our perception of danger or evil. If we fail to perceive danger or evil when they confront us, this reflects disordered love. Thomas emphasis on the internal object of the virtue, fear, is consistent with the nature of fortitude as an internal disposition. Virtues shape our passions. Thus, fortitude habituates our irascible passion to stand firm amidst the desire to flee.

In posing the question ‘who is more courageous, the man who carries out a dangerous act fearlessly or the man who carries out an equally dangerous act despite his considerable fear?’ Foot and Walton set up a false dichotomy implying one man displays courage and the other man does not and we must decide whether we want a fearful man as our model of courage or a fearless one. A Thomist could argue that this scenario

³⁶ Ibid., 82.

³⁷ Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 126–27.

³⁸ ST II.II.123.3.ad.2

presents inadequate information for making a judgment; it is possible that neither man is truly courageous. It is possible that the fearful man fears too much and the fearless man fears too little. Courage is about fearing the right things in the right way.

Foot goes so far as to say that “on the other hand even irrational fears may give an occasion for courage: if someone suffers from claustrophobia or a dread of heights he may require courage to do that which would not be a courageous action for others.”³⁹ Yet according to Thomistic virtue theory, if fear is irrational, then one cannot be a courageous person. This is clearer when explained through the relationship between temperance and continence. The person who has irrational concupiscible desires but overcomes them is continent or self-controlled, which falls short of temperance in the full sense, which orders one’s desires correctly. Similarly, for Thomas, one is truly courageous only in so far as one fears according to reason. Someone who has a dread of heights is not a courageous person. They may try to cultivate a courageous disposition by making an effort of will to overcome their irrational fear of heights. Yet their fortitude is at best on the level of continence, the seed of the virtue at its inception but not in its fullness. The courageous person fears the right things, at the right time and in the right way.

Walton conceives of courage as an act and not a disposition so he explicitly relates it to the external object and not the internal one. This opens the door to the type of bravery that General Skobleff describes.

I believe that my bravery is simply the passion for and at the same time the contempt of danger. The risk of life fills me with an exaggerated rapture. The fewer there are to share it, the more I like it. The participation of my body in the event is required to furnish me an adequate excitement. Everything intellectual appears to me to be a reflex; but a meeting of man to man, a duel, a danger into which I can throw myself headforemost,

³⁹ Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*, 12.

attracts me, moves me, intoxicates me. I am crazy for it, I love it, I adore it. I run after danger as one runs after women; I wish it never to stop.⁴⁰

This is an illustration of a man who meets danger and difficulty and immediately desires to overcome it, who does not even pause to consider the risks and the threat to his own life when faced with danger and who lets nothing stop him in his drive to overcome it. The picture of courage General Skobeleff presents is problematic in three ways. First, it is problematic because it is not clear that he risks danger for a worthy and noble cause. And on this point all agree. The end for which danger is risked must be a good end. If General Skobeleff confronts and conquers danger for a worthy end then according to Foot and Walton, his actions on this mission are courageous actions. Thomas and Aristotle have more stringent criteria, directing one's actions to a good end is only part of the virtue of fortitude. It fulfills the criterion that says the action must be done for the right end. Yet there are other criteria, it must also be done in the right way, and at the right time and towards the right people.

Second, neither Aristotle nor Thomas would consider General Skobeleff a courageous man but a vicious, reckless one because his daring is unfettered. Courage is the mean between fear and daring. A disposition that is inclined to be daring must be moderated and reigned in to be virtuous. A vicious disposition is the result of failing to find the mean relative to one's self.

Third, General Skobeleff lacks appropriate fear. Thomas and Aristotle would say that a fortitudinous person, far from doing away with fear, fears rightly. This means he fears the right things, in the right way, and at the right time. Being virtuous consists in finding the mean; moderating daring as well as fear.

⁴⁰ Lee H. Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas* (SUNY Press, 1990), 18.

Thomas considers fear a descriptive emotion. Fear is neither good nor evil in itself, but it functions as an internal indicator of a future evil. This evil emerges in the form of a threat to what one loves. Fear arises from love and seeks to avoid the loss of what we love. “And thus it is love that causes fear: since it is through his loving a certain good, that whatever deprives a man of that good is an evil to him, and that consequently he fears it as an evil.”⁴¹ So even if one doesn’t outwardly betray fearfulness, one must be capable of feeling fear if only to indicate that there are things that one values. Someone who fears nothing likewise loves nothing; and therefore the fearless man is not virtuous.

This relationship between love and fear and fortitude provides a great corrective to a contemporary, popular image of a hero as someone who is unafraid of death. Many modern hero tales in popular media feature a hero who has been a victim of a great tragedy, usually a terrible, tragic loss of the hero’s family. These icons become fearsome warriors, and take upon themselves the most dangerous of missions, deliberately courting death in an effort to find a noble way to reunite themselves with their loved ones. Some popular, contemporary examples that feature this tragic hero are the movie *Gladiator* or the long running television series *24*. They portray heroes that have been so scarred by tragedy that life no longer holds any meaning for them. They are so crazed by the pain of the loss of their loved ones that they take up the fight against evil, particularly the evil that has robbed them of their loved ones in an aggressive and daring way. They are fearless because they no longer love life or themselves. They hope for death, and while this makes them wildly popular romantic heroes, if they do not love life nor fear its loss in a reasonable way, then they are not virtuous for they do not possess virtuous dispositions.

⁴¹ ST I.II.43.1 cf. I.II.42.1

Thomas' exposition on love follows a strictly ordered hierarchy that is based on the measure of goodness inherent in the object. "Each thing is loved according to its measure of goodness"⁴² What is most inherently good is most deserving of love. "Therefore God ought to be loved chiefly and before all out of charity: for He is loved as the cause of happiness, whereas our neighbor is loved as receiving together with us a share of happiness from Him."⁴³ We are by nature attracted towards the good and we love according to a hierarchy of goodness. "The Christian loves his life, says Thomas, not only with the natural, life-asserting forces of the body, but with the moral forces of the spiritual soul as well. Nor is this said by way of apology. Man loves his natural life not because he is "a mere man"; he loves it because and to the extent that he is a good man."⁴⁴ Being alive is a condition of our enjoying any of the goods of this life, and death takes these all away.⁴⁵ Ordered fear corresponds to ordered love, we fear most that which threatens to take away that which we love the most. Drawing on the above argument, Thomas concludes "for a man's love for a thing is demonstrated by the degree to which, for its sake, he puts aside the more cherished object and chooses to suffer the most hateful. Now obviously, of all blessings of life a man loves life itself most, and on the other hand hates death most, especially when accompanied by the pains of physical torture."⁴⁶

⁴² ST II.II.26.2.ad.1

⁴³ ST II.II.26.2

⁴⁴ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 120.

⁴⁵ Rebecca Konyndyk de Young, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas's Transformation of the Virtue of Courage," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 11, no. 02 (2003): 153, doi:10.1017/S1057060803000069.

⁴⁶ ST II.II.124.3

Infused Fortitude

Although Thomas stretches Aristotle's vision of courage significantly, he was clearly concerned with retrieving the virtue in a specifically Christian context. Thomas' conceptualization of *fortitudo* drastically diverges from the Aristotelian *andreia* precisely on this point, martyrdom. Aristotle's model of *andreia* is the soldier who bravely fights to defend the *polis*. Thomas' primary model for Christian fortitude is naturally Jesus Christ, who suffers death on the cross for love of humankind, and it is this act of fortitude that exemplifies the virtue.

By making martyrdom, particularly Christ's martyrdom, the culmination of fortitude, Thomas elevates fortitude to a Christian level and asserts the need for grace to perfect the virtue. One way in which he asserts the need for grace is by differentiating civic and infused fortitude; civic fortitude is concerned with preserving human justice and infused fortitude is concerned with preserving divine justice.⁴⁷ Civic fortitude corresponds with Aristotle's *andreia*; it is acquired, may be practiced by anyone and is fully expressed in the soldier who fights bravely for the *polis*. Infused fortitude is practiced for the end of faith and divine justice. It's most perfect form is achieved when one is inclined by charity to sacrifice one's life for a higher good.⁴⁸ Charity, an infused virtue, directs the act of martyrdom so that one allows oneself to be martyred out of love for God. In addition, Thomas' inclusion of the precepts and the gifts in his exposition of fortitude clearly point to the need for grace in order to perfect the virtue.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ ST II.II.124.2.ad.2

⁴⁸ ST II.II.124.2.ad.3

⁴⁹ Angela Mary McKay, "The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas' Moral Philosophy" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2005), 139, <http://etd.nd.edu/ETD-db/theses/available/etd-04152004-125337/>.

The precept of fortitude makes it clear that fortitude is concerned with divine law, “that man may adhere to God.”⁵⁰ In the precepts, he distinguishes the type of fortitude exhorted by the Old and New Testaments.⁵¹ People in the Old Testament are primarily concerned with physical survival and thus needed to learn to fight physically to survive. In the New Testament the concern is eternal life and so the battle is a spiritual one. In the succeeding sections this will be made apparent as we see Thomas parallel the development of the New Testament as he constantly extends what Aristotle says to accommodate the spiritual battle.

In the corresponding gift of fortitude, the Holy Ghost gives man the “confidence of overcoming all danger.”⁵² First it gives one confidence to complete one’s work for God, even though it may be beyond one’s natural ability. Second it gives one the confidence of attaining eternal life, and so gives one the strength to continue despite the many difficulties that beset one. Finally it gives one the confidence to overcome paralyzing fear that comes from overwhelming danger. Angela McKay claims that the gift of fortitude “completes the virtue; by giving man confidence in the end he longs for, it makes it possible for him to persevere in the virtue over the course of a life.”⁵³

Power and Weakness in Martyrdom

Josef Pieper neatly encapsulates the significance of martyrdom for Christian fortitude saying, “Fortitude that does not reach down into the depths of the willingness to die is spoiled at its root and devoid of effective power. ...readiness for martyrdom is the essential root of all Christian fortitude. Without this readiness there is no Christian

⁵⁰ ST II.II.140.1

⁵¹ ST II.II.140.1.ad.1

⁵² ST II.II.139.1.ad.1

⁵³ McKay, “The Infused and Aquired Virtues in Aquinas’ Moral Philosophy,” 139.

fortitude.”⁵⁴ This readiness must be reflected even in lesser acts of fortitude. This shift in paradigm from soldier to martyr changes the dynamic of the virtue significantly. It subverts the traditional understanding of power in the world and presents a model of power based in weakness, in the willingness to die instead of to fight and kill.

While Aristotle is concerned with power shown through acts of bravery, Aquinas subverts the traditional understanding of power, to portray power in the distinctly Christian sense. True power is found not in the overwhelming display of strength that soldiers show on a battlefield, but rather true power comes from love, and is exemplified in the willingness to be weak and vulnerable. “Here, the position of weakness is not simply a matter of lacking brute strength and available resources, but refusing to use them on occasions when their use would be self-defeating or inappropriate.”⁵⁵ Rebecca de Young makes an important distinction between being truly helpless and being unwilling to use your strength to help yourself. Those who are truly helpless, are powerless to do anything about their situation. There are those who have power and ability but refuse to use it to be coercive. Those with power and strength tend to use these abilities to advance themselves. Refusing to use one’s power in a self-serving way is a rejection of the power structure of the world. “Power is so manifestly of the very structure of the world that endurance, not wrathful attack, is the ultimately decisive test of actual courage, which, essentially, is nothing else than to love and to realize that which is good, in the face of injury or death, and undeterred by any spirit of compromise.”⁵⁶ Both those who are weak and those who are willing to be weak require greater inner strength than those who are outwardly strong and use their power to achieve their ends.

⁵⁴ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 117–18.

⁵⁵ de Young, “Power Made Perfect in Weakness,” 165.

⁵⁶ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 131.

One does not need strength and power to be fortitudinous. Fortitude is realized most fully in the willingness to suffer and die for faith and justice. Further, Thomas' emphasis on suffering and endurance versus attacking serves to democratize the virtue.

The main point of making martyrdom the paradigm is to show that courage can be expressed as much or more in suffering as it can in striking out against a threat... To make martyrdom the model to follow allows anyone who is able to suffer to echo this supreme example of courage in their own lives, and leaves physical power, with its attendant gender and age limitations, out of the picture. Anyone who is weak, vulnerable, or unable or unwilling to use force is a candidate for practicing this virtue – including women, children, the elderly, the economically and socially disempowered and even the disabled.⁵⁷

Aristotle's *andreia* is most accurately translated as manliness, courage for men in their prime. Thus conceptualized, *andreia* can only be practiced by a subset of a subset of humanity. Women are naturally excluded from his conception of *andreia*; and within the subset of men, *andreia* further requires only those fit for battle - it cannot be expressed by men who are too young, too old or infirm. Only this small segment of the population can even qualify to be *andreia*, whereas Thomas opens *fortitudo* to all. After all, what experience is more universal than suffering? Everyone experiences suffering, the young and the old, the rich as well as the poor, the sick and the healthy. Suffering like death is a universal experience.

De Young points to the importance of suffering for fortitude as it is the avenue by which we might acquire inner strength of soul. "Its position of suffering and helplessness requires increased strength of soul – and this is the heart of courage. *Precisely by virtue of her position of greater weakness*, the martyr must exercise greater inner strength in order to overcome the greater difficulty occasioned by her fear and outer weakness."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ de Young, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness," 170.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 164.

When we are faced with an external threat we are given an opportunity to grow interiorly. The common aphorism, that trials and difficulties build character, points to this facet of fortitude. The martyr who faces great difficulty and fear, needs to exercise great inner strength to overcome her external weakness. It is through facing trials and difficulties that we practice our inner strength and develop firmness of soul which is the very heart of fortitude.

This emphasis on *sustinere* [to withstand] which we shall examine in a moment in relation to suffering and martyrdom has the potential to exalt suffering as a good. However, Thomas is careful to note that one must not go looking for occasions of suffering but one must be able to bear suffering when it is unavoidable.

Certain things are connected with an act of virtue as implying a willingness, namely that given the situation he is prepared to act in accord with reason. This seems especially noteworthy in the case of martyrdom, which is the right endurance of sufferings unjustly inflicted. Now people ought not to provide each other with opportunity for unjust action, but if someone does treat us unjustly, we ought to endure this in a balanced way.⁵⁹

His use of the adjective ‘balanced’ in relation to endurance suggests that one must not merely endure injustice, but endure it in a balanced way which implies that endurance is not a passive sort of enduring but rather an active, resisting sort of enduring.

Beyond *Aggredi*: Quasi Integral Parts of Fortitude

Thomas’ paradigm shift to the martyr has vast implications for fortitude. He enriches the scope of the virtue, first by exalting endurance over attack, and second by enriching the scope of the virtue beyond the battlefield. This will be elaborated upon in the following pages as the implications are meaningful for the retrieval of fortitude today.

⁵⁹ ST II.II.124.1.ad.3

The paradigm of the patient martyr enduring persecution for the highest good corresponds to the principal act of *fortitudo*, endurance. Thomas names two chief acts in *fortitudo*; *sustinere* and *aggredi*. The act of *aggredi* is the ‘daring’ part of fortitude, similar to Aristotle’s *andreia*. It is the initiating, active part of fortitude, the part that advances, undertakes, begins, attacks.⁶⁰ *Sustinere* is the sustaining, enduring, bearing, suffering part of fortitude.⁶¹ In line with his paradigm shift to martyrdom, Thomas deviates from Aristotle’s conception of *andreia* which emphasizes *aggredi* and names *sustinere* the principal act of fortitude.⁶² Thomas’ insistence on endurance as the primary act is easily understood in light of the passion of Christ and the suffering endured by the early Christian martyrs.

Virtue is about excellence, what is more excellent is more virtuous, and this often means that what is more difficult to achieve is more excellent and therefore more virtuous. Thomas recognizes that intuitively attack seems to be more difficult than endurance. Endurance connotes passivity while attack connotes activity, exertion, effort. It seems natural then to think that attack would be the central action, yet he concludes the opposite. “Endurance is the more important of the two acts of courage. To this and not to aggression, which is courage’s secondary action, martyrdom is linked.”⁶³ Endurance is more central to fortitude than attack. It is important to note that Thomas sees endurance, not as the passive, defeated and resigned sort of endurance, but a firm, active, resisting endurance. Pieper explains: “To suffer and endure is, furthermore, something passive

⁶⁰ Roy J. Deferrari. *Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1986.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² ST II.II.123.6. “The principal act of *fortitudo* is endurance to stand immovable in the midst of danger rather than attack them.”

⁶³ ST II.II.124.2.ad.3

only in an external sense.... Enduring comprises a strong activity of the soul, namely, a vigorous grasping of and clinging to the good; and only from this stouthearted activity can the strength to support the physical and spiritual suffering of injury and death be nourished.”⁶⁴

Thomas gives four reasons to substantiate his claim that *sustinere* is more difficult and therefore more important.⁶⁵ First, because when faced with danger, it is more difficult to restrain fear than to restrain daring, so enduring fear is more difficult than attacking when appropriate. Daring is easier to restrain because the very nature of danger is itself a deterrent to daring. Fear is more difficult to moderate because the nature of danger serves only to increase fear. Second, one usually initiates the attack from a position of superior strength and one endures from a weaker position. “Daring assumes that one has the ability to overcome or evade the evil that threatens; fear acknowledges that one does not.”⁶⁶ It is more difficult for the person enduring the attack because he is in a position of disadvantage and faces almost certain death. Third, for a person enduring an attack, the danger is immediate, whereas for the attacker, the danger is in the future, “the attacker has no immediate cause for fear.”⁶⁷ It is more difficult to deal with present danger than with future danger. “The one who acts aggressively from daring acts with the presumption that the evil can still be warded off, that it need never become present. The martyr, of course, cannot and does not. The martyr’s evil *will* and *does* become present (inevitably) because she *cannot* keep it at arms’ length...”⁶⁸ Fourth, there is an element of time and waiting and not knowing when the attack is coming when we endure that makes

⁶⁴ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 128.

⁶⁵ ST II.II.123.6

⁶⁶ de Young, “Power Made Perfect in Weakness,” 164.

⁶⁷ ST II.II.123.6.ad.3

⁶⁸ de Young, “Power Made Perfect in Weakness,” 164.

it more difficult than attack which can be done suddenly, on impulse. The quality of the time spent waiting for the attack to come has the quality of waiting for the proverbial axe to fall. It is not simply waiting, but waiting in a state of fear and anxiety. When a challenge arises it is easier to meet it with quick action than to wait with it hanging over your head. These four reasons show how endurance is more difficult than attack despite our natural instinct to the contrary.

It is important to note that we are not talking about a different virtue, but rather the same virtue nuanced differently. Aristotle's *andreia* and Thomas' *fortitudo* are the same virtue of courage or fortitude. However, their different concerns have caused them to envision the virtue differently. Aristotle's concern with the safety of the *polis* gives *andreia* a martial quality. While Thomas' concern with becoming a disciple of Christ leads him to emphasize the importance of enduring suffering while holding to the good.

Indeed, Aquinas's "fortitude," while used synonymously with "courage," suggests that what is demanded is a kind of endurance in the face of difficulty, danger, or oppression, a steadfastness of purpose and vision that will not be swayed even by threat of death. Hence, for Aquinas, patience and perseverance are integral to the very meaning of courage. To return to the metaphor, this emphasis connects to Aquinas's settled view that the moral life is a journey to God during which we must learn to endure much.⁶⁹

Beyond the Battlefield

An important distinction to note is the manner in which Thomas subtly shifts the locus of the war. While he agrees with Aristotle that "fortitude is properly about the dangers of death in battle,"⁷⁰ Thomas has a wider interpretation of what 'death in battle means.' He gives us two definitions. In the first definition, he agrees with Aristotle, a man shows courage by facing death in battle. In the second definition he expands

⁶⁹ Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues*, 159.

⁷⁰ ST II.II.123.5.

fortitudo to include what he calls ‘private combat,’ where an individual gives righteous judgment even under the threat of death.⁷¹ A person does not have to be a soldier in battle to be fortitudinous. A judge, receiving death threats to acquit a guilty person, exhibits fortitude if she does not let fear for her own safety deter her from being just. While still a public virtue because it benefits the common good, it can be lived in a private manner. This widening of perspective is heavily indebted to Thomas’ overarching concern for the martyr.

The shift in emphasis from exteriority to interiority remedies the flaw in Aristotle’s concept of courage that makes it seem overly focused on the physical act of fighting and an external enemy. In Aristotelian *andreia*, the virtue is internal but it is expressed in an external way through a battle that is fought in the public eye. The enemy is external, tangible and physical. In Thomistic *fortitudo*, the battleground is shifted from the public to the personal; the conflict is internalized as one strengthens one’s will to cling to the difficult good. Thomas gives examples of *fortitudo* in all sorts of situations such as when a man, despite fearing a fatal infection, attends to a sick friend, or when he undertakes a sea voyage for a godly purpose despite fear of pirates or ill weather.⁷² He widens the scope of *fortitudo* to situations other than the battlefield in which death is nevertheless risked. “Aquinas treats fortitude in such a way that its ends are transformed by charity, so that death in battle no longer stands as its paradigm.... Charity demands care for the sick and dying, and the risk of one’s life in it is courageous, no less than the risk for the common good in battle.”⁷³ In contrast, Aristotle says that *andreia* can only be

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² ST II.II.123.5.

⁷³ Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues*, 159.

displayed when the death that is faced is noble, such as on the battlefield and not from sickness, or a storm at sea.

Of course Aristotle teaches that courage is an interior disposition that moderates the feeling of fear a soldier may experience and allows him to stand firm on the battlefield and hold to the good despite that fear. Yet, he has a very martial image of courage, one that is best displayed when gloriously facing a physical enemy to the public acclaim of a city. Aristotelian courage is concerned primarily with tangible goods – the lives and safety of the citizens. This is consistent with his politics and the importance of *andreia* in society as providing people with the opportunity to attain ultimate happiness. Without adequate defense, a city is constantly at the mercy of its enemies and acutely vulnerable to the chaos which war brings. Chaos is an eminently unsuitable environment in which to practice the virtues and achieve *eudaimonia*. So while in the long run, *andreia* is necessary for the achievement of these high ideals, in its immediate and pressing sense, *andreia* is focused on battle: an external enemy and the preservation of the lives of the populace. When an enemy is bearing down on one, running away risks not only one's own life, but the lives of those one is defending and an entire way of life that the city is promulgating.

This preoccupation with the war colors his courage. Human history shows that wars are fought for physical goods, such as land and resources, and secular ideals, such as power and honor. With so much attention focused on these material goods, Thomas points to a different battle ground and the importance of the spiritual goods of faith and justice. He shifts the emphasis on the locus of the virtue from an exterior action to an interior one. He agrees that there remains something about the virtue which lends itself

necessarily to the display of external acts. In fact some contemporary philosophers believe that courage is found in individual acts which are judged to be courageous and not in the disposition of the courageous person.⁷⁴ But Thomas insists on the foundation of fortitude being an interior disposition “the action of the soul clinging most bravely to some good, so that it does not give way under pressure of physical distress.”⁷⁵ Individual acts of fortitude may or may not display a person’s fortitudinous disposition. This echoes a definition by Plato who says “courage is an endurance of the soul” and which Aristotle takes up as the spirit in which one meets dangers. But Aristotle and much present day literature gloss over the endurance of the soul and focus on the activity of attack and meeting a glorious death. Thomas brings us back to the interiority of the virtue which is not simply the glorious attack on the battlefield but the firmness of spirit that clings to the good despite it frequently being tedious.

Thomistic fortitude more directly emphasizes the importance of spiritual goods, particularly those of faith and justice. There is no overt physical enemy, nor obvious physical goods to be gained. “Now it is evident that in martyrdom man is firmly strengthened in the good of virtue, since he cleaves to faith and justice notwithstanding the threatening danger of death, the imminence of which is moreover due to a kind of particular contest with his persecutors.”⁷⁶ People become martyrs because of their adherence to their ideals of faith and justice even when confronted with the threat of death. In the Aristotelian scenario, when an enemy is bearing down on one, one has a choice to hold firm to the good and stand one’s ground or to flee and risk the loss of honor, life, family and city. The choice is simple, stand firm and fight or give in to fear

⁷⁴ See Walton, *Courage*.

⁷⁵ ST II.II.123.6.ad.2

⁷⁶ ST II.II.124.2

and flee. The risks in Thomistic fortitude are subtler, indirect. The choice is not between fighting or fleeing in a physical sense, but between holding firm to one's ideals or renouncing them. The battle is internal, between competing goods and the physical good risked is one's own life and perhaps the lives of those close to one. By simply renouncing one's faith and beliefs the torture and threat to one's own body would cease. Thomas asserts that the ideals of faith and justice are more important than life itself.

Beyond Faith

Thomas exhibits a more comprehensive view of martyrdom than a contemporary understanding that links martyrdom to dying specifically for one's faith. For example, there is current controversy in the Church over the canonization of Archbishop Oscar Romero which rests on an acknowledgement of his martyrdom. Because he was assassinated as a result of his stand against the oppression of the poor in El Salvador, there is a question of whether this 'qualifies' him to be named a martyr since he died a casualty in the struggle for justice and not directly for faith. One could argue that this directly contradicts Thomas' claim that "not only the man who suffers for verbal confession of faith suffers as a Christian but also the man who suffers in striving to perform any good act, or avoid any evil for Christ's sake."⁷⁷ He clarifies this further by saying that "the good of one's country is paramount among human goods: yet the Divine good, which is the proper cause of martyrdom, is of more account than human good. Nevertheless since human good may become Divine, for instance when it is referred to God, it follows that any human good in so far as it is referred to God, may be the cause of

⁷⁷ ST II.II.124.5.ad.1

martyrdom.”⁷⁸ Human good is not something separate from but rather, something subsumed under divine good. That which is truly good for humans is part of God’s divine will. Any human good that is directed to God, such as the struggle for justice for the poor that Romero was involved with, becomes a divine good. So anyone acting in a way that is good is doing so according to God’s will. Someone who is put to death for acting according to God’s will is a martyr.

Beyond Death

For Aristotle, *andreia* is the disposition that helps one to face the possibility of death in battle. He is inflexible on this point. *Andreia* is not displayed when one overcomes one’s fear of drowning to take a voyage by sea, nor when one overcomes one’s fear of public speaking to become a great rhetorician. His discussion on the five semblances of courage only serves to further concretize the limited nature of his conception of courage. *Andreia* is only about dealing with one’s fear of death, specifically when that death is a glorious one on the battlefield. This understanding of fortitude is problematic for a present day retrieval of the topic. How many among us serve on the public battlefield? This condition drastically limits the number of people who are able to practice fortitude.

On the surface, Thomas agrees with Aristotle that fortitude is about death. He says “moreover it belongs to the notion of virtue that it should regard something extreme: and the most fearful of all bodily evils is death, since it does away all bodily goods.... Therefore the virtue of fortitude is about the fear of dangers of death.”⁷⁹ And because

⁷⁸ ST II.II.124.5.ad.3

⁷⁹ ST II.II.123.4

virtue is the perfection of a power⁸⁰ the true test of fortitude is in the ability to stand firm and hold to the spiritual good in the face of the ultimate test, the fear of loss of one's life.

It seems that Thomas's paradigm is more difficult to attain than Aristotle's. Aristotle only requires that his paradigmatic soldier face death on the battlefield. The courageous warrior might very well triumph and overcome his enemies. There is no possibility for this sort of triumph in Thomas's paradigm who links death immutably to his model of fortitude. "Wherefore a person is not called a martyr merely for suffering imprisonment, or exile, or forfeiture of his wealth, except in so far as these result in death."⁸¹ The only way one can become a martyr is to die.

Despite this, Thomas manages to widen the scope of *fortitudo* to situations of fear other than fear of death. While strictly speaking fortitude is about the fear of death specifically, he states "fortitude regards danger of death chiefly, and other dangers consequently;"⁸² thus opening the door for the exercise of fortitude in other arenas as it regards other dangers consequently.

Following Pieper, one manner in which we can develop Aquinas's view of the realm of fortitude is by looking at death through a philosophical hermeneutic. Pieper explains that all pain and hardship we suffer in our lives, all that is negative and evil is ultimately a foreshadowing of death.

"To be brave actually means to be able to suffer injury.... By injury we understand every assault upon our natural inviolability, every violation of our inner peace; everything that happens to us or is done with us against our will; thus everything in any way negative, everything painful and harmful, everything frightening and oppressive. The ultimate injury, the deepest injury, is death. And even those injuries which are not fatal are

⁸⁰ ST I.II.55.1

⁸¹ ST II.II.124.4.ad.3

⁸² ST II.II.124.4.ad.3

prefigurations of death; this extreme violation, this final negation is reflected and effective in every lesser injury.”⁸³

Therefore, in this contemporary Thomist view, fortitude is the disposition that helps us to deal with these injuries that are negative, painful, harmful and oppressive. This understanding of fortitude broadens the stage on which fortitude is exhibited beyond death to life. Not only death, but the daily trials and tribulations of life are caught up in the comprehensive net of this virtue.

The way Thomas does this is through the potential parts of the virtue of fortitude: “because what fortitude practices in face of the greatest hardships, namely dangers of death, certain other virtues practice in the matter of certain minor hardships and these virtues are annexed to fortitude as secondary virtues to the principal virtue.”⁸⁴ These include magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance. So, through the concept of potential parts of the virtue of fortitude (i.e. virtues which are annexed by their proximity to fortitude in some way) he extends the virtue beyond dangers of death in a restricted sense, to give us strength to face the trials and tribulations of daily life.

Potential Parts of Fortitude

Fortitude has four potential parts, these four virtues function very similarly to fortitude differing only in the degree of danger that confronts one. Whereas fortitude regards the greatest of all dangers - those of death, these secondary virtues habituate the irascible appetite to hold to the good in the face of hardships other than death. They are potential parts in so far as when they are used to face the dangers of death then they are a part of fortitude, and when the hardship faced is not death then they are secondary virtues

⁸³ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 117.

⁸⁴ ST II.II.128.1

annexed to the primary virtue, fortitude. Now, because fortitude is composed of *aggredi* and *sustinere*, the potential parts are divided accordingly. Magnanimity and magnificence belong to *aggredi* while patience and perseverance belong to *sustinere*.⁸⁵

Magnanimity is the “stretching forth of the mind to great things.”⁸⁶ The magnanimous man is a man who recognizes that he is extraordinarily blessed by God and so has the ability to achieve great things and who then sets out to accomplish these great things.⁸⁷ The parable of the talents depicts the magnanimous person perfectly through the man who receives five talents and turns it into ten. He is given more and uses his gifts to accomplish great ends. The magnanimous man is someone who does not allow natural insecurity or fear of failure to deter him from accomplishing the great things he envisions. In this way it is like fortitude but oriented towards hope of “obtaining the greatest goods.”⁸⁸

The vices opposed to magnanimity are the presumption, ambition, vainglory and pusillanimity. Presumption, ambition and vainglory err on the excess of magnanimity. For example, presumption is the attempt to reach beyond one’s ability⁸⁹ whereas the magnanimous man knows well the extent of his abilities and their limits and behaves accordingly. There is a similarity between Thomas’ presumptuous person and Aristotle’s sanguine person who resembles *andreia* because of a false optimism. Aristotle’s sanguine person thinks he is a better fighter than he actually is. Thomas’ presumptuous person has a higher opinion of his abilities than they warrant. He may presume that he is a great artist and can recreate Michelangelo’s work on the Sistine chapel when in reality his art

⁸⁵ ST II.II.128

⁸⁶ ST II.II.129.1

⁸⁷ ST II.II.129.3

⁸⁸ ST II.II.129.5

⁸⁹ ST II.II.130.1

work is mediocre at best. Both the sanguine and the presumptuous are mistaken about the actual state of their abilities and so presume to be more than they are. They are both foolish men who let pride obscure their vision so that they do not see themselves clearly.

Pusillanimity, the defect of magnanimity, is a much more serious sin than presumption.⁹⁰ Thomas says it “makes a man fall short of what is proportionate to his power, by refusing to tend to that which is commensurate thereto.”⁹¹ It is the giving in to our fears and insecurities so that we do not even attempt to live up to our abilities and talents. Thomas says that “just as the magnanimous man tends to great things out of greatness of soul, so the pusillanimous man shrinks from great things out of littleness of soul.”⁹² Pusillanimity springs from ignorance of one’s own ability or from fear of failure.⁹³

Thomas claims that ignorance of one’s own ability in this case is not a lack of prudence but “laziness in considering one’s own ability.”⁹⁴ Let us consider the story of the good Samaritan. Did the priest and the Levite walk by the wounded man from fear of him or from ignorance of what they could do to help him? Perhaps, in part they were afraid of becoming unclean, but perhaps they were also pusillanimous from ignorance, because they did not stop to adequately consider whether they could help or not, it was easier to walk by and ignore the wounded man. Keenan proposes that the heart of sin lies precisely in this act of walking by and ignoring those that need our help. He says sin is the failure to bother to love.⁹⁵ The sin of failing to bother to love springs from

⁹⁰ ST II.II.133.2.ad.4

⁹¹ ST II.II.133.1

⁹² ST II.II.133.2

⁹³ ST II.II.133.2.ad.1

⁹⁴ ST II.II.133.2.ad.1

⁹⁵ James F. Keenan, *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 47–65.

pusillanimity. Many times we do not help people out because we are too comfortable and complacent and caught up with our own affairs to consider what we can do for them. Although Thomas calls this cause of pusillanimity ‘ignorance of our ability’ it is not true ignorance but rather vincible ignorance which is ignorance that can and should be overcome. Pusillanimity springs from this attitude of complacency, of being concerned only with those things that affect us directly, of wanting to keep our world narrow and comfortable.

Fear of failure, is being in the grip of a fear that is paralyzing and prevents us from living up to our full potential. Thomas says “the fainthearted is worthy of great things in proportion to his ability for virtue, ability which he derives either from a good natural disposition, or from science, or from external fortune, and he fails to use those things for virtue, he becomes guilty of pusillanimity.”⁹⁶ In his account of pusillanimity, Thomas gives us the example taken from the parable of the talents of the servant who received one talent and buried it for fear that he might lose it. The servant was pusillanimous because he allowed fear to prevent him from fulfilling the potential of the one talent. Likewise, a person who has natural talent playing the piano or singing but does not pursue, cultivate and share that talent for fear of failure is also pusillanimous. There is an ever present fear of being made ridiculous in the eyes of society. Still, allowing that fear to prevent us from fulfilling our potential is pusillanimous.

Fear affects our daily, mundane lives in many forms: fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of humiliation, fear of leaving our comfort zone. The prevalence of fear affects our choices and actions, making our lives necessarily smaller, less than they could

⁹⁶ ST II.II.133.1.ad.2

be. Thomas calls this shrinking of our potential pusillanimous. This highlights the need for a contemporary retrieval of fortitude.

Magnificence is a virtue similar to magnanimity. Whereas the magnanimous man is concerned with doing great things, the magnificent man is concerned with making great things which involve a great expenditure of money.⁹⁷ A politician who performs great acts of public service to the nation such as negotiating a peace treaty would be a magnanimous man. A person who donates a large sum of money to a university's endowment or builds a national museum is a magnificent person. Magnificence is a special virtue because it is more difficult for someone to part with a great amount of money than for someone to part with a small amount of money. Opposed to magnificence is the vice of meanness. Thomas says the "mean man fails to observe the proportion that reason demands between expenditure and work."⁹⁸ A man is mean who wants to pay less for something than it's worth.

Patience is a virtue that springs from *sustinere*, it helps us to endure hardships without giving in to despair.⁹⁹ Patience today often tends to be equated with silent suffering. One's image of patience is of someone who sits quietly and endures whatever hardships life offers with an air of long suffering resignation. Yet this sort of patience is the complete opposite of the sort of patience that Thomas proscribes. Thomas' patience is cheerful, one endures with equanimity; it refuses to give in to sorrow though the situation be dire. Thomas' patience is hopeful, not resigned. Hardship is an inevitable aspect of life. A virtuous person must be able to encounter this hardship without being paralyzed by sorrow, but with a balanced disposition that is able to weather the hardship without

⁹⁷ ST II.II.134.3

⁹⁸ ST II.II.135.1

⁹⁹ ST II.II.136.4

losing hope or being broken by it. A virtuous person is patient because she understands that this too will pass.

An important aspect to note about patience is that it does not simply endure all injustice without discrimination. There is a time for one to be patient and endure suffering and a time to protest injustice. As Thomas says, “nor is it inconsistent with patience that a man should when necessary, rise up against the man who inflicts evils on him...”¹⁰⁰ Patience does not extend to allowing people to trample all over us or to sitting by while other people commit gross injustices towards God or other people. This is not the sort of thing one must suffer patiently through. True patience, like fortitude adheres to the precepts of justice. Life itself brings hardship, such as prolonged life threatening illness of oneself or of a loved one. Patience is the virtue that helps us endure this misfortune with equanimity. It gives one the strength to resist wallowing in sorrow and losing all hope.

Perseverance is the virtue that helps us to persist in something arduous over a long period of time. Writing a dissertation is an example of an activity that requires perseverance. Difficult tasks are made more so the longer they take to accomplish. Weariness or fear of failure set in over a prolonged period of time.¹⁰¹ Perseverance is the virtue that overcomes these irascible passions and allows one to accomplish one’s goal. Thomas gives us the example of the soldier who persists to the end of battle, or to the magnificent man who persists to the end of a magnificent work.¹⁰² Perseverance has to do with the many setbacks and difficulties that come from the amount of time it takes to accomplish a worthy goal.

¹⁰⁰ ST II.II.136.4.ad.3

¹⁰¹ ST II.II.137.2.ad.2

¹⁰² ST II.II.137.1.ad.2

Because Thomas adheres to Aristotle's mandate that courage be strictly about the dangers of death, these secondary virtues annexed to fortitude are his way of expanding the purview of fortitude past the dangers of death. Thus he offers us magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance as ways in which we can practice some aspects of fortitude in our daily lives.

Preeminence of Justice

In another point of departure from Aristotle's theory, Thomas insists that fortitude's adherence to justice is the most important factor in determining its status as a virtue. Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches summarize Thomas' thought:

For Aquinas, the nobility of the cause in war must be judged independently of our allegiance to one of the parties; consequently, glamorous deaths in battle fighting for an unjust cause cannot be for him acts of courage. There is no hint of this in Aristotle.... Courage in war is not courage because it is particularly glamorous or valiant, not because it involves the "noble acts of war," nor because it is highly honored in city-states, nor because it provides the warrior a unique chance to display his prowess as he dies – all possible reasons suggested by Aristotle's account which assumes its paradigmatic status. Rather courage in battle is courage because in the face of great peril the soldier has persevered in doing what is just – according to a justice now formed by charity.¹⁰³

For Thomas, fortitude is not simply the enduring of all injury, but the endurance of injury for a good cause - justice. Pieper notes that while physical injury fractures our physical integrity, we may choose to suffer it "as a means to preserve or to acquire a deeper, more essential intactness."¹⁰⁴ Endurance and suffering of injury and death for no good reason is in no way brave but merely ridiculous. It is only praiseworthy insofar as it is directed to the goods such as justice, faith and love of God.¹⁰⁵ Thus, fortitude is

¹⁰³ Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues*, 163–64.

¹⁰⁴ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 119.

¹⁰⁵ ST II.II.124.3

necessarily directed towards justice. Throughout his treatise on fortitude, Thomas repeatedly emphasizes the necessary relationship between fortitude and justice: “a man does not expose his person to dangers of death except in order to safeguard justice.”¹⁰⁶ This strict adherence to justice is a crucial element in Thomas’ conception of the virtue of fortitude.

This point has generated great debate among philosophers in the last century.¹⁰⁷ Peter Geach sparks this debate with his question of the courageous Nazi. He asks whether we could call a Nazi soldier, who faced death in battle and danger in carrying out his military duties, courageous. This remains an interesting and relevant point. Are bank robbers courageous? What about suicide bombers? Doesn’t it take fortitude to deliberately fly an airplane into the World Trade Center? In the face of death these people acted bravely. They didn’t cower or run away in fear.

Yet Geach, using the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, insists that this is not courage. The Nazi, and therefore the bank robber and the suicide bomber, cannot be courageous because courage is a virtue and as such is necessarily directed towards the good. “It is not the death but the cause that makes the martyr. It was not martyrdom when young ‘idealistic’ Germans were killed in the early days of the Nazi movement.... There can be no virtue in courage... if the cause for which this is done is worthless or positively vicious.”¹⁰⁸ Because the object of the act is evil and unjust, the Nazi cannot have courage. As St Augustine says in his letter *Against Gaudentius*: “*martyres veros non facit poena sed causa.*” Not the injury, but the cause makes martyrs.

¹⁰⁶ ST II.II.123.12.ad.3

¹⁰⁷ My thanks to my colleague, Nicholas Austin, who brought this discussion on the relationship between courage and justice to my attention.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Thomas Geach, *The Virtues: The Stanton Lectures 1973-74* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 159–60.

Alasdair MacIntyre disagrees with Geach. He explains that if the Nazi were to undergo a moral conversion and realize the error of his ways, if a Nazi were to stop being a Nazi then he would already have the habit of courage. He would have to learn other virtues such as charity or justice but “he would not have to unlearn or relearn what he knew about avoiding both cowardice and intemperate rashness in the face of harm and danger.”¹⁰⁹ MacIntyre argues that while the Nazi may lack the virtue of charity or justice, he definitely possesses the virtue of courage.

Another philosopher, Linda Zagzebski delves further into this debate and gives four possible solutions. The first three solutions will be discussed in this section on justice. The fourth is more relevant to the section on prudence and will be taken up there.

First, the trait exhibited by the Nazi is not courage. We can see Thomas and Geach agreeing with this position. Second, the trait is courage, but that in some cases courage is not a virtue. Third, the trait is courage, courage is a virtue, but virtues do not necessarily make their possessor good. MacIntyre and Foot are supporters of this position. Foot claims that “hardly anyone sees any difficulty in the thought that virtues may sometimes be displayed in bad actions.”¹¹⁰ While MacIntyre says that “to deny that that kind of Nazi was courageous or that his courage was a virtue obliterates the distinction between what required moral re-education in such a person and what did not.” So he holds that the Nazi has the virtue of courage but this virtue does not necessarily make the Nazi good.

Thomas insists that moral virtues make their possessor good. This is the difference between intellectual and moral virtues; moral virtues spring from a good will

¹⁰⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition*, 3rd ed. (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 180.

¹¹⁰ Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*, 15.

and make their possessor good. Art is an intellectual virtue that “falls short of being a perfect virtue, because it does not make its possessor to use it well.”¹¹¹ One could be an excellent pianist and a thief at the same time; the two are not mutually exclusive. On the other hand, moral virtue perfects the appetite rendering its possessor good. One could not be just and a thief at the same time. Being just and being a thief are mutually exclusive dispositions.

Thomas links the moral virtues inextricably to justice. A just person is someone who is rightly ordered and inclined to do the good. Thus, fortitude’s *raison d’être* is the preservation of justice. Justice is more important even than our own lives. “Fortitude strengthens the soul in human justice, in order to conserve which it withstands the dangers of death.”¹¹² Praise of fortitude is contingent on its ability to adhere to what is just, what is good, and what is due to others; over and above our own self interests.¹¹³

Prudence

Thomas Aquinas holds that fortitude without right reason is not fortitude. Thus the Nazi cannot be courageous. Thomas gives us the analogy of a blind horse that illustrates the harmfulness of an incipient virtue that is not directed by right reason. “The natural inclination to a good of virtue is a kind of beginning of virtue, but is not perfect virtue. For the stronger this inclination is, the more perilous may it prove to be, unless it be accompanied by right reason, which rectifies the choice of fitting means towards the due end. Thus if a running horse be blind, the faster it runs the more heavily will it fall,

¹¹¹ ST I.II.57.3.ad.1

¹¹² ST II.II.124.2.ad.1

¹¹³ ST II.II.123.12.ad.3

and the more grievously will it be hurt.”¹¹⁴ Swiftness is a virtue in horses, yet compounded with blindness, this virtue becomes harmful. If the horse were slow, were less virtuous in this sense, it could not hurt itself as badly nor do as much damage. It is precisely because of its swiftness that it becomes more destructive.

Zagzebski’s fourth solution is comparable to Thomas’ blind horse analogy. The trait is courage, courage is a virtue, courage is itself always a good thing to have but the virtues and vices of a person do not add up arithmetically. The courage of the Nazi is good and it makes him good insofar as he is practicing a virtue, however, overall his courage makes him capable of more evil than a cowardly man. Two vices might add up to make a man less evil, for example, a cowardly Nazi has the vice of injustice and cowardice. Yet a cowardly Nazi, due to his cowardice which is a vice, is less inclined to fight and kill people. Whereas a courageous Nazi, due to his courage which is a virtue, is more likely to fight and cause death, doing more harm than a cowardly Nazi.

The Nazi has a natural inclination to fortitude, an inclination which lacks the perfection of true virtue as it is not ordered to justice. This inclination, if left running blind without prudence to guide it to a just end, ends up more hurtful than helpful to the person. And in this way the Nazi with the natural inclination to fortitude is more harmful than one with a natural disposition to be cowardly.

This passage in Thomas’ *Summa* also provides a rebuttal to MacIntyre’s argument. The Nazi who is courageous does not merely need to relearn the proper object and due end of courage and retain the habit of being steadfast in the face of danger. The courageous Nazi would have to acquire a new habit of courage because virtue isn’t just an inclination to firmness of soul, it is firmness of soul in the right time in the right

¹¹⁴ ST I.II.58.4.ad.3

circumstances and for the right end. The courageous Nazi has a natural inclination to fortitude that helps him to avoid cowardice and intemperate rashness, but without the ability to exercise it in the right time and place and for the right end, he is a fast horse running blind. He is not truly virtuous. As Ronald Beiner comments, “It hardly makes sense to say that someone is courageous but lacks the moral insight to judge suitable occasions for the exercise of courage, or that someone is generous but lacks the moral insight to judge suitable occasions for the exercise of generosity. If we lack knowledge of how to concretize our experience of the virtues, we cannot practice them; and if we cannot practice the virtues we do not have them.”¹¹⁵

Interestingly enough, it seems that MacIntyre agrees with Thomas on the need for prudence to guide the virtues. “Prudence is not only itself a virtue, it is the keystone of all virtue. For without it one cannot be virtuous. A man may have excellent principles, but not act on them. Or he may perform just or courageous actions, but not be just or courageous, having acted through fear of punishment, say. In each case he lacks prudence.”¹¹⁶

Contemporary Relevance of Fortitude

Thomas expands the scope of fortitude beyond Aristotle’s narrow battle field in two main ways. First, by focusing on *sustinere* over *aggredi*, Thomas expands fortitude to include aspects of ordinary life that Aristotle never considers, such as the judge who renders just judgment despite receiving death threats. Many of us will never be soldiers on a battlefield but there will be instances in our life where it will be difficult to speak the truth because we fear harm to our person or our loved ones. Speaking the truth,

¹¹⁵ Ronald Beiner, *What’s the Matter with Liberalism?* (University of California Press, 1992), 48.

¹¹⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (Routledge, 1998), 48.

particularly in the fight for justice is often hazardous to one's health. Second, Thomas recognizes the secondary virtues of magnanimity, magnificence, perseverance, and patience as replacements for fortitude in situations that are not about death.

However, while these secondary virtues are invaluable, they are not adequate replacements for fortitude. Magnanimity, magnificence, patience, and perseverance are certainly relevant to contemporary life but do not fully encompass all situations of struggle in our lives. There are many situations in our ordinary lives that require fortitude - the primary virtue that adheres to the good in the face of great difficulty.

One aspect of our lives where we need the virtue of fortitude is in our relationships. Relationships are difficult and complicated and sustaining and nurturing them requires fortitude. Sandra Gines complains that Thomas' vision of fortitude doesn't take into account the complexities of relationships.¹¹⁷ She criticizes Thomas for his narrow vision of fortitude as only being needed in limit situations. In his account of fortitude, a person is only able to exercise true fortitude in situations where there is a looming threat to one's life. What about the fortitude needed to nurture and sustain relationships? Death is not generally the main factor in the breakdown of a relationship but it is threatened in other ways requiring fortitude. Relationships are nurtured and sustained through small mundane acts that form the habit of loving. Cooking dinner, doing the laundry, or making time to watch a movie together, are habits which foster and strengthen a relationship. These may seem like small things that don't require the virtue of fortitude, after all, how much fortitude does one need to watch a movie with a loved one? Nonetheless, fortitude is essential to overcome obstacles such as boredom,

¹¹⁷ Sandra Faye Gines, "Quiet Courage: Fortifying the Self to Be Vulnerable from within an Aristotelian-Thomistic Conception of Virtue and a Good Human Life." (Ph.D dissertation, University of Iowa, 2002), 105.

distraction, and self-centeredness that threatens these little habits that form the very fabric of relationships.¹¹⁸

Albert Borgmann offers a similar critique. He says we need to ask ourselves “what circumstances today are most hostile to a Christian life and what moral skills does countering them require.”¹¹⁹ People, particularly in first world countries are growing increasingly isolated, preferring technology to interpersonal relationships. Instead of joining a softball league, or going to a local art exhibit, they shy away from genuine engagement with people preferring instead to watch television, surf the internet, or play a video game. Aristotle and Thomas never considered that someone might find the process of forming personal relationships difficult and even abhorrent. Encountering people, the process of forming relationships in a community is frequently messy and difficult yet an invaluable and essential experience of humanity. Borgmann says, “These are the places where patience is tried and generosity rewarded, where disappointments can’t be escaped and grace descends in what Virginia Woolf calls moments of being. Such places and activities are the precincts of faith where redemption comes into view again as the perfection the world cries out for.”¹²⁰ Crossing the threshold from isolation to the community is something that requires fortitude. We fear being exposed, making ourselves vulnerable, opening ourselves to ridicule and hurt. Fortitude is needed in order to strengthen one in the face of this fear, to risk the arduousness of human interaction, particularly when the alternative is so easy - to stay at home, with technological gadgets to distract us.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 109.

¹¹⁹ Borgmann, “Everyday Fortitude,” 20.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 21.

Relationships are in general good, yet do not always lead us to the good. From the time we are young, we need fortitude to withstand the peer pressure from our friends who want us to exclude and shun the misfits or break the rules with them. Given the structures of sin in our society it is often easier to go with the flow than to stand up to corrupt practices and throughout our adult life we are frequently enticed with the 'easier way' - to cheat, to bribe, to steal, to lie. Many times it is so much easier and more convenient to give in and the good is frequently difficult to practice. Fortitude is needed to adhere to the good we know with our reason. Martyrdom is not the only way in which Christians can live the virtue of fortitude. We can practice the habits of the martyr by suffering the more minor hardships that will come as a result of holding to the good despite social and even civil pressure to do otherwise. As *Veritatis Splendor* says:

Although martyrdom represents the high point of the witness to moral truth, and one to which relatively few people are called, there is nonetheless a consistent witness which all Christians must daily be ready to make, even at the cost of suffering and grave sacrifice. Indeed, faced with the many difficulties which fidelity to the moral order can demand, even in the most ordinary circumstances, the Christian is called, with the grace of God invoked in prayer, to a sometimes heroic commitment. In this he or she is sustained by the virtue of fortitude, whereby — as Gregory the Great teaches — one can actually "love the difficulties of this world for the sake of eternal rewards." (VS 90)

Another area of life where we need fortitude is in rebuilding our lives after personal or natural disaster has struck. A personal disaster could be the breakdown of a long term relationship, either because of death or irreconcilable differences, or perhaps the failure of a business one has worked one's entire life to build. A natural disaster could be an earthquake, a tsunami, or a nuclear meltdown. Aristotle would deny that *andreia* can be practiced at all in these circumstances as they offer no opportunity for a glorious death. Thomas would suggest that fortitude is exercised during the natural disaster while

your life is in imminent danger. I would suggest that while there is great fortitude needed in the midst of a natural disaster, perhaps even greater fortitude is needed afterwards when you are surveying the fragments of your life and attempting to pull the pieces together and move forward.

Fortitude is an essential virtue in dealing with the many trials and tribulations we experience in our daily lives. Thomas' theory falls short because he adheres too strictly to Aristotle's insistence on fortitude being about the dangers of death. Thomas sees displays of fortitude in contexts that don't offer the possibility of death and martyrdom as inferior forms of fortitude. Other thinkers challenge this notion. Saint Teresa of Avila affirms the need for fortitude in living one's life over sacrificing it. She says "it requires greater courage in one not yet perfect to walk in the way of perfection than to undergo an instant martyrdom; for perfection is not attained to at once..."¹²¹ The glorious death of the martyr seems too quick and easy. Lesser mortals toil their entire lives, enduring a never-ending stream of hardships and setbacks that one requires the virtue of fortitude to endure and meet. Borgmann affirms Saint Teresa's point saying, "Courage in the face of danger is noble; the courage to live well in ordinary times may be even more noble."¹²² People need the virtue of fortitude, and not only when death is imminent but throughout their lives. If we are truly a people called to a vocation of holiness (LG 40) in every aspect of our lives, then we need fortitude to pursue this holiness.

¹²¹ Teresa of Avila, *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*, trans. David Lewis, Third edition (New York: Benziger Bros., 1904), 31, 19, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8120>.

¹²² Borgmann, "Everyday Fortitude," 16.

Chapter 2: Filipino Fortitude

Introduction

Whenever I mentioned the topic of my dissertation to my countrymen, there was always resounding agreement. They truly believe that Filipinos possess fortitude in abundance. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the question, what does Filipino fortitude look like? To some degree, it looks like Thomistic fortitude, but there are ways that Filipinos have expanded the conception of fortitude and resilience and made it truly Filipino.

By looking at Filipino culture, history, value systems and practices, I hope to paint a unique portrait of fortitude specified by its unique context. Whereas the first chapter provided an analysis of the virtue of fortitude with particular attention to its specificity in the culture and time of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, in this chapter I will perform a similar exercise by examining the way that fortitude is specified in the Philippine context. This chapter will discuss ways that Filipinos have fleshed out the virtue of fortitude in a manner that could bestow insight on the renewal of the virtue across cultures.

The main thesis of this chapter is that Filipinos have an affinity for Thomistic fortitude.¹²³ This is in no way a claim that every single Filipino is blessed with fortitude. Rather, an investigation into their history, as well as social and cultural mores portrays a people who value characteristics of Thomistic fortitude and behave accordingly.

¹²³ Not that most Filipinos are Thomists, but they relate to Thomas's description of fortitude with his emphasis on endurance and suffering over Aristotle's description of courage, many without even knowing that Thomas described fortitude in this way.

Much of this chapter is based on analogy as there is no way to test empirically whether a society has a virtue, nor even whether a person does. Social scientific methods while helpful are inadequate for assessing virtue in a person, or in a society. The strict criteria for having the virtue of fortitude while numerous remain ambiguous. This ambiguity is inherent to virtue; as Aristotle says in his *Ethics*, an act is just or temperate because it is a just or temperate act done by a just or temperate man (N.E.1105.b.1). When we think of people of virtue, we think of people like Thomas Moore, Nelson Mandela, or Jose Rizal who we know were courageous because we know the narrative of their life; the ideals that they held, that they fought and died for.

As such, the methodology of the chapter will be mainly narrative, drawing on Philippine history, culture, social studies, as well as language, to demonstrate the fortitudinous nature of Filipino people. While a single instance would not be enough to substantiate this claim, several examples as portrayed in major historical events, and taken together with cultural stories and values, illustrate a pattern of behavior that tends towards fortitude.¹²⁴

This chapter will proceed in four main parts. First it begins by providing a framework for social virtue. Traditionally, virtue and vice are referenced to individual persons and not societies. However, beginning with Thomas' definition of inchoate virtue that is acquired through habituation, we can extrapolate a more comprehensive understanding of how we are formed by the virtues and vices specific to our societies. This new conceptualization of social virtue is supported by recent categories of social science as well as the category of sinful structures.

¹²⁴ History, patterns of behavior and cultural mores are all subject to interpretation. Where I see a clearly and attempt to demonstrate in this chapter an inclination to fortitude that Filipinos possess as a society, I acknowledge that there are other perspectives.

Second, we will examine three historical examples of Filipinos as a society behaving in a manner consistent with Thomas' paradigm of fortitude. The first example examines the enduring influence of the *Pasyon* tradition on the Filipinos who were involved with the minor uprising leading to the revolution of 1896. Filipinos empathized with Jesus to such an extent, that in their revolution they felt they were living out the drama of his passion, death and hope in the resurrection. Next is the example of Jose Rizal, scholar and martyr, who was chosen to be the Philippine National Hero over the martial Andres Bonifacio. The final example is the People Power movement at EDSA revolution where people were willing to sacrifice their lives to resist further injustice.

Third, the chapter will discuss the work of Craig Steven Titus who puts Thomas Aquinas' virtue of fortitude in dialogue with the psychological characteristic of resilience. This section will highlight some of the ways in which resilience research augments virtue theory and how this applies to the Filipino experience. For example, the psychosocial characteristics that support these virtues of enduring correlate with Filipino cultural traits such as *bayanihan*, and *bahala na*.

Finally, I note two ways that Filipinos have enriched the conception of fortitude, through their particular way of being resilient and joyful in dire situations. Ideally, a study of the ways in which a universally recognized virtue is specified in a particular locality should yield characteristics that contribute to the wider dialogue about the universal virtue. Resilience and joy are possible ways which expand and enrich the human experience of fortitude across many cultures.

Social Virtue

Social virtue is both an ancient and an emerging concept. Plato had some sense of social virtue as the main theme of *The Republic* is the creation of a just society and he speaks of justice being both an individual virtue and a virtue of a city.¹²⁵ Though for Plato, justice was about parts or persons fulfilling their function. He says if the parts fulfill their function, then they are just, and they make their city just. “The opposite of this – the money-making, auxiliary, and guardian classes doing what’s appropriate, each of them minding its own business in a city – that would be justice and would make the city just” (*Republic*, 434c).

While Thomas speaks of virtue only on the personal level, in the exposition of the natural inclination towards virtue, one might find seeds for a more social conceptualization of virtue through his discussion of natural inclinations which we will see in more detail below.

Recent developments in Catholic theology, particularly discussion on the category “structures of sin” has been used as a starting point by contemporary theologians, Dan Daly and Meghan Clark to develop a new concept of structures of virtues and vice in society.

When we speak of the virtue of a society, we are speaking analogously. A society has no intellect or will of its own, yet one often hears talk of a collective group of people having a mentality or a will. Thus, in this analogous sense, a society may exhibit a firm disposition towards a good. Certain cultures exhibit dispositions to particular virtues and vices more clearly than others. In the previous chapter, we saw the high value that

¹²⁵ Plato, *The Republic Of Plato: Second Edition*, trans. Allan Bloom, 2 Sub edition (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 368e. (Hereafter referred to as *Republic* with Stephanus number.)

Athenians, during the time of Aristotle, placed on the virtue of physical courage. We can say analogously that the British are polite, or that Germans are efficient and as we will see later, John Paul II talks about the structure of sin as being sinful analogously.

When Thomas discusses the virtues, he is always referring to individual agents. These agents are always social persons in relation with others, but development of virtue and vice is discussed mostly from the perspective of the individual. Still, in his exposition of the virtues, particularly his distinction between inclinations and true virtue we find the seeds of a more social virtue.

Thomas says that the inclination to virtue is distinguished from virtue¹²⁶ itself which is directed by reason.¹²⁷ “The natural inclination to a good of virtue is a kind of beginning of virtue, but is not perfect virtue.”¹²⁸ The inclination to a virtue is not yet a virtue in the full sense, because virtue by definition is referenced to a good end.¹²⁹ Thomas gives three ways in which we are inclined to virtue inchoately. He says “one may be readier to perform the act of one virtue, than the act of another virtue, and this either from nature, or from habituation, or again by the grace of God.”¹³⁰ Let us examine this statement in greater detail.

First, with regard to nature, we are born with certain personality traits, characteristics that are uniquely our own that incline us towards acts of virtue. For instance, someone born with a higher capacity to endure physical discomfort is already more inclined to *sustinere* than someone who is born with a greater sensitivity to physical discomfort.

¹²⁶ ST. I.II.58.4.ad.3

¹²⁷ ST. I.II.58.4.ad.1

¹²⁸ ST. I.II.58.4.ad.3

¹²⁹ ST. I.II.55.3

¹³⁰ ST. I.II.66.2

Titus, whose ideas will be discussed in greater detail at the end of the chapter, notes that the field of psychosocial sciences says that we are born with different temperaments which can be identified by observing biological and neurological signs.¹³¹ One such temperament is timidity. There are people, who even as babies, exhibit more timidity than others in ways that is quantifiable, such as an elevated heart rate and other signs of anxiety that are exhibited in social situations. These people are simply born more fearful than others. They are born with a predisposition to fear. This does not mean that they will grow up to be cowardly as predisposition itself is not destiny. However, people born with this temperament naturally find it more difficult to cultivate fortitude. Recognizing this inclination towards timidity is helpful as one tries to develop fortitude. One who is born timid needs more encouragement and practice in habituating oneself to overcome the fear and stress that arises from encountering new people and situations than someone who was not born timid.

Second, many of our character traits are formed by the things we habitually do, intentionally or not. There are habits we acquire from our environment. For example, if our parents insist we keep our rooms clean then it is likely we will develop the habit of cleanliness. The same can be suggested if one lives in a society like Singapore where the state issues fines and severe penalties for littering. Singapore is a very clean city and the society as a whole are clean and orderly because people have a tendency to mimic their environment, when one sees people acting in certain ways in certain situations one copies the mannerisms and habits of the people around them.

¹³¹ Craig Steven Titus, *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude: Aquinas in Dialogue With the Psychosocial Sciences* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 154.

The third reason points to the will of God who sometimes chooses to grace people with infused virtue, perhaps to help them to bring about his will in a certain situation. This type of inchoate virtue is particularly relevant later on in this chapter in the section on EDSA. The people who gathered on EDSA were confronted by tanks and soldiers and the very real possibility of mutilation and death. They were afraid and wanted to run yet they relate how God answered their prayers by giving them the strength to stand firm and not give way. They believed God had infused them with fortitude.

Thomas says a person acting in a virtuous manner due to these three reasons only possesses inchoate virtue, the beginning of virtue, but not virtue in its fullest sense. A moral virtue must be “joined to right reason” in order to be considered truly a virtue, not just as an inclination to virtue, but as a perfect moral virtue.¹³² Right reason directs one’s actions to their due end. Thus, prudence is essential to the virtue.

Further, Thomas notes, “if a running horse be blind, the faster it runs the more heavily will it fall, and the more grievously will it be hurt.” In a similar way, a person may have the inclination towards fortitude, and tend to stand firm in dangerous situations, but not know when it is appropriate to retreat. Her inclination would, in a way, be “blind”, because it is not “joined to right reason.” Thus such a person would not have the virtue of fortitude, because while she possesses the affective inclination, she lacks the direction and guidance of prudence that would dispose her to respond fittingly to particular situations of danger.

Because of certain elements of Filipino culture, its people as a community have an inclination to the virtue of fortitude. This is evident in a social awareness of the virtuousness of endurance and resilience, the characteristics that Thomas distinguishes as

¹³² ST I.II.58.4.ad.3

the primary act of fortitude. This social disposition to fortitude is not the perfect virtue of fortitude but what Thomas calls inchoate virtue or the beginning of virtue.¹³³ Filipinos have an inclination to fortitudinous behavior, and there are times when Filipino fortitude is properly ordered towards justice. However, their fortitude often remains an imperfect virtue, in the process of maturation because, as I will argue later, in our endurance in the face of dangers and sufferings we do not always act in pursuit of justice.

The second of the three reasons Thomas gives, habituation, provides us with a starting point from which we can develop our claim of social virtue. In a more detailed account of habituation, Thomas explains that our inclinations to virtue are influenced by custom. Here, the Latin term ‘mos’ is important. Thomas says “now ‘mos’ has a twofold meaning. For sometimes it means custom, in which sense we read (Acts 15:1): ‘Except you be circumcised after the manner (morem) of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Sometimes it means a natural or quasi-natural inclination to do some particular action...”¹³⁴

The first meaning of ‘mos’ is a custom that holds reference to a social practice. In his example, the Jews were circumcised according to the manner or custom of Moses. Every family has particular customs that they follow, and every culture has distinct customs within it. As children maturing in a particular culture, these customs have great influence on habits we acquire as we develop and grow.

The second meaning of mos ties in with the first. He says “custom becomes a second nature, and produces an inclination similar to a natural one.”¹³⁵ Here, Thomas acknowledges the influence that culture and societal norms have on individual

¹³³ ST I.II.58.4.ad.3

¹³⁴ ST I.II.58.1

¹³⁵ ST I.II.58.1

inclinations and the development of virtue. Our inclinations are influenced by what we have become *accustomed* to in the society we keep and the culture in which we live.

Now Thomas is careful to specify that not all of our cultural habits are moral virtues, but only those that rightly form our appetitive faculty. Some customs are simply customs. An example of something that is merely a custom would be learning to dance the *tinikling*, a traditional folk dance in the Philippines. Other customs cultivate habits which affect our moral character. For example, in the Philippines, corrupt customs like bribery are so widespread that they are regarded simply as a common aspect of life; a way of doing business, of avoiding a speeding ticket, or of getting elected to public office. “In a symposium on Filipino culture, one participant, a respected college professor asked: ‘How come we, Filipinos, violate all known rules and regulations in the conduct of our public affairs? For example, we ignore traffic lights when there are no policemen. We complain about bribery and yet offer bribes.’”¹³⁶ Filipinos are inconsistent about acting justly because we grow up in an environment that tolerates and even supports unjust practices.

The awareness that social customs in some way affects our moral growth is developed in much greater detail in the twentieth century with a growing awareness of “structures of sin.”¹³⁷ The concept that society creates structures that act adversely on the moral development of an individual has caught the attention and the imagination of a diverse group of scholars.

¹³⁶ F. Landa Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation* (Punlad Research House, 1992), 1.

¹³⁷ See Daniel J Daly, “Structures of Virtue and Vice,” *New Blackfriars* 92, no. 1039 (May 1, 2011): 341–57, doi:10.1111/j.1741-2005.2010.01355.x. Dan Daly undertakes a more detailed account of the development of the concept of structures of sin.

We can trace two important developments in the concept of structures of sin through the encyclicals *Centesimus Annus*, and *Evangelium Vitae* by Pope John Paul II. In *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II expresses more explicitly than Thomas that the social structures in our environment influences our moral development positively or negatively. “Man receives from God his essential dignity and with it the capacity to transcend every social order so as to move toward truth and goodness. But he is also conditioned by the social structure in which he lives, by the education he has received and by his environment. These elements can either help or hinder his living in accordance with the truth.”¹³⁸

John Paul is careful to maintain human freedom and credits persons with the strength of will to transcend their environments. While we are influenced by our environment, we have the capacity and the vocation to transcend it. In *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II pushes this concept further still by attributing moral responsibility to structures that lead people astray. In paragraph sixteen of his 1983 apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* he discusses how while only moral agents can be the object of moral acts, there is a “category of analogical social sins.”¹³⁹ These are sins that exist between human communities, and insofar as they are the principle actors, they are analogically moral agents and likewise their sin is analogical.

Theologian Daniel Daly uses sociologist Peter Berger to explain how these structures are formed through a process of externalization, objectification and then internalization. Through our habitual actions as a society, we ‘externalize’ certain virtues and vices that then take on a life of their own. They become ‘objectified’ or

¹³⁸ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 38.

¹³⁹ Daly, “Structures of Virtue and Vice,” 347.

‘institutionalized’ in a way independent of the individuals that ‘created’ them. These structures in society then influence our decisions and actions, negatively if they are vicious structures or positively if they are virtuous structures. He says:

Berger, the bishops, and the pope understood that in the process of externalization human persons were agents who constructed society and culture. The process of objectification was the movement from individual agency to the creation of a cultural-structural reality, such as consumerism. Finally, internalization constituted the agent’s formation by the structures of her culture. That is, the agent was a living embodiment of a culture’s values insofar as her character was formed by the culture within which she lived. Berger, echoing Aristotle and Aquinas, noted that social structures formed a “second nature” in the person.¹⁴⁰

Daly argues that ‘structures of sin’ is an inadequate term for this social reality and that they are more accurately described as structures of vice.¹⁴¹ They are structures¹⁴² which promote systems of corruption and injustice. For example, one act of bribery is a sin. A system that consistently and habitually supports and promotes acts of bribery is vicious. Not only does it habituate persons to give and accept bribes, but institutionalization in a system removes stigma from it. People become desensitized to the fact that this practice is wrong. For example, in many towns in the Philippines, the custom of bribery is called SOP, which is an acronym for Standard Operating Procedure. It is not a dirty, shady, immoral practice that needs to be hidden, but something that can be done out in the open, that everyone is familiar with because it is standard.¹⁴³ These systems function in a way that condition persons to habitual acts of sin and influences the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 353.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 354.

¹⁴² Dan Daly’s definition of social structure is “an institution, a practice, a value laden narrative, or a paradigmatic figure that people find already existing or which they create on the national and global level, and which orientates or organizes economic, social, and political life. Once objectified, structures tend to become fixed and fossilized as mechanisms relatively independent of the human will, thereby promoting or paralyzing social development and causing justice or injustice.” Ibid.

¹⁴³ In his conclusion to his 4000 year history on bribes, John Noonan argues against this mindset. Simply because it is widely practiced does not make it right, nor necessary. John T. Noonan, *Bribes: The Intellectual History of a Moral Idea* (University of California Press, 1987), 693.

development of their character. The language of virtue and vice is more appropriate to this phenomenon because of its insight into moral development and its emphasis on the formation of character.

Theologian Meghan Clark further develops Dan Daly's work on social virtue using the virtue of solidarity which she says is a virtue on both an individual and a social level. She gives specific practices which a community can do to cultivate the virtue and acquire a firm disposition in it. For example, a community can cultivate the virtue of solidarity through specific practices such as "habitually not engaging in torture" and "practicing acts which support and create economic and social opportunities such as education and access to health care..."¹⁴⁴ Applying the language of individual virtue to communities, she says that both individuals and communities develop the virtue of solidarity as a "firm and persevering disposition" the same way, through "practicing human rights, as the right kind of actions and emotional reactions... As it becomes a firm and persevering character among individuals and communities, it becomes an acquired moral social virtue, and more substantive human rights will exist."¹⁴⁵

An acquired moral social virtue is where a particular society or culture is inclined or habituated to act in a certain way, for example the virtue of cleanliness, and obedience to authority in Singapore. In the Philippines, the habits of being resilient and enduring suffering are culturally ingrained, because there are many opportunities to practice them, and also because people have been habituated through our cultural and social values to act with the sort of fortitude that Thomas described. Filipinos have an acquired social

¹⁴⁴ Meghan J. Clark, "Anatomy of a Social Virtue: Solidarity and Corresponding Vices," *Political Theology* 15, no. 1 (January 2013): 36.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 38.

moral virtue of fortitude, albeit their virtue is not yet true virtue, but rather growth in virtue.

There have been instances where the Filipino people have shown their fortitude; notably the 1891 rebellion where we won their freedom from the oppressive Spaniards, and EDSA, where we ousted a tyrannical dictator. These will be discussed in more detail in this chapter. We accomplished these things by standing firm and persevering in a fight for justice, and the common good of all.

However, there are many times when Filipinos display a stunning disregard for justice, so that corruption has become endemic to our basic structures and institutions.¹⁴⁶ To perfect their acquired moral social virtue of fortitude, Filipino fortitude needs to be directed more consistently towards justice. As Thomas says “A man does not expose his person to dangers of death except in order to safeguard justice: wherefore the praise awarded to fortitude depends somewhat on justice.”¹⁴⁷ Our lack of justice prevents us from developing our social inclination to fortitude into perfect virtue. Filipinos still exhibit a tendency to act in fortitudinous ways, however the fortitude they display is necessarily inchoate. Perfect fortitude is intrinsically directed to support the requirements of justice. The problems arising from the Filipino habit of injustice will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to showing instances of the Filipino social disposition to fortitude.

¹⁴⁶ This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

¹⁴⁷ ST II.II.123.12.ad.3

Three Socio-Historical Examples of Filipino Fortitude

Pasyon and Revolution

While studies of the Philippine Revolution have dominated the field of Philippine history, John Schumacher, noted Philippine historian, criticizes the field for the “narrowness of the frameworks within which it has been studied....”¹⁴⁸ The perspective of the revolution has been narrated by the educated elite. There is dearth of different perspectives on the revolution. Another historian, Reynaldo Ileto, echoes Shumacher’s observation, saying: “The standard interpretation of the revolution against Spain as the working out of ideas and goals stemming from the *ilustrados* is symptomatic of the wide spread acceptance among scholars that the educated elite functions to articulate Filipino values and aspirations.”¹⁴⁹ The history of the Revolution has been told from the perspective of the upper class Filipinos without regard for the historical circumstances of the masses.

The history of the Philippine Revolution of 1896-1902 and the minor uprisings that occurred before it, is a story of emancipation from the unjust and tyrannical powers of the Spaniards. It is traditionally recounted through the movements of its *ilustrado* (the enlightened) leaders: Jose Rizal, its inspiration, and Andres Bonifacio,¹⁵⁰ leader of the Katipunan, a secret society that initiated and sustained the revolution.

¹⁴⁸ John N. Schumacher, “Recent Perspective on the Revolution,” *Philippine Studies* 30, no. 4 (1982): 445.

¹⁴⁹ Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 9.

¹⁵⁰ Whether Andres Bonifacio was an *ilustrado* has been a point of contention among historical scholars. He was not wealthy and educated abroad like Jose Rizal and the other *ilustrados*. However, the primary meaning of *ilustrado* is not wealthy, but rather educated. “Bonifacio himself, I would add, can be considered *ilustrado*, even if a self-made one, in spite of his lack of higher formal education. Anyone who was reading Victor Hugo’s *Les misérables*, Carlyle’s *History of the French Revolution*, and the *Lives of the American Presidents* in Spanish, among other books, was clearly an educated man by the standards of Manila in the 1890s, undoubtedly much better read in modern thought than many of the more affluent

This story begins towards the end of the 18th century, with an influx in prosperity in the Philippines, a Spanish colony. This influx of prosperity was brought about by the promotion of agriculture and the opening of trade routes. These favorable economic conditions gave rise to a class of wealthy, native Filipinos who could afford to send their children to study in Europe.¹⁵¹ Coming from a conservative, colonial society, the Filipinos in Europe experienced a radical enlightenment. The privileged lifestyle in Europe, coupled with an education in Western democratic ideals fostered a growing discontent with the abuses perpetrated by the authorities, particularly the religious orders. Dubbed '*ilustrados*,' they formed groups and organized movements that initially advocated reforms to curb the unfettered power of the Spanish officials and clerics. Their goal was to be granted equal citizenship rights with the Spaniards.

Eventually realizing that Spain was never going to grant them basic citizenship rights, they began the revolution for freedom from Spain's oppressive and tyrannical rule. While the *ilustrados* are clearly at the helm of the revolutionary movement, we know that the uneducated peasant masses joined the revolution, and are in large part responsible for the success of the revolt. For a long time, it was been commonly accepted that the masses were inspired by the *ilustrado* borne western ideals of liberty and equality.

However, in his controversial work, *Pasyon and Revolution*, Iloilo sets out to investigate the motives and aspirations of the uneducated peasant masses. He claims "the meaning of the revolution to the masses – the largely rural and uneducated Filipinos who constituted the revolution's mass base – remains problematic for us. We cannot assume

students who frequented the colleges and university in Manila..." Schumacher, "Recent Perspective on the Revolution," 449–50.

¹⁵¹ John N. Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880-1895: The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, the Making of the Revolution* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 2.

that their views and aspirations were formless, inchoate, and meaningless apart from their articulation in *ilustrado* thought.”¹⁵²

The principal thesis in Iletto’s work is that “the masses’ experience of Holy Week fundamentally shaped the style of peasant brotherhoods and uprisings during the Spanish and early American colonial periods.”¹⁵³ He posits that the various Holy Week activities, particularly the reading, singing, and re-enactment of the passion of Jesus Christ, had two, contradictory functions in society.¹⁵⁴ First it was used by the Spanish friars to encourage subservience to Spanish rule by promoting the idea that suffering is a normal aspect of the Christian life, so the suffering peasants should be content with their difficult lives and await their reward in heaven. However, it also functioned in a second way that was not at all intended by the friars. It provided the “lowland Philippine society with a language for articulating its own values, ideals, and even hopes of liberation.”¹⁵⁵

Used by the Spanish missionaries as a method of evangelization, the *pasyon* is the story of Jesus Christ in dramatic verse form. While it is essentially the story of our salvation, it is more than a simple retelling from the Gospels. The *pasyon* was truly appropriated by the common folk who memorized and sang it as they imbued it with their own particular concerns and nuances.¹⁵⁶ Its popularity overflowed the temporal framework of Holy Week to enliven occasions as diverse as funerals or as part of courtship rituals.¹⁵⁷ “The widespread use of the *pasyon* not only during Holy Week but also on other important times of the year insured that even the illiterate tao[person] was

¹⁵² Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 4.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 12.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Schumacher, “Recent Perspective on the Revolution,” 455.

¹⁵⁷ Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 20.

familiar with the general contours of the text.”¹⁵⁸ Thus singing or chanting of the *pasyon* became a part of the daily rural life and world view of the ordinary person.

Ileto sees the *pasyon* as being the driving force and motivator behind peasant involvement in the minor uprisings and the Philippine Revolution during the period of 1840-1910. Unlike their wealthy and educated *ilustrado* countrymen, the rural peasant masses were not fighting for the Western ideals of liberty and equality but perhaps their own, contextualized sense of liberty and equality. Ileto’s interpretation is that they saw themselves as taking part in an age old drama, the passion story of Jesus Christ. “The history of the Filipino people was seen in terms of a lost Eden, the recovery of which demanded the people’s participation in the *pasyon* of Mother Country.”¹⁵⁹

Ileto uses the Filipino expression of *damay* to explain how the peasants related to the *pasyon*. *Damay*, which today usually means sympathy and/or condolence for another’s misfortune, has a much older meaning of ‘participation in another’s work.’ The whole point of the singing of the *pasyon* is the evocation of *damay* with Christ; the text itself is filled with examples that suggest this mode of behavior: expressions of sorrow and compassion, tearful weeping, individuals helping Jesus carry his Cross, changing their state of *loob*[inner being] to lead a pure life and follow Christ’s example.¹⁶⁰

*Loob*¹⁶¹ encompasses a range of concepts having to do with interiority such as ‘character,’ ‘will,’ and ‘soul.’ It is often paired with *lakas* which means strength. *Lakas ng loob* is the Filipino equivalent of fortitude. Since translations from one language to

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 254.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 51–52.

¹⁶¹ : “...loob as a synthetic concept is the individual’s unique interiority; as an analytical concept it is the unrepeatable complex of an individual’s awareness and thought, his emotions and sense for value, his personality and character.” Dionisio M. Miranda, *Loob--the Filipino within: A Preliminary Investigation into a Pre-Theological Moral Anthropology* (Divine Word Publications, 1989), 3.

another encompass a range of meanings, particularly for phrases, the meaning of *lakas ng loob* ranges from ‘inner strength,’ ‘strength of character,’ to ‘firmness of soul.’

In a recent nationwide study of characteristics most highly valued among Filipinos, Virgilio Enriquez found that *lakas ng loob* was among the top seven.¹⁶² Enriquez finds that: “*Lakas ng loob* is a key ingredient in the realization of *pagbabagong-dangal*, enabling one to face difficulty, even death, to vindicate the *dangal* (dignity/honor/good) in one’s being (de Mesa 1987). *Lakas ng loob* is a *damdamin* (internal feel/attribute/trait) necessary for actualizing the good not only in one’s self but also in one’s fellow man (*kapwa*), in one’s *loob*...”¹⁶³

This corresponds to Ileta’s discussion of *loob* and the way in which it has influenced the value formation of Filipinos. His findings are consistent with a Thomistic definition of fortitude as a characteristic that allows one to endure and face difficulty, even death, to hold to the good. It is also a social definition, because inherent in it is the good of one’s *kapwa*, in the same manner that fortitude is inherently directed towards justice. The leaders of the peasants were particularly concerned that their followers strengthen their *loob* to remain steadfast and unwavering in their purpose. Their followers were frequently exhorted to resist temptations, withstand persecution and “remain steadfast in the face of hardships,”¹⁶⁴ by strengthening their *loob* through prayer.¹⁶⁵

One of the minor uprisings was led by Apolinario de la Cruz, founder of an outlawed religious confraternity called the Cofradia de San Jose. The Cofradia, founded in 1832, initially began as a religious community that gathered for prayers. Over the next

¹⁶² Virgilio G. Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology* (University of the Philippines Press, 1992), 74.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ileta, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 39.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 41.

eight years, its popularity grew, attracting scores of people to its ranks, and eventually drawing the ire of local clergy for two principal reasons. First they were concerned about the orthodoxy of the prayer meetings. Second they were threatened by its growing popularity, worried that it would become a political movement; and as it turns out – they were right. Fleeing their towns to avoid persecution in 1841, the members of the Cofradia, congregated on the slopes of Mount San Cristobal, under their ‘king,’ Apolinario de la Cruz. In October of 1841, government forces attacked and overcame the Cofradia, capturing and then executing Apolinario de la Cruz.¹⁶⁶

Ileto characterizes Apolinario as a “Christ-like figure in Philippine history, apparently remembered not for his particularly unique individual attributes but as a powerful sign of Christ’s presence among men. Folk memories of his personality have been shaped in terms of the *pasyon* image of Christ.”¹⁶⁷

Apolinario often wrote to his followers, telling them to endure the suffering as part of their *damay*, their participation in the passion of Jesus Christ. Speaking of hard times, he tells his followers that it “is merely as if thin high clouds were covering the rays of sun, but through God’s mercy there will be *liwanag*[light] in us, and any oppression should be endured as it is part of the times, for God has willed it and He, too, will bathe us in glory.”¹⁶⁸ On another occasion, he tells his companions “not to change what is in the *loob*’ in the face of prolonged suffering: *Pilitin ninyong tabanan*, ‘force yourselves to remain steady.’”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 32–33.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 50.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 43.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 45.

In his words we can hear echoes of a Thomistic fortitude. Thomas was concerned with the *sustinere* of suffering that enabled people to remain steadfast and hold to their ideals. Both the Filipino concepts of *damay* and *loob* find resonance in Thomas' description of fortitude. Thomas' model of fortitude was Christ in his passion, enduring torture for the love of humanity. In *damay* the people participate in the passion of Christ, enduring suffering out of love for their fellow men and mother country. Thomas' virtue of fortitude is the habit that strengthens the soul to remain firm in the face of danger. Likewise the leaders of the societies such as the Cofradia and the Katipunan, frequently urged their brothers to strengthen their *loob* that they may remain firm in the face of the difficulties and dangers they must endure in order to liberate Philippines. *Loob* is transformed through "the individual experience of the struggle."¹⁷⁰

Of the Revolution, Iletto claims that "we can delineate in the speeches, songs, poems and recollections of the Revolution the repetition, largely on an unconscious level, of *Pasyon* categories of perception. Then we can begin to understand, not the *Pasyon*'s effect, but the efficacy of elite appeals for revolution...."¹⁷¹ The masses were drawn to the revolution because the leaders were able to find a common language that appealed to them.

Andres Bonifacio, founder of the Katipunan, wrote his manifesto "Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog" (What the Tagalogs Should Know) using the style and language of the *pasyon*. Printed in the *Kalayaan*, the organ and official newspaper of the secret Katipunan society, Bonifacio follows the form of the *pasyon* by describing the suffering of the Filipino people at the hands of the Spanish oppressors in a way

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 117.

¹⁷¹ Reynaldo C. Iletto, "Critical Issues in 'Understanding Philippine Revolutionary Mentality,'" *Philippine Studies Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 30, no. 1 (March 31, 1982): 97.

reminiscent of the suffering of Jesus Christ and the participation of his Holy Mother in order to evoke *damay* and change in *loob*.¹⁷²

A participant in the Revolution, Diego Mojico gives his firsthand account of the Revolution in 1899, using *pasyon* language and themes.

...the most pathetic weeping, the tears, sighs and dying of the country were taken to heart by the brave and heroic of loob; several rusty muskets, spear, and bamboo sticks were dared pitted against the *cuartel* of the civil guard and the hacienda of the friars, which were well-armed and provisioned, in spite of which the fury of the country spread even more, overrunning and annihilating the enemy; during those days and those times, cowardice and indolence rested in the grave of the forgotten; in many thousands of hearts sprung forth bravery, goodness and heroism, loob and feelings were one...¹⁷³

Again we see the description of the suffering of the people in a way that evokes *damay*, the themes of the *pasyon*. People are called not only to feel compassion, but to participate in the *pasyon* of the country that struggles to free itself from the tyrannical Spaniards. They are the underdogs, fighting with rusty muskets, spears and bamboo sticks against an army that is well-armed and provisioned. They fight, in this lopsided fight, with the belief that their success is predicated on their strength of soul; they are brave and heroic of *loob*. “The people can fight with ‘rusty muskets, spears and bamboo sticks’ against a well-equipped enemy because they are acting out an event whose outcome is, in a way, part of a divine framework.”¹⁷⁴ Winning depends not on superior weaponry but on faith in God and strength of loob. This description captures one of Thomas’ points about fortitude. *Sustinere* is superior to *aggredi* because *sustinere* is more difficult, and therefore more virtuous. Being the underdog with inferior weapons is much harder than being on the side with the superior weapons and force.

¹⁷² Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 84.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 128.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 129.

Ileto's thesis that the *pasyon* provides both the ideological framework and the underpinning of the peasant involvement in the Revolution supports the claim that Filipinos have an inclination to fortitude that springs from habituation. The two Filipino concepts that Ileto emphasizes, *damay* and *loob*, incline people to fortitude. More than simply an experience of suffering, in *damay* the common folk construe their suffering as participation in the passion of Jesus Christ and this experience of solidarity moves them to act in ways that imitate him. Imitation of Jesus Christ in his passion is precisely what Thomas hoped for in choosing Christ's passion as the model of fortitude. The Filipinos believed that in order to triumph as Christ did necessitates a transformation of their *loob* to one that is firm and able to withstand trials and temptations. Their emphasis on a steadfast *loob* correlates strongly with Thomas' insistence that the virtuous person develop fortitude, firmness of soul.

A Critique of Ileto's theory

Schumacher's critique of the narrowness of the construction of the histories of the Revolution holds for Ileto's work as well. The weakness in Ileto's theory is the sovereignty with which he endows the *pasyon* tradition.¹⁷⁵ Schumacher suggests that along with the *pasyon* in many places, and even more widespread and influential than it are the devotionaries and novenas.¹⁷⁶ He believes that the novenas "may prove to have been of greater formative influence on folk-consciousness than even the *Pasyon* among the Tagalogs, and to have supplied for the lack of an extensive *pasyon* tradition among

¹⁷⁵ Schumacher, "Recent Perspective on the Revolution," 463.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 465.

other linguistic groups of Filipinos.”¹⁷⁷ These were found in every household, in every far flung town, in almost every language of the Philippines. In a manner similar to the propagation of the *pasyon*, “these novenas of European origin become transmuted into indigenous forms of popular prayer and religious thought.”¹⁷⁸ As such, the novenas imbibed local concerns and prayers. The novenas carry many of the same themes as the *Pasyon*, including the theme of fortitude.

One example is from the Novena to San Diego de Alcala, originally published in 1823: *Pagsisiyam sa maluwalhating poon San Diego de Alcala. Pintakasi sa bayan ng Tayabas, Tayabas. Inayos ng isang devoto niya.*

The first day of the Novena, is a reflection on humility and how humility “means to learn to love suffering.” On the Seventh day, the reflection exhorts people to be unwavering in their faith. “Do not waver in the path of faith, the path to eternal life.... It is a difficult journey but the easier way leads only to eternal suffering. Reflect on this and draw strength in it so that in times of doubt and fear and difficulty, we will know that the way of the cross is the way of life.” On the ninth day: “Reflect on San Diego de Alcala’s endurance of suffering and pain, which became his means to peace. In the name of suffering our strength may fail and we dismay. With the grace of God, those who keep going will triumph if they do so in the name of the Lord.... Those who are fortunate to be received in heaven are those who have suffered for the love of the Lord”

In this novena to San Diego de Alcala, we see the emphasis placed on developing a people able to withstand hardship. Through praying and reflecting on this novena, they become schooled in the endurance of suffering and are encouraged to develop inner

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 466.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 465.

strength to withstand the trials and difficulties of life. Above all, there is the sense that all suffering is referred to the suffering of Christ and his martyrdom, which coincides with Thomas' paradigm for fortitude. Endurance of suffering and steadfastness in the face of trials and difficulties are characteristics of *sustinere* the primary part of fortitude.

Whether through the *pasyon* or the novenas and devotionaries, there is a schooling of people in the characteristics of fortitude. A strong emphasis is placed on the strengthening of one's loob, one's inner self so that one develops a steadfastness of spirit in the face of hardships, along with gentle exhortations to emulate Christ's passion. The effect of these influences is that the people as a community become habituated to act in fortitudinous ways.

Philippine National Hero: Jose Rizal

At several points in Philippine history, there have appeared extraordinary individuals who were perceived by the masses as embodiments of the Christ model. An example is Jose Rizal, one of the few popular martyrs who belonged to the ilustrado class.¹⁷⁹

Reynaldo Ileto

Jose Rizal's life has been "the most highly documented life of any Asian of the nineteenth century, perhaps of any Asian ever."¹⁸⁰ Austin Coates, one of his biographer, explains that Rizal was a prolific writer and the force of his personality and his "aura of destiny" were such that they inspired people to keep the letters he wrote no matter how trivial the matter. His highly documented life means that we have unique knowledge of the kind of person he was, because of our access to the details of his thoughts and his

¹⁷⁹ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 50. In a footnote, Ileto supports his statement by saying "This is evident in Tagalog poems honoring Rizal in which parallels are often drawn between Rizal and Christ, particularly concerning the mode of Rizal's death in Bagumbayan, the "Calvary" of the country." It is further validated by the presence of Rizalista Sects who view Jose Rizal as literally being Jesus Christ.

¹⁸⁰ Austin Coates, *Rizal, Philippine Nationalist and Martyr* (Oxford University Press, 1968), xxix – xxx.

daily life through his correspondence. Historian Asuncion Maramba says: “We need modern heroes badly, and we need to know what kind of men and women they were – not just snippets or high points of their lives, but more details and greater depth on what they chose to do, what they suffered and sacrificed, what led to the heroic dimension of their lives and the high price they paid for it.”¹⁸¹ Through his letters, essays, and books we are able to access so much of Jose Rizal’s life, we can see his inner struggles and his most cherished ideals.

This section will begin with a brief biography of Jose Rizal, illuminating points in his life where he exhibited fortitude or special regard for this particular virtue. After a brief biography, this section will delve in into the controversy surrounding his designation as national hero over the more martial Andres Bonifacio. This decision is a significant indicator of the Filipino social inclination to fortitude.

Born in 1861 to illustrious parents, Jose Rizal was the seventh of eleven children. He finished his early studies in Ateneo de Manila with excellent marks before proceeding to Universidad de Santo Tomas to study medicine and philosophy. Alleging discrimination against Filipinos by the Santo Tomas Dominicans, he leaves the school in 1878. In 1882 he sails to Spain to complete his studies at Universidad Central de Madrid.

Biographer Frank Laubach, describes Rizal as being the sort of person who planned his day in meticulous detail and adhered to his chosen schedule. “He obeyed his schedules with the regularity of a machine, not only for a day or a month or a year, but all his life.”¹⁸² For example, if he was playing chess, no matter how much he was enjoying himself, when the clock struck the hour to call him to his studies, no amount of pressure

¹⁸¹ Asuncion David Maramba, *Modern Filipino Heroes* (Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2006), v.

¹⁸² Frank Charles Laubach, *Rizal: Man and Martyr* (Manila: Community Publishers, Incorporated, 1936), 397–98.

from his friends could convince him to stay.¹⁸³ As a testament to his perseverance and studiousness, Rizal graduated with a degree in Medicine in 1884, and then again a year later with a degree from the Philosophy and Letters department.

Hoping to cure his mother's worsening eyesight, he stayed in Europe to study ophthalmology travelling to the best schools in Paris and Germany. Not only was he a gifted doctor, he was also a polyglot, mastering 22 languages in the course of his life. He excelled in many diverse activities, such as painting, poetry, fencing, farming, architecture, and writing novels, to name but a few of his accomplishments.

While he was in Europe, he and the other Filipinos formed organizations advocating reforms in the Philippines. Specifically they asked that Filipinos be granted the same freedoms and process under the law available to Spanish citizens. Living by his most famous words "The pen is mightier than the sword," he authored two novels. The first, *Noli me tangere*, was published in 1887 in Berlin. *Noli* was a satirical story exposing the abuses of the Spanish clergy in the Philippines. Violent reactions greeted its publication and circulation. It was immediately condemned by the clergy in the Philippines as heretical and impious, and subsequently banned. Yet, there was a growing group of supporters who risked imprisonment in order to secretly circulate copies of the banned novel. *Noli* was influential because it awakened Filipinos to the injustices of their situation and provided the spark which eventually blew into the flames of a revolution.

Despite the threats and worried warnings to stay away, Rizal returned to the Philippines later that year. He went home and successfully operated on his mother's double cataract and saw other patients from the surrounding area. However, he was forced to leave a few months later, because of his reputation for being subversive. He

¹⁸³ Ibid., 398.

traveled all over the world going to places as far flung as Hong Kong, Japan, America, Canada, London, and Australia. Over this period, he completed his second novel, even more inflammatory than *Noli me tangere*. *El Filibusterismo* was published in Ghent in 1891.

After publishing *El Filibusterismo*, he returned to Hong Kong and remained there for a few months operating a very successful ophthalmology clinic. Then, despite the threat to his person, he decided to return to the Philippines in 1892. His reason for this seemingly foolhardy action can be determined from a letter that he writes in Hong Kong, just before leaving, which he addressed to the Filipino people.

The step I have taken, or which I am about to take is, without doubt, very risky and, needless to say, I have given it much thought.... I cannot live on knowing that because of me many are suffering persecution; I cannot live on seeing my brothers and their numerous families persecuted like criminals. I prefer to face death and gladly give my life if only to free so many innocent people from such unjust persecution.¹⁸⁴

In his decision to return to the Philippines, Rizal became a “conscious hero.”¹⁸⁵ He could have lived beyond his thirty five years if he had only remained in exile, away from the Philippines. His return was “doubly brave, because unlike military heroes whose job description contains ‘death in battle,’ Rizal was a quiet, peaceful man who willfully and calmly walked to his death for his convictions.”¹⁸⁶ He lived with the truth that the struggle for the freedom of one’s country is more important than one’s life. Laubach attributes this to his moral courage:

His consuming life purpose was the secret of his moral courage. Physical courage, it is true, was one of his inherited traits. But that high courage to die loving his murderers, which he at last achieved, - that cannot be inherited. It must be forged out in the fires of suffering and temptation. As

¹⁸⁴ Jose Rizal, To the Filipinos, Hong Kong, June 20, 1892.

¹⁸⁵ Ambeth Ocampo, *Rizal Without The Overcoat* (Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2008), 11.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

we read through his life, we can see how the moral sinew and fiber grew year by year as he faced new perils and was forced to make fearful decisions. It required courage to write his two great novels, telling things that no other man had ventured to say before, standing almost alone against the most powerful interests in his country and in Spain, and knowing full well that despotism would strike back.¹⁸⁷

Upon his arrival from Hong Kong, he was arrested on dubious pretexts and imprisoned in the town of Dapitan. While there, he had the freedom of the island. He put his knowledge and his talents at the service of the community. He planted fruit trees, took up landscaping, started writing an English – Tagalog dictionary and opened a primary school where he taught local children reading, writing, arithmetic, Spanish and English.¹⁸⁸

A popular story told about Rizal during this period describes how as principal of his school, he valued the virtue of courage in his students. New applicants would spend the morning taking an entrance test and in the late afternoon Rizal would take them for a walk in the woods behind the school, leaving his cane at some memorable spot. Upon their return to the schoolhouse, he would pretend to notice that he had left his cane in the woods and ask the prospective student to retrieve it for him. The boy then has to conquer his fear of darkness and his imagination of the fearful things that could be hiding in the shadows, in order to retrieve the cane. Acceptance into Rizal's school depended not only on intellect, but courage as well.

While in exile, the seeds of discontent that had been sown by his novels inspired the founding of the Katipunan, a secret revolutionary brotherhood determined to free themselves from Spanish tyranny. While Rizal was never directly involved with the Katipunan, and is in fact, outspoken in his criticism of its revolutionary method, he is

¹⁸⁷ Laubach, *Rizal*, 402.

¹⁸⁸ Coates, *Rizal, Philippine Nationalist and Martyr*, 262.

nevertheless credited with being “the principal organizer and living soul of the insurrection”¹⁸⁹ by the military judge who tried and sentenced him to death in 1896. He was executed on December 30, 1896.

In recent years, Rizal’s designation as national hero has been the subject of controversy because of his opposition to the revolution which successfully won the Filipino people freedom from Spanish tyranny. Chief among his detractors is Renato Constantino who delivered a speech “Veneration Without Understanding” in 1969, where he asks Filipinos to rethink their choice of national hero for this reason:

For the national revolution is invariably the one period in a nation’s history when the people were most united, most involved, and most decisively active in the fight for freedom. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that almost always the leader of that revolution becomes the principal hero of his people... In our case, our national hero was not the leader of our revolution. In fact he repudiated that Revolution. In no uncertain terms he placed himself against Bonifacio and those Filipinos who were fighting for the country’s liberty.¹⁹⁰

A national hero must be one who leads people in the fight for freedom and there is no denying that not only was Rizal not a leader in the revolution but he was also adamantly against the Revolution. On December 15, 1896, just 15 days before his execution, he wrote an anti-revolution manifesto: “From the very beginning, when I first received information of what was being planned [the revolution], I opposed it, I fought against it, and I made clear that it was absolutely impossible. This is the truth, and they are still alive who can bear witness to my words. I was convinced that the very idea was wholly absurd -- worse than absurd -- it was disastrous.”¹⁹¹ Using this statement,

¹⁸⁹ W. E. Retana, *The Trial of Rizal*, ed. Horacio De la Costa (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1961), 94.

¹⁹⁰ Renato Constantino, *Dissent and Counter-Consciousness* (Ermita, Manila: Erewhon, 1979), 125–26.

¹⁹¹ Jose Rizal, “Manifesto to Certain Filipinos (Rizal’s Disavowal of the Revolution),” accessed April 19, 2012, <http://joserizal.info/Writings/Other/manifesto.htm>.

Constantino denounces Rizal as treasonous for opposing the revolution and consequently Filipino nationhood.¹⁹²

While Rizal is clearly, unequivocally, against the rebellion led by the Katipunan, it is not necessarily true that Rizal was against the idea of revolution and a Filipino nationhood. In fact, in direct contradiction to Constantino, Schumacher claims that Rizal's very purpose in writing the *Noli* was "to provide a catalyst for a revolution, to start the process that would lead to the emancipation of the Philippines."¹⁹³ Rizal, along with many of the *ilustrados*, was initially in favor of reforms, of gaining equal rights as the Spaniards under the same government. However, his later writings betray a growing awareness that Spain will never grant these reforms and so Rizal begins to prepare for revolution.

In order to get a clearer picture of his vision of revolution, one needs to read Rizal's personal letters together with his published work.¹⁹⁴ Rizal, ever the methodical thinker, wrote three books as part of a long term plan to give the Filipino people a national identity. In a letter to his friend Ferdinand Blumentritt in 1888 discussing his novel *Noli me tangere*, he says "I must wake from its slumber the spirit of my country..." The *Noli* is more than just a satire about the abuses of the Spanish friars and government officials. Schumacher says: "It is a charter of nationalism for Filipinos. It calls on the Filipino to regain his self-confidence, to appreciate his own worth, to return to the heritage of his ancestors, to assert himself as the equal of the Spaniards."¹⁹⁵ He annotated Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* in between writing his famous novels,

¹⁹² Constantino, *Dissent and Counter-Consciousness*, 129.

¹⁹³ John N. Schumacher, *The Making of a Nation: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Filipino Nationalism* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), 91.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Noli Me Tangere and *El Filibusterismo*. *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* is a book written about the Spanish conquest of the Philippines, but details the life style and culture of the native Filipinos and their interaction with the Spanish colonizers. Rizal's annotation was meant to give Filipinos a sense of history, to show them that they were a people with a culture and identity of their own before the Spanish conquest. Unfortunately this particular book is only known to scholars and historians. It lacked the impact and popular reception that greeted the *Noli* and *El Fili*.

In *El Filibusterismo*, Simoun, the protagonist, tries to incite a violent revolution against the Spaniards and he fails. At the end of the book, he is dying and a priest, Padre Florentino says to him:

Our misfortunes are our own fault, let us blame nobody else for them. If Spain were to see us less tolerant of tyranny and readier to fight and suffer for our rights, Spain would be the first to grant us freedom.... But as long as the Filipino people do not have sufficient vigor to proclaim, head held high and chest bared, their right to life of their own in human society, and to guarantee it with their sacrifices, with their very blood; as long as we see our countrymen feel privately ashamed, hearing the growl of their reveling and protesting conscience, when in public they keep silent and even join the oppressor in mocking the oppressed; as long as we see them wrapping themselves up in their selfishness and praising with forced smiles the most despicable acts, begging with their eyes for a share of the booty, why give them independence? With or without Spain they would be the same, and perhaps even worse. What is the use of independence if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow? And no doubt they will, because whoever submits to tyranny loves it!¹⁹⁶

Rizal betrays a complex understanding of world history, Filipino society, and human nature. While he is not completely opposed to an armed revolution, he foresees a larger, more insidious problem: freedom from Spain is only part of the solution; for a lasting solution, Filipinos must be free in themselves.

¹⁹⁶ Jose Rizal, *El Filibusterismo (subversion)*, trans. Leon Maria Guerrero (Hongkong: Longman, 1965), 297.

In his novels, Rizal not only exposes the excesses and cruelties of the Spanish overlords but also the excesses and cruelties of the Filipinos who betray their countrymen in order to better their lot in life. Judith Kay defines internalized oppression as “the behavioral and affective habits acquired from oppressive mistreatment in which oppressed peoples incorporate and accept the perspective of the oppressor toward themselves and their group.”¹⁹⁷ Living a life of oppression under the Spanish clergy, Rizal saw in his fellow countrymen vicious habits stemming from their situation of oppression. In his books he satirized those Filipinos who acquired many of the vicious habits of their Spanish overlords. For example, the character of Doña Victorina in *El Filibusterismo*, was a Filipina who looked down on all Filipinos and was continually trying to pass herself off as European. He portrays how Filipinos have internalized oppression by imbibing the vices of their oppressors.

Judith Kay provides a helpful comparison in her article “Getting Egypt out of the People: Aquinas’ Contributions to Liberation.” Her discussion on how Thomas’ work on virtues and vices provides a useful framework with which to approach problems of internalized oppression. She says: “If the Israelite Exodus from slavery remains a paradigmatic vision of liberation for some Christians, then the Israelites’ subsequent divisiveness and longing for the fleshpots of Egypt remains a cautionary tale. Former slaves may carry the vices of their masters into the promised land.”¹⁹⁸ Her insight on the Israelites is strikingly similar to Rizal’s insight on the Filipinos. She argues that liberation

¹⁹⁷ Internalized oppression is defined as “the behavioral and affective habits acquired from oppressive mistreatment in which oppressed peoples incorporate and accept the perspective of the oppressor toward themselves and their group.” Judith W. Kay, “Getting Egypt out of the People: Aquinas’s Contributions to Liberation,” in *Aquinas and Empowerment: Classical Ethics for Ordinary Lives*, ed. G. Simon Harak (Georgetown University Press, 1997), 1.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

for an oppressed people is not as simple as freeing them physically from their chains. People who have been enslaved a long time have developed vices from oppression, vices that they would not be so easily liberated from, vices that will hamper their flourishing, as individuals and as a new, liberated society. In Rizal's opinion, a revolution will only succeed in a superficial liberation from Spain; Filipinos would still be left with the interior attitudes and habits of a slavish and oppressed people.

Rizal's main concern is that the oppressed will become tyrants. To overthrow a tyranny without being prepared to put something better in its place merely leads to a new form of tyranny. A lesson learned from many revolutions in world history is that even when they are successful, revolutions often fail in producing a new and better society for the majority of the people. For instance in 1896, Filipino revolutionaries won freedom from the Spaniards but quickly succumbed to colonization by the Americans a mere 4 years later. Now, more than a century later, free from the Americans, Filipinos are still struggling to define a national identity.

In the same anti-revolution manifesto quoted by Constantino, Rizal charts a path for the kind of revolution he envisions: "Fellow countrymen: I have given many proofs that I desire as much as the next man liberties for our country; I continue to desire them. But I laid down as a prerequisite the education of the people in order that by means of such instruction, and by hard work, they may acquire a personality of their own and so become worthy of such liberties."¹⁹⁹ Liberty is important, but first one must be worthy of liberty. Freedom is something that they must earn, through education and the development of their character.

¹⁹⁹ Rizal, "Manifesto to Certain Filipinos (Rizal's Disavowal of the Revolution)."

Rizal emphasized development of character before the call to arms. “Only virtue can redeem the slave: it is the only way to make tyrants respect us...”²⁰⁰ One must first cast off the vicious habits of the oppressed and then begin one’s education in the development of the civic virtues. Kay expresses a similar conclusion: “Aquinas’s insights remind us that undoing internalized oppression is a moral practice in its own right. The project of eliminating internalized oppression ought to be seen as a demanding moral practice of acquiring virtue and abandoning destructive habits.”²⁰¹ Let us take Doña Victorina as exemplary of many Filipinos. Then following Rizal’s train of reasoning, one of the vicious habits the Filipinos need to eliminate is the exaltation of all things foreign and the disdain of things that are local. These vicious habits need to be undone and new virtuous habits need to be cultivated. Liberty is not condition to be granted exteriorly, but a condition that will arise if the people are virtuous.

Rizal’s objection and outright rejection of the revolution in the earlier part of his manifesto acquires a new light. Like Plato and Aristotle, who wanted to build a just society through the education of a just citizenry, Rizal wanted to liberate his countrymen by educating them so that they acquire the virtue to merit freedom. The sentiment expressed in his manifesto echoes an earlier paragraph that appears in *El Filibusterismo*:

I do not mean that our freedom is to be won at the point of the sword; the sword counts for little in the destinies of modern times. But it is true that we must win it by deserving it, exalting reason and the dignity of the individual, loving what is just, what is good, what is great, even to the point of dying for it. When the people rises to his height, God provides the weapon, and the idols fall, the tyrants fall like a house of cards, and freedom shines in the first dawn.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Rizal in a letter to Roxas 1889.

²⁰¹ Kay, “Getting Egypt out of the People: Aquinas’s Contributions to Liberation,” 36.

²⁰² Rizal, *El Filibusterismo (subversion)*, 297.

This passage displays Rizal's affinity with Thomistic fortitude. Unlike Aristotelian courage, Thomistic fortitude does not need to be martial. Rizal understands this subtlety. Freedom and justice are worth fighting for, but they are interior qualities, not acquired at the point of the sword but developed through education and the cultivation of the virtues. Freedom and justice won at the point of the sword are fleeting and ephemeral. To be lasting qualities, they must be part of one's disposition.

The contrast between Aristotelian courage and Thomistic fortitude is vivified in the controversy surrounding the selection of the Philippine national hero. Should our national hero be a warrior-like person, the epitome of Aristotelian courage or should we choose someone who fought with his pen and was martyred as is paradigmatic of Thomas's model of Christian fortitude? Constantino's critique is based on an Aristotelian notion of a hero, as someone who displays valor on the battlefield by leading one's troops to a glorious victory. Constantino and other detractors of Jose Rizal believe that Andres Bonifacio, leader of the 1896 Philippine revolution, is a more deserving candidate of the title.

In a recent survey,²⁰³ respondents were asked who they considered to be genuine Filipino heroes. They were allowed to name up to 5 persons; 75% named Jose Rizal, 34% named Andres Bonifacio. To this affirmation of Rizal, Constantino would object that people voted that way because they have been conditioned by Americans to favor Rizal. One of his objections to Rizal being the national hero is that he believes that the Americans encouraged the idealization of Rizal because of his anti-revolutionary sentiments. However, this is refuted by both historians and Rizal scholars who claim that Rizal was

²⁰³ "First Quarter 2011 Social Weather Survey: Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, and Ninoy Aquino Are Top Three Most Identified Filipino Heroes," April 8, 2011, <http://www.sws.org.ph/pr20110408b.htm>.

revered in life and in the immediate aftermath of his death, even before the Americans colonized the Philippines.²⁰⁴ At the beginning of this section, we referred to his highly documented life. The fact that even letters written describing a brief encounter with him were treasured²⁰⁵ is evidence that he was popular even during his lifetime and not merely upon his death. Rizal scholar, Leon Maria Guerrero, claims that Rizal inspired such love from the Filipinos that he was chosen “unanimously, irrevocably.”²⁰⁶

Filipinos honor both Andres Bonifacio and Jose Rizal. However, they love Rizal more. Guerrero explains:

We may honor the fighters who, in hills and cellars, serve their country with the strength of their arms.... But we reserve our highest homage and deepest love for the Christ-like victims whose mission is to consummate by their tragic ‘failure’ the redemption of our nation.... When, at their appointed time, they die, we feel that all of us have died with them, but also that by their death we have been saved.²⁰⁷

Filipinos did not choose a triumphant general famed for his skill with the sword and tactics on the battlefield in the manner of an Aristotelian hero to be their national hero. Filipino people as a society have a deep affinity with Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection. The fact that the Philippines chose Rizal over Bonifacio suggests the Filipino people, as a society, value characteristics of Christian fortitude over Aristotelian courage. They value endurance and willingness to sacrifice one’s life for a higher good.

²⁰⁴ See Esteban A. De Ocampo, *Why Is Rizal the Greatest Filipino Hero?* (National Historical Institute, 1996) and Schumacher, *The Making of a Nation*. For example, Ocampo tells us “In the early part of 1889 he was unanimously elected by the Filipinos in Barcelona and Madrid as honorary president of La Solidaridad... In 1891, Rizal was chosen *Responsable* (Chief) of the Spanish Filipino Association. He was also the founder and moving spirit in the organization of *Liga Filipina* in Manila on July 3, 1892.... A year after Rizal’s execution, General Emilio Aguinaldo and the other revolutionary chiefs exiled to Hongkong held a commemorative program there on December 29, 1897 on the occasion of the first anniversary of their hero’s execution and martyrdom.”

²⁰⁵ Coates, *Rizal, Philippine Nationalist and Martyr*, xxx.

²⁰⁶ Leon Maria Guerrero, *The First Filipino, a Biography of Jose Rizal* (Quezon City: The Journal Press, 1963), 499.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 500.

EDSA Revolution, 1986

In many ways, the EDSA²⁰⁸ revolution of 1986, is a fulfillment of Rizal's vision of a revolution. In 1986 the world watched as Filipinos gathered to protest the injustice and corruption of their president and dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, and succeeded in peacefully removing him from power. The Filipino people were given the Global Award for Non-violence by two organizations, the Center for Global Non-Violence and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Foundation. At the award ceremony, Pierre Marchand applauds the fortitude shown by the Filipinos in the 1986 EDSA revolution:

The world salutes the Filipinos for their courage in overthrowing two undesirable presidents. You have given the gift, in a world that only knows force and violence, of effecting radical change without firing a shot. The legacy of people power would be the Filipino people's gift to other peoples of the world. You were given a national gift. Do not keep it to yourselves. The world will never be the same again, if the spirit of EDSA prevails beyond the shores of this tiny archipelago.²⁰⁹

This section will begin by giving a brief historical overview of the events leading up to the EDSA revolution. Despite being a major event in Philippine history, most histories on the EDSA revolution tend not to be traditional historical accounts where events are narrated chronologically by a historian. The major form that the history of this revolution has taken has been compilations of narratives from a diverse multitude of different people involved. People ranging from leaders of the revolution such as Cory Aquino and Cardinal Sin, to the ordinary yet extraordinary folk such as Sister Terry Burias, DSP, and Lulu Castaneda tell in their own words, stories of their experience.

²⁰⁸ Epiphania De los Santos Avenue (acronym EDSA) is the street where the people gathered and the revolution occurred.

²⁰⁹ Jose Rodel Clapano, "Pinoys Get Award for Non-Violence," *Philippine Star*, February 25, 2001, sec. Headlines.

In his defense of one such history, Alfeo Nudas says “We read and re-read the stories, not for the information they give, but for their own sake. And the sake, or self, of a story is the human voice in it, telling us, or inviting us, to feel and see the universe as the person behind the voice feels and sees it. Each story enriches and widens one’s consciousness of the 1986 Philippine Revolution.”²¹⁰ In line with Nudas’ recommendation, this section will approach the EDSA revolution through the eyes of the different people who were there. Through the narratives on the revolution, we are given a unique perspective of the character of the Filipino people at EDSA who displayed firmness of soul in their willingness to stand in front of tanks and sacrifice their lives for justice in their country.

One of the forms which Filipino fortitude took in this instance was a commitment to nonviolence. While Thomas is not a proponent of absolute nonviolence as he envisioned circumstances where violence might be just, for example, he thinks that fortitude can be expressed by the soldier in battle. However, contemporary readers can find in Aquinas an incipient idea of nonviolence. First, nonviolent endurance is one possible expression of *sustinere* - the standing firm for the sake of the good in the face of mortal danger is, for Thomas, a central act of fortitude. Second, Thomas's elevation of the martyr to the paradigm of fortitude is strong reason for thinking that Thomas's teaching about fortitude can today be fruitfully connected to more recent expressions of fortitude that exhibit non-violent resistance to evil and injustice.

²¹⁰ Alfeo Gapasin Nudas, *God with Us: The 1986 Philippine Revolution* (Cardinal Bea Institute, Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, 1986), 54.

In his seminal work, *Man and State*, Jacques Maritain discusses an order of warfare that applies “spiritual means to the temporal realm.”²¹¹ He uses the example of Ghandi’s *Satyagraha* which is the power of truth and love as an instrument of political and social action.²¹² He says

In my opinion Ghandi’s theory and technique should be related to and clarified by the Thomistic notion that the principal act of the virtue of fortitude is not the act of attacking, but that of enduring, bearing, suffering with constancy. As a result it is to be recognized that there are two different orders of means of warfare (taken in the widest sense of the word), as there are two kinds of fortitude and courage, the courage that attacks and the courage that endures, the force of coercion or aggression and the force of patience, the force that inflicts suffering on others and the force that endures suffering inflicted on oneself. There you have two different keyboards that stretch along the two sides of our human nature, though the sounds they give are constantly intermingled: opposing evil through attack and coercion – a way which, at the last extremity, leads to the shedding, if need be, of the blood of others; and opposing evil through suffering and enduring – a way which, at the last extremity, leads to the sacrifice of one’s own life. To the second keyboard the means of spiritual warfare belong.²¹³

The Philippine Revolution of 1896 was fought and won by taking up ones arms and spilling of blood while the EDSA revolution of 1986 was won by acts of love; foremost among these was the willingness to lay down one’s life. They used spiritual warfare to overthrow a dictator and restore justice in their country. It was no simple endurance either, if people had simply formed a hostile but nonviolent barricade then there is a great chance that the revolution would have ended differently. Marcos sent soldiers to threaten violence and they were met with flowers, sandwiches, and rows of people sitting in front of their tanks praying and refusing to move. They showed the soldiers they would rather sacrifice their lives than let them through.

²¹¹ Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 68.

²¹² Ibid., 68–69.

²¹³ Ibid., 69.

Thus, while Thomistic fortitude is not necessarily nonviolent, nonviolence is a legitimate specification of it. Nonviolence is a way in which Thomistic fortitude was lived by the people at EDSA. This is not to say that violence is never fortitudinous nor that non-violence is the only way to live fortitudinously. Yet at EDSA, Filipinos expressed the virtue of fortitude through their nonviolent yet active resistance of injustice. Their chosen method proceeds along Maritain's notion of spiritual warfare: opposing evil through suffering and enduring which at the last extremity leads to the sacrifice of one's own life.

A Brief Historical Overview of the EDSA Revolution of 1986

This story begins in 1965 when Ferdinand Marcos was elected President of the Philippines. In 1969, his four year term ended and he was re-elected President, but his second term was plagued with demonstrations and civil protests. In 1972 he began his reign as dictator by declaring Martial Law in the country; he shut down newspapers, television and radio stations, wrested major corporations from wealthy families, and systematically eliminated his opponents. One of the first arrested after the declaration of Martial Law was Senator Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino who had been very vocal in his criticism of the Marcos' policies. In 1980, still in prison and under a death sentence, Aquino suffered a heart attack and was sent to the U.S. for medical treatment. He chose to stay there in self-imposed exile for three years, researching, writing and speaking out against the Marcos regime. In 1983, despite being warned to stay away, Aquino returned to the Philippines and was shot on the tarmac upon his arrival.

His death prompted a massive outpouring of grief which led to protests and demonstrations ultimately leading to revolution. Corazon ‘Cory’ Aquino, his wife, took up his battle cry and Filipinos fed up with cruelty and injustice of the Marcos regime rallied around her. This was the beginning of People Power. People Power is often used as a synonym of the EDSA revolution but it more accurately refers to a social movement that began with the protests and demonstrations following the death of Ninoy and culminated in the gathering of the people “with a shared commitment and the courage to lay one’s life down for country”²¹⁴ at EDSA.

In February of 1986, submitting to pressure from the United States, Marcos called for a snap election, running for President again against Cory Aquino. Reports of massive electoral cheating and violence during the tabulation of votes drew condemnation from the Philippine bishops, the US Senate, and other countries around the world. Many protests broke out when Marcos announced he had won the election.

On February 22 of the same year, Marcos’ Secretary of Defense, Juan Ponce Enrile, and his Vice Chief of Staff, General Fidel Ramos, defected and sought refuge in a military base, Camp Crame, located along EDSA. Cardinal Sin sent an appeal through Radio Veritas, a Catholic run radio station, for the public to gather around Camp Crame to show their support for Enrile and Ramos, and to prevent violence from occurring. In response, Marcos ordered troops to Camp Crame to quell the rebellion and retake the base. His troops were unable to reach Camp Crame as civilians flocked to EDSA in droves in response to Cardinal Sin’s appeal. The Filipino people were ready to lay down their lives, if need be, to prevent Marcos’ forces from engaging those of the rebels.

²¹⁴ Vitaliano R. Gorospe, “Power and Responsibility: A Filipino Christian Perspective,” in *Toward a Theology of People Power: Reflections on the Philippine February Phenomenon*, ed. Douglas J. Elwood (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), 18.

Vulnerable and unarmed, the civilians faced Marcos' forces and disarmed them with nothing more substantial or threatening than prayers, kind words, flowers, cigarettes and candy. Unable to break through the barricade of people, the soldiers refused to do violence to their countrymen. His reign effectively over, Marcos fled the country on February 25, 1986. The People Power movement had succeeded.

The Stories

These stories from the Filipino people exhibit the immense value that they place on fortitude and their distinctive conceptualization of the virtue. In the narrative accounts of EDSA, we see a community of people who are struggling to be brave in the manner that Jesus taught them. Stanley Hauerwas says that the most important task of a Christian church "is nothing less than to be a community capable of hearing the story of God we find in the scripture and living in a manner that is faithful to that story."²¹⁵ Jesus' courage was of a quintessentially different sort from the courage that we normally see in the world. At EDSA, the Filipinos attempted to emulate his kind of courage. A closer examination of some of these narratives will prove an excellent vehicle to portray Filipino fortitude.

A story told by Margarita Cojuanco, speaks of a rally she participated in shortly after Ninoy's death on September 24, 1984 at Quezon Blvd. The rally was disrupted by military men throwing rocks, smoke bombs and eventually firing on the crowd. She recounts her terror as she was fleeing, seeing someone shot a few feet away from her. Reflecting on this experience she says it taught her a powerful lesson: "The military are

²¹⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 1.

powerful because they have their Armalites, .38s, .45s, shields, truncheons, tear gas, protective masks, smoke grenades, so on and so forth. Courage comes easy with them because of what they possess. For my part, I discovered an inner quality I did not know I possessed, the inner spirit of courage without outside, material support.”²¹⁶

Margarita Cojuanco reflection demonstrates a growing awareness of the superior quality of a Thomistic type of fortitude. Possessing superior physical strength and weapons is much easier because they are external accouterments. Mahatma Gandhi says a fully armed man can be a coward at heart. The fortitudinous person is stronger, more virtuous, because the strength needed is not external, physical strength which is easy to obtain; but rather internal strength of spirit which is more difficult to acquire.

The Aquinos, both husband, Ninoy and wife, Cory, displayed a remarkable appreciation for Thomistic fortitude in their lives. Living in comfort in Boston, MA, Ninoy could have chosen to begin his life anew in the United States of America and ignored the plight of his countrymen. Instead he chose to work tirelessly for a solution to the country problems. He travelled, visiting countries that had had successful revolutions, in search of a methodology and finally decided on non-violent resistance. He presented the results of this search to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs in 1983. He says:

I have concluded that revolution and violence exact the highest price in terms of human values and human lives in the struggle for freedom. In the end there are really no victors, only victims....

I have decided to pursue my freedom struggle through the path of nonviolence, fully cognizant that this may be the longer and the more arduous road....

I have chosen to return to the silence of my solitary confinement and from there to work for a peaceful solution to our problems rather than go back

²¹⁶ Monina A. Mercado, ed., *An Eyewitness History: People Power, the Philippine Revolution of 1986* (Manila: James B. Reuter, S.J. Foundation, 1986), 34.

triumphant to the blare of trumpets and cymbals seeking to drown the wailing and sad lamentations of mothers whose sons and daughters have been sacrificed to the gods of violent revolution. Can the killers of today be the leaders of tomorrow? Must we destroy in order to build? I refuse to believe that it is necessary for a nation to build its foundation on the bones of its youth... Filipinos are still killing each other in ever-increasing numbers. This bloodletting must stop. This madness must cease.²¹⁷

Like Mahatma Ghandi's *satyagraha*, which is the power of love and truth expressed through suffering, sacrifice, and nonviolent action; Ninoy discovers that true power lies in love. This power of love lies in the recognition that our enemy shares our human dignity and the only response to this realization is love expressed nonviolently. On Radio Veritas, 19th of March, 1986, Fr. Jose Blanco explained nonviolence. He said: "Violence addresses the aggressor and the animal instinct in the enemy or oppressor. Nonviolence searches out and addresses the humanity in the enemy or oppressor. When that common humanity is touched, then the other is helped to recognize the human person within and ceases to be inhuman, unjust, and violent."²¹⁸

Ninoy chooses the more difficult path of endurance, perseverance and martyrdom over that of the glorious hero, returning to lead bloody revolution to set his people free. Like Thomas he recognizes that endurance is the longer, more arduous road for the following reasons. First, Ninoy is obviously in a weaker position with regard to military strength. A commitment to non-violence in this position is more difficult than lashing out, than working to accumulate weapons or planning a means of destroying your enemy. Second the uncertainty of this position makes it more difficult. When one attacks, one controls the time and place of the attack as opposed to the anxiety of anticipation in the one who endures. In fact, Thomas names patience as one of the potential parts of

²¹⁷ Douglas J. Elwood, *Philippine Revolution: 1986 Model of Nonviolent Change* (Quezon City: New Day Pub, 1988), 19.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 30.

fortitude for precisely this reason. The ability to endure hardship over a prolonged period of time without giving into despair is a necessary aspect of fortitude.

The very manner of his death displays Thomistic fortitude. Although he was warned to stay away, he decided to return to put his principles into action. When asked why he was returning to such a personally dangerous situation, he replied “the Filipino is worth dying for,” a statement made all the more powerful because it was followed very shortly by his death. Fulfilling Thomas martyr paradigm, Ninoy died for the Filipino people. It is not surprising that Ninoy has achieved the status of a national hero given that his life followed the trajectory of Jose Rizal’s life; exiled for being subversive, returning to the Philippines and then eventually being executed by a tyrannical government.

Upon Ninoy’s death, Cory, becomes a symbol for the people of Ninoy’s sacrifice. Thrust into a position of leadership that she is initially reluctant to accept, she eventually accepts the challenge with a perseverance and determination. Cardinal Sin’s reflection on Cory when she asks for his blessing on her presidential candidacy is descriptive. He says: “At that moment I thought God answered the prayers of our people. He chooses weaklings. And why weaklings? Why a weak woman? We have never been gifted with a president who is a woman. That is how the Lord confounds the strong.”²¹⁹ Unlike Aristotle, for whom no woman, much less a weak woman, could possess *andreia*; Cardinal Sin recognizes that there is power and strength in weakness. One of the most profound lessons that Christianity teaches is to look beyond the categories of this world; particularly those that pertain to strength and power. The weakness and vulnerability fueled by love is potentially more powerful than any military force.

²¹⁹ Mercado, *An Eyewitness History*, 48.

As Cory accepted the mandate the people placed on her, she grew in confidence.

In a campaign speech delivered on 3 February 1986, she exhorts the crowd:

We must stand up against Mr. Marcos. We must all commit ourselves. We have an opportunity to create history. We have to decide now. We have nothing to lose but the chains that have bound us for so long. We must be able to tell our children when we grow old, when we talk about these historic times, that we did what we had to do, we responded to the call of the times, we faced the challenge to fight for our future. We staked our lives for a noble cause – a free tomorrow.²²⁰

Cory calls people to find inner strength to resist the forces of evil to come face to face with death, because justice is more important than their lives. Her newfound confidence grows and changes her from the timid housewife, a grieving widow, to a person of fortitude. Observing her after this speech, Gracia M. Carino describes how Cory has grown in strength and fortitude. She says “There is a tangible strength to her and it is seen in the way she walks, the way she talks. No more the martyr –widow, no more the private person forced to hide her grief and pain. She is herself now – strong, authoritative with the strength and the authority that the people themselves have given her.”²²¹

Committed to her late husband’s convictions on non-violent resistance,²²² Cory exhorts people to actively resist the tyrannical forces of Marcos, even though this resistance may result in the loss of their lives. In her words, one hears echoes of Ninoy’s and even Jose Rizal’s famous words - the Filipino is worth dying for. Cory insists that freedom is worth the sacrifice of their life. This sentiment reverberates throughout the Filipino people.

²²⁰ Ibid., 55.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Elwood, *Philippine Revolution*, 18.

For example, Lulu Castaneda and her 17 year old daughter answered Cardinal Sin's call to EDSA, to put their bodies in front of oncoming tanks. Looking at her daughter, Lulu reminisces: "I looked at her with pain and said: She's only 17 and she is going to die. Then I also thought: But if she dies for the country, then it is a good way to die. I think a lot of people were there for the same reason."²²³ Over and over, Cory and Ninoy's, and ultimately Jose Rizal's cry is echoed in the hearts and minds of the millions of people at EDSA. Not seeking death, but accepting it, being willing to sacrifice their lives and the lives of those they love in order to free their country and its people from injustice and tyranny.

Foremost among those who responded Cory's exhortation to non-violent yet active resistance and to Cardinal Sin's more concrete call to EDSA were the seminarians, novices, priests and religious sisters. They were invaluable to People Power as they led the people in prayer and worked at keeping people calm in order to maintain peace between the gathered masses and the military. Often, religious sisters were asked by the people to stay in front and to lead them in prayer. Another participant, George Winternitz, says: "People prayed the Rosary in front of tanks and stopped them simply by staying put and continuing in prayer. It was as if Our Lady herself, heeding the prayers, worked directly on the officers directing the tanks." The most vivid images captured of EDSA showed tanks stopped in front of rows of people praying the rosary led by religious sisters. The subject of one of these photographs, Sister Terry, gives a firsthand account of her fear and experience of courage as she faces down the tanks during the revolution:

²²³ Mercado, *An Eyewitness History*, 125.

Tension is building up. Some Sisters begin to leave. Pingping and I want to leave, too. But the people are pleading that we stay. And they want us to move up front. So Pingping and I move up front. I look around. I don't see other Sisters anymore. Pingping and I feel so alone here. I get frightened. We feel very helpless, powerless, against the sullen marines and their tanks. So I take out my rosary again and tell the people that we pray to Our Lady once more.... For the fourth sorrowful mystery, I tell the people: 'Let us pray for the souls in purgatory, and let us call on all the angels to be with us in this hour of our struggle.' I am terribly scared of the crushing wheels. I want to move out of their path. Yet, strangely enough, I feel at peace. I am ready to die, and die with my people.... And just before the rosary ends, the first tank is revved up to life and now begins to move against us. My instinct is to flee, to save my life, but Pingping is a brave girl and I become brave, too. We sit, waiting for the wheels to grind us. All the people sit. The encouragement moves all the way to the back.... The people gives us courage, just as perhaps we give them courage, too. The next thing I know is the tank is silent again. One foreigner exclaims: 'It's a miracle!'

Many people are crying. They start congratulating Pingping and me – we congratulate them, too. And deep down me I prayed: 'You have seen my weakness and You filled me with your strength.'

... General Tadiar, in one of his interviews, said that he had ordered the tanks to plow through the people. But when he turned around and saw two nuns in the path of the tanks, he shouted at the top of his voice: 'Stop the tanks! Stop! Stop!'²²⁴

Sister Terry's account is an example of many other accounts of people at EDSA.

Their narratives resonate with the faith of the Filipinos; their certainty that they were being called by God to participate in this event and that things would happen according to His plan. "Vox populi, vox Dei. The people in the streets believe that with God on their side they cannot lose. They are right."²²⁵ The story of People Power is a story that demonstrates the Filipino experience of Jesus. Hauerwas points out, "the truthfulness of Jesus creates and is known by the kind of community his story should form."²²⁶ People Power is a story that arises out of, is formed and molded by, and is interpreted in light of the faith of the Filipinos. They are a community who lived the story of Jesus Christ, by

²²⁴ Nudas, *God with Us*, 62–63.

²²⁵ Mercado, *An Eyewitness History*, 73.

²²⁶ Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 37.

making themselves humble and vulnerable, by refusing to strike back, and by winning over their opponents through love and kindness.

This kind of fortitude surpasses man's natural capacity. To sacrifice one's life requires the gift of courage which "by giving man confidence in [the] end he longs for, gives him the strength to struggle towards that end."²²⁷ Thomas says that we can acquire fortitude that helps us hold firm to the good, even when it is difficult to do so. However, there are times when natural fortitude is not sufficient and we require the assistance of the Holy Spirit to alleviate fear, help us to persevere in our course, and give us confidence in eternal life.²²⁸ In her statement, Sister Terry clearly attributes her transformation from fear to confidence, from weakness to strength, to the grace of God. She was not only fortitudinous, but her fortitude was infused by God. God's gift of courage, his infusion of fortitude enabled her to hold firm and not flee in the face of her overwhelming fear of being crushed by the tanks.

Many other people at EDSA speak of being afraid, and of working through their fear by finding confidence and courage to persevere in their course through their prayers and the presence of the other participants. God infused many frightened people with fortitude during this revolution. The position they put themselves in would have been terrifying to a soldier, someone who has been trained in controlling fear. Yet students, housewives, bankers were given the courage to sit there, intensely vulnerable in front of tanks and machine guns, by the grace of God. "The courage of the martyr is not about

²²⁷ McKay, "The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas' Moral Philosophy," 139.

²²⁸ ST. II.II.139.1

human power or achievement, but about proper dependence on God as a source of strength and the end to which we direct and dedicate our lives.”²²⁹

Gifts of God’s grace are evident all over the revolution. There were many accounts of random acts of love to complete strangers, occurrences that do not normally take place in ordinary Philippine society. Herminio Astorga relates how he was arranging transportation from Luneta, a park where people were gathered in a rally, to EDSA. Just when he thought he had taken on an impossible task, people with private cars started coming by to offer rides. Willing to pay taxis out of his own pocket to ferry people to EDSA, he was dumbfounded when the taxis declined his money and offered to take people for free. He says: “I felt a sudden chill and my hair stood on end. ‘A miracle is happening,’ I told my wife.”

Other accounts feature small acts of extraordinary love. The police and military had long been despised and feared by the people for being the enforcers of martial law. In previous rallies and demonstrations, it was not uncommon for them to use violent means of crowd dispersal. Some soldiers defected along with Enrile and Ramos and were holed up in Camp Crame with no food supplies. Cardinal Sin called the people to EDSA to support them by coming to EDSA to form a human barrier and by bringing them food. Yolanda Lacuesta says “I used to hate the military and the police, but on Sunday I found myself preparing sandwiches for them. I heard over the radio that they needed food. I had to squeeze through a crowd just to bring food to the soldiers. I remembered all the times when I cursed them during rallies and was amazed that now I walked so far and worked so hard for them.”

²²⁹ de Young, “Power Made Perfect in Weakness,” 179.

Not only were people willing to lay down their lives for their country, but they were also willing to show benevolence by looking after the needs of those who in the past, had oppressed them. This was the kind of revolution that Rizal envisioned, one that humanized rather than dehumanized people. People who reach out with love to their fellow Filipinos, regardless of whether they are friend or foe, are worthy of being a free people. Filipinos had finally realized, in line with Rizal's ideals, that "revolution is not primarily an armed struggle to shed other people's blood, but a willingness to risk shedding one's own blood for the sake of the people."²³⁰

The Habit of Nonviolence

The commitment to nonviolence is a habit that was intentionally fostered. Beginning in 1984 and continuing through 1985, several organizations held seminars and workshops that taught the principles and techniques of active nonviolent action. These seminars were attended by many people including a lot of the religious who exerted great influence over the people at EDSA. Elwood says "it is believed that these ongoing seminars, workshops and training sessions throughout the country helped to condition the minds of many Filipinos for the February upheaval."²³¹

Fr. Jose Blanco, Secretary of IFOR and a leader of AKKAPKA, two organizations dedicated to promoting nonviolent resistance through these seminars, details two habits that one needs to prepare:

One must first develop the capacity to recognize the inherent value of all human life and dignity.... One must also prepare to willingly accept the consequences of one's protest – that is, harassment and suffering, possibly even imprisonment or death. "If you are not prepared for that," said Fr.

²³⁰ Schumacher, *The Making of a Nation*, 99.

²³¹ Elwood, *Philippine Revolution*, 27.

Blanco, “you will run away, curse, pick up a stone, or bring a gun.” Then nonviolence turns into counter-violence (Veritas, 19 March 1986).”²³²

The habits that one is urged to cultivate are both interior ones that require one to draw on spiritual resources. The first habit sounds easy enough, but what if the person you are asked to respect and value is someone who has done great harm to you or your family? Our instinctive reaction is to reduce the humanity of that person to the enemy. Sister Meden Howard, DSP, relates her struggle to recognize the value of the life and dignity of the soldiers while at EDSA. “I tell myself, These soldiers are not my enemies; they are my brothers – they’ll not hurt us. Next thing I know they are already hurting us – they are hurling teargas canisters at us.... I remind myself again and Our Lord, ‘They are not enemies. They are my brothers.’”²³³ Anyone who has truly tried to love their enemy realizes that this is an incredibly difficult task that requires great strength of will.

The second habit requires great spiritual strength and commitment to nonviolence. We are inclined to run away or lash out when attacked. To condition ourselves to sit, refrain from striking back and endure physical harm and the possibility of violence, requires great fortitude.

Fortitude is Active

There is a common misconception that fortitude, because of the emphasis Thomas gives *sustinere*, is passive non action. But it is not and it was never meant to be interpreted that way. *Fortitudo* has two parts: *sustinere* is the part which endures and suffers; and *aggredi* is the part that actively resists and initiates action. Non-action is not fortitude but cowardice. Fortitude actively, though not necessarily violently, resists

²³² Ibid., 22.

²³³ Nudas, *God with Us*, 57.

injustice. Nonviolent action needs *fortitudo* with both of its acts: *sustinere* and *aggredi*. *Sustinere* allows one to endure harm to one's person and *aggredi* encourages one to act in a subversive albeit nonviolent manner. Elwood says: "People power should be seen for what it is: not passive inaction but a viable mode of action. Nonviolent people power cannot occur unless the participants replace submissiveness and cowardice with struggle and courage. In fact, it takes far more courage to wield nonviolent power, because the people are unarmed."²³⁴ Fortitude as Thomas envisioned it was active sort of fortitude that People Power exemplifies in a fine way.

This is important to emphasize because more often than not, Filipinos are inclined to a very passive sort of fortitude. People Power is an example of them being properly inclined to the virtue of fortitude, as very often they allow injustices to prosper without actively resisting them. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Resilience, Fortitude, and Filipino values

In the Philippines, resilience is a highly valued trait. Ismael V. Mallari's seminal essay "Pliant like the Bamboo" has made its way into several local textbooks and has been a recurrent theme in all sorts of studies on Filipino values. Mallari relates the fable of the Mango tree and the Bamboo plant; which proceeds along very similar lines to the more familiar fable of the Hare and the Tortoise. Instead of competing about speed, the Mango tree and the Bamboo are in an argument about who is stronger. Asking the Wind to blow up a storm to test their strength, the Mango tree stands strong and unmoving, but the Wind proves too much for it and it is eventually uprooted. The Bamboo is wiser; instead of making itself stiff, it sways and bends with the wind and so is left standing

²³⁴ Elwood, *Philippine Revolution*, 22.

when the storm is over. Mallari likens Filipinos to the bamboo tree, relating incidents in Philippine history where the Filipino people have survived great adversity because of their ability to adjust to stronger forces. He says: “Verily, the Filipino is like the bamboo tree. In its grace, in its ability to adjust itself to the peculiar and inexplicable whims of fate, the bamboo tree is his expressive and symbolic national tree....”²³⁵

Being like the Bamboo helps Filipinos cope in adverse situations, enduring hardships, resisting destructive pressures, maintaining capacities and bouncing back after the storm has passed. The fable also subverts the meaning of strength. Many people around the world would equate size and mass with strength, the bamboo with its slight and slender frame is unimpressive beside a towering mango tree. Yet Filipinos value this unexpected characteristic, the ability to bend yet not break. A trait that is often seen as weakness, is for them an aspect of strength. For Filipinos, strength is not necessarily the ability to match brute force for brute force, but the ability to withstand the onslaught of a stronger force and survive; an interpretation that portrays an affinity to Thomistic fortitude as opposed to Aristotelian *andreia*. Like the Bamboo, Filipinos are resilient, recognizing the importance of being flexible in order to survive.

Suffering and hardship are universal phenomena. Some people are overwhelmed and left paralyzed when disaster strikes while others are able to galvanize their resources and meet challenges head on with grace and creativity. Resilience research is interested in the traits that help individuals to cope, and even flourish after experiencing suffering and hardship. This section will use Craig Steven Titus’ study of psychological resilience and its connection to the Thomistic fortitude as the framework for Filipino resilience. Titus

²³⁵ Ismael V. Mallari, “Pliant like the Bamboo,” in *World Literature*, ed. Cabanilla, J. Q. et al (Goodwill Trading Co., Inc., n.d.), 347.

identifies behaviors and coping mechanisms for resilience that correspond with habits that Thomas believes are essential for fortitude. Also, these resilient habits correlate strongly with Filipino traits. The section will weave together the three elements of psychological resilience, Thomistic fortitude, and Filipino cultural traits.

Psychosocial research on resilience is interested in understanding what factors are involved in the faltering of some people and the pressing on of others? When two similar events happen to two different people, how is it that one is strengthened by the experience while another is broken by it? “What initiates and sustains a resilient use of human resources? What renders some individuals and groups more resilient than others?”²³⁶ Resilience research is primarily concerned with identifying factors that enable people to cope with challenges in a way that empowers them to grow and flourish.

Titus creates a composite definition of resilience that encompasses three abilities: coping, resisting destructive pressures, and constructively creating. First, resilience is the ability to cope in adverse conditions; it endures, minimizes, or overcomes hardships. Second, it consists in resisting destructive pressures on the human person’s physiological, psychosocial, and spiritual life; that is, it maintains capacities in the face of challenges, threats, and loss. Third, resilience creatively constructs and adapts after adversity; it implies recovering with maturity, confidence, and wisdom to lead a meaningful and productive life.²³⁷

Psychosocial Science Studies on Fear and Attachment

One of the ways in which resilience research contributes to our understanding of fortitude is through its analysis of temperament. Temperament is defined as “a collection

²³⁶ Titus, *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude*, ix.

²³⁷ Ibid., 29.

of types of personality differences, which we can detect at an early age. It influences how we develop our characters, involve ourselves socially, and manage fearful situations.”²³⁸ Titus’ explanation of the timid temperament helps us to understand why some people are more inclined to fear than others. Research finds that some people are born more timid than others. They have psychological and biological markers that indicate this temperament. Titus explains:

Timid personalities tend to avoid the unfamiliar, shy away from the uncertain, talk less to strangers, and more easily suffer anxiety.... From birth, their hearts beat faster than other infants’ when faced with novel or strange situations.... These indicators suggest why we should consider an individual’s acquired vulnerability and resilience in the context of temperament and character development.²³⁹

Some people are simply born more fearful than others. They are born with a predisposition to fear. This does not mean that they will grow up to be cowardly, as predisposition is not destiny. However, people born with this temperament naturally find it more difficult to cultivate fortitude. Recognizing this inclination towards timidity is helpful as one tries to cultivate fortitude. One who is born timid develops fortitude by habituating oneself to overcome the fear and stress that arises from encountering new people and situations.

Another set of resilience studies focused on the correlation between fear and attachment are invaluable to our understanding of the factors which contribute to fortitude. “When we feel secure (well attached), we are not fearful. Inversely, when we feel afraid, we are not secure.”²⁴⁰ When we feel threatened, we draw security from our attachments, the people who love and support us as well as from our source of meaning

²³⁸ Ibid., 154.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 155.

and motivation. Whereas when we feel alone and unattached we become insecure and fearful. Possessing deep and stable attachments, whether to family or a religion, gives one the strength to stand firm in the face of danger. Attachments are a source of strength in our practice of resilience and fortitude. Because the un-attached lack the strength and comfort that comes from being attached, they are more afraid and thus more prone to flight when confronted with a threat.²⁴¹ The more fearful one is lessens the likelihood that one will be able to assess a situation and determine the right course of action. The security that attachment brings gives one the strength to stand firm and consider options that will lead to flourishing. Un-attachment renders one more vulnerable to behaving cowardly while attachment enables one to stand firm.

This study on attachment and its ability to enable one to stand firm in the face of danger and behave courageously is significant in the Philippine context as Filipinos in general feel deep attachment to both religion and family. Being the only Christian country in Asia, Filipinos exhibit a deep attachment to their religion. They explicitly see it as a source of strength. In *Pasyon and Revolution*, Ileo describes several instances where the peasant masses placed such confidence in their relationship with God that they entered into battle with weapons that were far inferior to their opponents. They believed that God was on their side and that gave them the strength and confidence to hold to their cause. In our exploration of EDSA we encountered similar stories of people who were afraid and wanted to run from the tanks but found strength in their prayer.

In an interview, Filipina migrant worker Alina Ganjuana, describes how her attachment to God gives her strength and hope: “In these years, I have learnt that spiritual strength counts more than anything else, including money. Because of the crisis, many

²⁴¹ Ibid., 156.

difficulties led me away from my faith, but I tried my best to keep my spirituality alive, above everything else. Faith and prayer helped me go forward and have given me the strength to continue hoping.”²⁴²

In the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, Filipinos are described as deeply attached to their families, and find in this attachment a source of security and confidence. It says: “... we Filipinos are **family oriented**. The *anak-magulang* (parent-child) relationship is of primary importance to us Filipinos... who cherish our filial attachment not only to our immediate family, but also to our extended family.... This family-centeredness supplies a basic sense of belonging, stability and security. It is from our families that we Filipinos naturally draw our sense of self-identity.”²⁴³ Also, unlike in the United States where it is common for children to move out of their family home and live on their own once they turn 18, Filipino children only move out when they marry, and even young married couples frequently stay with their parents, or if they have children sometimes alternate between both of their parent’s homes. Many Filipino children live at least part of their childhood, if not all of it, in a home with a grandparent. Applying Titus’ observations about the value of attachment in helping a person to overcome fear and stand firm, the natural attachment that Filipinos exhibit towards God and family contributes to their ability to be resilient through trying times.

One of the most important aspects of fortitude is moderating fear. Fear that leads to a cycle of worry and anxiety has a tendency to escalate and spiral out of control. Resilience studies suggest ways that people manage fear through self-soothing, game

²⁴² Santosh Digal, “Faith Helps Filipino Migrants Cope with the Economic Crisis,” *Asia News*, March 15, 2010, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Faith-helps-Filipino-migrants-cope-with-the-economic-crisis-17888.html>.

²⁴³ Catholic Church Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (ECCCE Word and Life Publications, 1997), 13.

playing and self-confidence.²⁴⁴ When we are conscious of our fear and its causes, we can identify the beginning of an anxiety attack and begin self-soothing techniques such as talking ourselves out of the worry–anxiety spiral, as well as relaxation techniques like deep breathing and meditation.²⁴⁵

Another method that researchers have found effective in coping with fear (particularly in children) is playing games.²⁴⁶ Playing games works on both the conscious and the unconscious level. On the conscious level, playing games develops problem solving skills. On the unconscious level, it gives our mind time to compose itself and process the problem.

Some of the most striking images of Filipinos in the aftermath of a natural disaster are of them playing games. One photograph that was published on the front page of a major newspaper featured two men playing chess during a storm. The two men are seated at a table, outdoors, playing a serious game of chess. What is remarkable is that they are doing it during a storm, one can see the heavy rain pelting down on them, and the flood waters rising to cover their feet and their legs almost to their knees and in the background there are children with huge smiles on their faces as they swim and play in the dirty flood water in the middle of a street.

Another image that was widely published after super storm Yolanda devastated an entire region of the Philippines was of teenagers playing basketball against a backdrop of a town in shambles. Foreign correspondent Todd Pittman from the Associate Press writes:

²⁴⁴ Titus, *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude*, 167.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 168.

They found the hoop in the ruins of their obliterated neighborhood. They propped up the backboard with broken wood beams and rusty nails scavenged from vast mounds of storm-blasted homes. A crowd gathered around. And on one of the few stretches of road here that wasn't overflowing with debris, they played basketball.... As a foreign correspondent working in the middle of a horrendous disaster zone, I didn't expect to see people having a good time – or asking me to play ball. I was even more stunned when I learned that the basketball goal was one of the first things this neighborhood rebuilt. It took a moment for me to realize that it made all the sense in the world. The kids wanted to play so they can take their minds off what happened, said Elanie Saranillo, one of the spectators. “And we want to watch so we, too, can forget.”²⁴⁷

Many images in the aftermath of a natural disaster show Filipinos playing games. Playing games helps them to cope with the enormity of the tragedy, to show that their spirit is not broken and to help take their minds off the enormity of their problems.

Finally, research has shown that confidence in our abilities gives rise to hope, and together, hope and self-confidence are strong determinants in overcoming fear.²⁴⁸ Someone who is self-confident and hopeful is much less likely to give in to anxiety and depression. When someone is beset by trouble, the confidence in one's own ability to endure and overcome the challenge spells the difference between moral growth and depression.

Constructive Resilience in the Philippines

A study on arousal and performance finds that “high levels of ‘incentive arousal’ as an active coping aid in motivating and focusing attention on a primary task, while keeping contact with secondary ones, and even lowering levels of effort and energy dispensed.”²⁴⁹ Titus compares the findings in this study to Thomas' description of the

²⁴⁷ Pitman, Todd, “Street Ball Lifts ‘Yolanda’ Victims’ Spirits,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 21, 2013, sec. News, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/531537/street-ball-lifts-victims-spirits>.

²⁴⁸ Titus, *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude*, 168.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

magnanimous man. Thomas describes the magnanimous man as one who is not easily distracted by petty matters and who is motivated by a grand project that holds his focus and attention. His description of the magnanimous man easily fits the studies on someone who has a high level of incentive arousal.

Titus elaborates on constructive resilience in relation to *aggredi*, the initiative taking aspect of fortitude. “Constructive resilience entails rebuilding in the wake of disasters. It empowers us to face the challenges present in worthwhile but difficult projects, enabling us to build something positive out of destructive events.”²⁵⁰ He concludes that “when one is faced with trying circumstances, natural inclinations can produce an initial assertiveness, which can form the first step toward acting to protect the well-being of one’s society, family, or self.”²⁵¹

Due to a combination of its geography and politics, the Philippines is a country that “endures” much in the way of trials of the human spirit, from overwhelming poverty to natural disasters. Every year dozens of people die while thousands more lose their homes and possessions to floods, landslides, and typhoons. Yet after each death and disaster has passed, Filipinos return and rebuild, displaying a rare, unique resiliency of spirit.

In the aftermath of a couple of catastrophic storms, Conrado de Quiros, a newspaper columnist, writes on Filipino resilience. He says resilience is “resident in the Filipino, particularly the way he handles disaster. It’s not just how the community galvanizes into action to come to the aid of the victims, it’s how the victims themselves

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 188.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 203.

respond to their ravaging.”²⁵² World Health Organization director, Margaret Chan, visiting the Philippines in the aftermath of the same storm had similar praise for Filipinos saying: “I am amazed by the Filipino people’s resilient spirit in these challenging times.”²⁵³

De Quiros claims that Filipino response to adversity is due in large part to their creativity. A community that lives on a giant trash heap creates beautiful artwork and accessories out of garbage. Two decades ago, a volcano erupted in Pampanga, covering a large part of the land with lahar. Deprived of their income in a devastated land, people from Pampanga started making statues out of lahar to sell to tourists. De Quiros points to these examples that he says show Filipino resilience in the “indomitability of the human spirit.”

Another type of hardship that many Filipinos are exposed to is working in a different country. Filipino migrant workers endure great hardship and exploitation overseas in order to support their families in the Philippines. They endure substandard living conditions, unfair labor practices, and abusive employers in order to be able to send money home to their families so that their families can have a better life. Displaying the spirit of resiliency, they adapt and persevere in new, harsh, and often unjust environments. They not only survive but in coping with adversity they achieve personal growth. A study on Philippine migrant workers notes:

Despite the seemingly exploited lives, migrant workers have adapted to living transitionally and at the margins. They have successfully formed communities of compatriots abroad. The inspiring aspect of their difficult experience, from an existential perspective, is that they have discovered a sense of personal freedom and autonomy, they are more aware of

²⁵² Conrado de Quiros, “Filipino Resilience,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 20, 2009, sec. Opinion.

²⁵³ “WHO Philippines-WHO Director General Visits Ondoy Victims,” accessed February 13, 2010, <http://www.wpro.who.int/philippines/home/>.

themselves as persons with their own dreams and preferences and not merely as breadwinners. Self-awareness has also enabled them to cope with episodes of abuse that are common to the everyday lives of migrants, regarding these problems as trials that inevitably pass away.²⁵⁴

These examples show the constructive resilience of Filipinos in coping with natural disasters and living as aliens in foreign land. After a storm has passed, the people whose homes have been ruined are seen picking up their belongings and washing out the mud, trying to regain some semblance of order in their homes. They pick through their remaining possessions, determining what can be salvaged, and figuring out how to replace what is lost. They actively rebuild their lives. The same can be said for the migrant worker's ability to reconstruct their lives in strange countries under harsh living conditions. They overcome the separation from their family by forming new communities and survive the harsh working conditions they are often subjected to by finding meaning and growth.

Solidarity and Bayanihan, Passivity and Bahala Na, Filipino Patience and the Optimistic Temperament

The virtues associated with *sustinere*, the enduring aspect of fortitude are virtual synonyms of resilience. Perseverance is the virtue that enables one to continue in an arduous undertaking over a prolonged period over time. It is easier to endure something difficult or painful for a short period of time. The more time passes, a certain fatigue from the passing of time adds to the difficulty of the endeavor. Titus says that "perseverance serves as a synonym for resilience efforts that demand completion over time: coping, conserving, and constructing."

²⁵⁴ M. C. R. B. Bautista, "Migrant Workers and Their Environments: Insights from the Filipino Diaspora," in *UNU Global Seminar 18th Shonan Session. Shonan Village, Kanagawa, Japan.*, vol. 20, 2002, 5, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.199.1008&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

While patience is rarely mentioned in resilience research, Titus finds parallels between the coping mechanisms of evasion and passivity, and the virtue of patience.²⁵⁵ There are some situations where it is best not to directly confront the problem. Sometimes, one survives best by evading or being passive. Another study on solidarity provides insight into the virtue of patience. “In the midst of physical and psychological pain, we find that a sense of solidarity and justice (moral order) serves as anchoring experiences, which give us strength to weather the difficulty.”²⁵⁶ One study has found that children, who experience parental injustice, cope better when they feel a sense of solidarity with their siblings who either suffer with them or are compassionate towards them.²⁵⁷ We suffer more easily when we suffer in company; and suffering in solidarity strengthens resilient behavior.

Bayanihan, a core Filipino character trait is a way in which Filipinos express solidarity. This concept springs from an old tradition where people of a village got together to help a family move their home. In olden times, the house was placed on bamboo poles and the men of the village carried the whole house from one spot to another. Then the family would thank their neighbors by providing a small feast. *Bayanihan* is an application of the Catholic principle of subsidiarity where small groups of people unite to accomplish a particular goal for the wellbeing of the community. For example, when a national disaster occurs, relief comes from many different organizations. The different government agencies naturally respond but they are integrally supplemented by the many private organizations that have their own resources and procedures for collecting goods, packing them and redistributing them to affected

²⁵⁵ *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude*, 254.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

areas. People in these private organizations such as schools, companies, but even in the houses of private individuals, spontaneously congregate in order to help the victims of the disaster. This is how contemporary Filipinos tend to practice *bayanihan*.

In Ateneo de Manila University, relief operations are set up in the covered basketball courts and the sheer volume of people who arrive to help is overwhelming. They have to turn volunteers away, as the relief operation is unable to accommodate more than one thousand at a time. People are assigned to receive donations, others are given the task of sorting and repacking donations, others are assigned to deliver the repackaged goods to depressed areas, while others volunteer to help the victims clean their homes and belongings. The eagerness of people to help in a personal, tangible way those who are suffering is the spirit of *bayanihan*. The outpouring of support and sympathy that the victims of tragedy receive helps them to cope with their loss.

Titus' correlation between the coping mechanisms of evasion and passivity, and the virtue of patience is also relevant to the Filipino experience. Filipinos excel at evasion and passivity. The Filipino expression '*bahala na*' symbolizes a cultural attitude. It is an ambiguous trait and has both negative and positive connotations. Often, when used colloquially, expresses a fatalistic passivity. For example, a student who is too lazy to study for an exam may say "*Bahala na*" which in this context means 'come what may.' This is a negative, fatalistic sort of passivity. On the other hand a student who has studied very hard for the exam says "*Bahala na*" and in this context it means 'I have done my best and God will help me with the rest.' This is a positive sort of passivity that "gives him/her a psychological peace of mind and an emotional stability."²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Rolando M. Gripaldo, "Bahala Na [Come What May]: A Philosophical Analysis," in *Filipino Cultural Traits: Claro R. Ceniza Lectures*, ed. Rolando M. Gripaldo (CRVP, 2005), 215.

In the second context, “*Bahala na*” functions as a coping mechanism. For example, a Filipina decides to migrate overseas to work in order to pay certain debts, send her children to school, and buy medicine for her parents, may use “*Bahala na*” in this context to denote her uncertainty of the future and her trust in divine providence. Will her employers honor her contract? Will they treat her well? Will her husband be unfaithful while she is gone? “Plagued by these uncertainties, the worker is not sure as to the outcome of her going abroad to work. She leaves to God whatever may become of her and her family. She leaves to God her fate. God will guide and take care of her and her family. Such attitude gives her, at least temporarily, peace of mind.”²⁵⁹ In his analysis of “*Bahala na*,” Rolando Gripaldo explains that it “recognizes the precariousness and uncertainty of the future but at the same time hopes that Providence will take care of that future.”²⁶⁰ The “*Bahala na*” attitude is an expression of the faith and of trust in God. It is type of passivity that helps Filipinos to cope with the uncertainties of life and enables them to be optimistic about the future, trusting in God’s providence.

The ability to endure hardship without being broken by it is patience, a virtue that Thomas categorizes as a potential part of fortitude. The duration of hardship is another factor that often wears people down. For example, having a root canal or giving birth is an example of hardship that is relatively brief. The pain is intense but it is easier to steel one’s mind to endure because one knows that the pain will stop in the near future. In contrast to the example of someone who goes to war, after the initial excitement wears off and one has been away from one’s family for months surrounded by suffering and death, it is easy to see how one becomes depressed and despondent, particularly if there is

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 205.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 214.

no foreseeable end. Hence, as Thomas says, “the necessity for a virtue to safeguard the good of reason against sorrow, lest reason give way to sorrow: and this patience does.”²⁶¹

In a study on Filipino migrants, Rozanna Verder-Aliga explains how their lack of mental illness is a product of their resilience:

The term, psychological resilience, defined as the individual’s ability and capacity to withstand stressors, explains the absence of mental illness or psychological distress among these participants.... All of these participants show inner strength, brave endurance, a sense of coherence, and tenacious resilience. Their resilient nature has immunized them from developing anxiety or depressive-like symptoms.²⁶²

The Filipino response to natural disaster as well as the various studies on the resilience of immigrant Filipinos is indicative of their ability to not only endure trials and hardship over prolonged periods of time but they are able to do so while keeping in good spirits. Filipino sociologists points to this very trait using Mallari’s analogy:

The bamboo symbolizes flexibility, endurance and harmony with nature; it does not fight the wind but outlasts the storm. In its being able to bend, the bamboo is able to withstand the forces of wind and rain.... The Filipino goes along with things, bends with fate rather than stands against things. He has the qualities of flexibility and endurance.... His resiliency helps to maintain his good-naturedness and good sense and ability to achieve a measure of recovery and progress under the most discouraging barriers. Resiliency made the Filipino people such a hardy and indomitable race....²⁶³

From the above examples, one might extrapolate that Filipinos as a society are naturally inclined to patience. They are able to maintain their good spirits in spite of the many trials and hardships that beset them. This aspect of Filipino fortitude is noteworthy because of the rising incidence of mental illness in more developed countries. Many

²⁶¹ ST II.II.136.1

²⁶² Rozzana Verder-Aliga, “Elderly Female Filipino Immigrants,” *Journal of Filipino Studies: An Electronic Journal*, no. CFSJ-CSUEB-2007 (n.d.), <http://journaloffilipinostudies.csueastbay.edu/html/verder-aliga.html>.

²⁶³ Tomas Quintin D. Andres, *Positive Filipino Values* (New Day Publishers, 1989), 11–12.

people all over the world struggle to cope with adversity in their daily lives and many give up the fight and despair. Insight into the Filipino psyche, their ability to be resilient without becoming depressed, to feel joy in the midst of devastation can contribute to a renewal of fortitude that will be relevant across cultures.

Psychosocial research has identified an optimistic and hopeful temperament as crucial to both the initiative taking part and the enduring part of fortitude. “Optimistic strategies spell active ways to face suffering and hardship; they involve a sort of confidence that eventually we shall manage the problem at hand.”²⁶⁴ Whether it has to do with the initiative to creatively construct one’s life after a disaster or the ability to endure difficult times, hopefulness and optimism help one to cope. Psychosocial research defines the person with an optimistic temperament as one who acts with the expectation of a good outcome.²⁶⁵ The optimistic person is someone who believes that despite the trials and difficulties that beset one, things will turn out well. Not only does this person believe in the best possible outcome but actively works towards it. There are people who when presented with a challenge can only perceive the setbacks and are unable to work towards a positive outcome because they fail to visualize it and so they are stumped by their outlook. Whereas the optimistic and hopeful person is able to creatively envision and work towards a positive outcome.

While the psycho-social studies do not make moral judgments, they provide invaluable insight into the human psyche. When they are integrated into Thomas’ virtue framework we gain a better understanding of our impulses and behavior as we deal with fear and the types of personalities that are more fearful. The studies on temperament are

²⁶⁴ Titus, *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude*, 256.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 215.

especially useful from a developmental perspective. Temperaments are innate but they can also be learned. One can counter a timid temperament by consistently acting in a brave manner. Or one can change a pessimistic temperament into an optimistic one by repeatedly telling oneself that things will work out for the best, by cultivating hope, so to speak.

Titus believes that putting Thomas' virtue of fortitude in dialogue with the psychosocial sciences enhances the way each field understands the human person. "Resilience findings aid in enhancing virtue theory concerning how humans endure difficulty or suffering, hold firm in a painful struggle, resist self-destructive pressures, wait for the attainment of good, persist until the accomplishment of some goal, and even express sorrow as a virtuous good."²⁶⁶ The psychosocial sciences contribute to our understanding of the factors that lead to moral growth and the development of fortitude. Meanwhile, Thomistic philosophy and theology provide a more comprehensive framework in which to situate the insights into human nature garnered from resilience studies.²⁶⁷

Joyful Fortitude

Finally, a unique aspect of the Philippine experience of fortitude is the joy they express despite being in desperate circumstances. The last section will explore the Filipino tendency to be joyful in situations of grief and despair in a range of situations: from everyday occurrences such as wakes, to yearly city festivals which commemorate a

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 262.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 364.

period of devastation for the inhabitants of the city, and finally the expression of joy in the EDSA revolution.

Unlike the other virtues it is difficult to conceive of fortitude as being joyful. This is mainly due to the function of its principal part which is to endure suffering. Endurance of suffering is neither joyful nor pleasurable. Whereas generally, acts of virtues are pleasurable to the virtuous man, Aristotle recognizes that courage presents an apparent counterexample to this thesis. He compares the pleasure that horse lovers get when they behold a horse, to how “just acts give pleasure to a lover of justice, and virtuous conduct generally to the lover of virtue” (N.E.1099.a). However, he believes that “courage implies the presence of pain” (N.E.1117.a). And while it does bring happiness, because someone who practices acts of courage becomes virtuous and being virtuous brings happiness, he does not equate this happiness with pleasure. He says: “It is not true, then, of every virtue that the exercise of it is pleasurable, except in so far as one attains the end” (NE. 1117.b).

Similarly, Thomas is equally cautious about attributing pleasure to acts of fortitude. He begins by distinguishing between bodily and spiritual pleasure. He determines that acts of virtue give one spiritual pleasure, especially in fortitude where a person often endures harm to one’s body that is contrary to bodily pleasure. Fortitude is unique in that one experiences both spiritual pleasure from the act of fortitude and spiritual sorrow because of the harm to the body and the loss life.²⁶⁸ It is entirely possible that in the face of great bodily pain, one loses spiritual pleasure as Thomas says: “In the brave man spiritual sorrow is overcome by the delight of virtue. Yet since bodily pain is more sensible, and the sensitive apprehension is more in evidence to man, it follows that

²⁶⁸ ST. II.II.123.8

spiritual pleasure in the end of virtue fades away, so to speak, in the presence of great bodily pain.”²⁶⁹

A unique aspect to Philippine fortitude is the joyful attitude of the Filipinos, their cheerfulness and laughter, and even to take pleasure in situations that look dire. This is an aspect of fortitude that was unforeseen by Aristotle and Thomas, though it springs from the different cultural context of the virtue. Filipinos are not mad; they do not display joy or feel pleasure in the midst of great physical pain. However, they are able to feel joy and laugh in the midst of great adversity. De Quiros describes the relief operations after Typhoon Ondoy brought devastating floods to parts of the country. He says:

I too shared the reaction of the American soldiers who were amazed at the sight of kids grinning from ear to ear when they came to give relief.... the sight was still incongruous. Certainly that was not the sight that greeted the relief givers in New Orleans in the aftermath of “Katrina.” Gratefulness, much less cheerfulness, was not the emotion the victims registered on their faces, or gave the relief-givers to understand. That was true for men, women, and children....²⁷⁰

After another typhoon, super typhoon Yolanda, Todd Pitman similarly notes the difference in Filipino resilience. He says “I covered the aftermath of the 2011 tsunami in Japan, and cannot recall a single laugh. Every nation is resilient in its own way, but there is something different in the Philippines that I have not yet put my finger on.”²⁷¹

This joyful attitude in the midst of trials and devastation is what this section will describe through the examples of wakes, city festivals, and the EDSA revolution.

²⁶⁹ ST.II.II.123.8.ad.3

²⁷⁰ Conrado de Quiros, “Filipino Resilience.”

²⁷¹ Pitman, Todd, “Street Ball Lifts ‘Yolanda’ Victims’ Spirits.”

Celebration amidst Suffering: Wakes and Festivals

Filipinos have a penchant for finding reasons to be joyful and celebrate despite tragic situations. A distinctive example would be a Filipino wake. Wakes in the Philippines go on around the clock for anywhere between five to twenty days. They are notorious for generally not being solemn and sad affairs but rather occasions to gather, to drink, and to gamble. This is not to say that there is no grieving and crying, people close to the deceased mourn. But that the general atmosphere of the people at the wake is celebratory. De Quiros hypothesizes that this attitude is due in large part to his ‘gallows’ sense of humor. “The Filipino is not beyond looking death in the face, and laughing.”²⁷²

Two prominent festivals in the country will serve as a more institutionalized example for Filipino resilience, commitment to joy and celebration in the face of adversity. Both festivals commemorate the show of fortitude in the face of great hardship that the people of their city displayed. Masskara Festival is celebrated in Bacolod City on the third weekend of October to celebrate the City’s Charter day. The Empanada festival is celebrated on June 23, the Charter day of Batac City in Ilocos Norte, a town in the north of the Philippines.

Masskara began in 1980, during a period of hardship and sadness in the city. It was a lean year for many of Bacolod’s citizens as sugarcane, Bacolod’s main industry, was at an all-time low. It was a time of hardship and desperation, with people worried about not being able to pay bills. Then tragedy struck. In June, the *Don Juan*, a passenger vessel ferrying people from Bacolod to Manila, sank. An estimated seven hundred passengers perished, including members of from many of the city’s prominent families. In order to lift people’s spirits, local artists, government and civic groups decided to have

²⁷² Conrado de Quiros, “Filipino Resilience.”

a festival of smiles. “They reasoned that a festival was also a good opportunity to pull the residents out of the pervasive gloomy atmosphere. The initial festival was therefore, a declaration by the people of the city that no matter how tough and bad the times were, Bacolod City is going to pull through, survive, and in the end, triumph.”²⁷³

Batac was a relatively prosperous town before the World War II. However, the war brought famine and suffering. The Bataquenos, though, armed with their resilience found ways to solve the problem of starvation. A family of good cooks started to make a delicacy which could serve as a complete meal for the Ilocano family, using what is readily available in their agricultural lands and in their poultries. This family produced what we now know as the Batac Empanada. Made from rice, papaya, mung beans, egg, and longaniza, this culinary delicacy is the focus of the City’s Charter day celebration. There are songs and dances featuring the ingredients and steps in cooking the empanada which every child in Batac learns. Like Bacolod city, the people from Batac celebrate their hardiness, their resilience, their ability to survive a time of extreme famine and hardship and the initiative of a family of cooks that helped them to recover.

Both cities refused to give into despair, instead, they took the initiative to confront their problems and figure out a way to move forward, demonstrating Titus’ constructive resilience. Not only did they figure out a way to move forward, but were aware of their own resilience and celebrated it. Refusing to give in to grief, they chose methods that would bring laughter and smiles, in an effort to lift people’s flagging spirits.

²⁷³ “The MassKara Festival 2012 | Life’s Good in Bacolod – Why MassKara?,” accessed August 6, 2012, <http://www.themasskarafestival.com/about-masskara/why-masskara/>.

People Power

One of the more unique aspects of the People Power revolution is the joyful attitude of the Filipinos. In his preface to *An Eyewitness History: People Power...*, Francisco Tatad claims “Revolutions tend to be ugly, even when successful. This is an exception; it is a ‘beautiful revolution.’ Its ‘combatants’ include men, women, and children who had more fun than fear during the event, and who like to think of what they went through as a religious experience.”²⁷⁴ In reading the accounts of the participants at EDSA these two things stand out. First, the participants viewed their experience of the revolution through the lens of faith. Second, many referred to the atmosphere, which should have been very tense and serious, as joyful. This is not to say that there were no tense or serious moments, there were moments of great tension and fear as testified to by Sister Terry and Lulu Castaneda. But there were also many lighthearted moments of pleasure, with people celebrating, and partying in the streets. A participant, Amado Lacuesta, observes:

When I first see the barricade of sandbags across EDSA near White Plains road, I do not know whether to cheer or laugh. It is barely thigh-high and looks puny, as though it couldn’t stop a pushcart. But the young people astride it, waving their banners and laughing and cheering and flashing the L-sign, do not seem worried.... More people, vehicles, laughter, cheers. I shake my head. This isn’t revolution. It’s fiesta, only more fun.²⁷⁵

The gift of laughter in the face of overwhelming, disheartening odds is a remarkable characteristic in the Filipino. People were happy and celebratory because they were gathered together, despite being in grave danger with little to protect them. In a homily, Bishop Ted Bacani said “Mr Marcos announced a smiling martial law but the

²⁷⁴ Mercado, *An Eyewitness History*, 8.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 122.

people were not smiling. Now we have a laughing revolution and all of us are happy.... This is a merry revolution, because Mary, the Mother of the Lord, is with us.”

Fr. Blanco says: “Our darkest hour could not take away our humor. Our tensest moments could not cancel out our joy. Our patience, our resilience, our humor paid out.... Unless we take these qualities of ours as a people, we will not understand Filipino people power. This patience, this resilience, this humor and joy will be – along with the grace of God – our most valuable assets....”²⁷⁶

Perhaps the most notable gift that Filipinos add to fortitude is a sense of joy (saya) and laughter. “Laughter is a way of life for every Filipino. It sustains them in times of hardship, just as laughter helped ease the isolated life Rizal led in a foreign land. Many OFWs, Filipino migrants and poverty stricken Filipinos find solace in laughter.”²⁷⁷ Filipinos’ penchant for laughter and celebration amidst the direst of circumstance conveys a cheerfulness that is integral to a Thomistic definition of virtue. There is a way, subtle yet radiant, in which Filipinos are able to transform resiliency beyond mere survival.

Conclusion

This chapter offers ways that Filipinos have “thickened” the virtue of fortitude in a manner that could bestow insight on the renewal of the virtue across cultures. As each culture lives out its own unique specification of the virtues, these examples demonstrate the way in which Thomistic fortitude is specified in the Philippines according to the defining characteristics of Thomas’ fortitude; such as his emphasis on *sustinere*, the

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 306.

²⁷⁷ Renato Perdon, *Understanding Jose Rizal* (Manila Prints, 2011), ix.

enduring part of fortitude, as well as his high regard for the sacrifice of oneself for a higher good. Through these examples, we will see that Filipinos have a natural inclination towards *sustinere* over Aristotelian *andreia* and that they value Thomas' martyr more highly than they value Aristotle's warrior hero. These examples make evident the strong affinity that Filipinos have towards a Thomistic conceptualization of fortitude over Aristotelian courage.

Ideally, a study of the ways in which a universally recognized virtue is specified in a particular locality should yield characteristics that contribute to the wider dialogue about the universal virtue. Courage is a 'perennial virtue' because it is considered a desirable character trait in every culture and generation as it is "integrally related to the human capacity to sustain a course of action, based on overarching principles, ideals, plans."²⁷⁸ People all over the world, regardless of time and culture need fortitude to live a good life.

Anne Patrick challenges us to rethink our formulations of the virtues in a way that encourages flourishing in today's world. She asks "...what configuration of values and virtues is most desirable in today's world and how should we contribute to the process of transforming inadequate notions of value and virtue for the sake of the Kingdom?"²⁷⁹ Thus we can reformulate our earlier question in light of Patrick's challenge. Instead of merely asking: What does fortitude in the Philippines look like? We need to ask: What characteristics of fortitude can be appropriated from the Filipino experience can be helpful to other people struggling to be courageous? Many countries suffer trials similar

²⁷⁸ Jean Porter, "Perennial and Timely Virtues: Practical Wisdom, Courage, and Temperance," in *Changing Values and Virtues*, ed. Dietmar Mieth and Jacques Pohier (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 61.

²⁷⁹ Anne Patrick, "Narrative and the Social Dynamics of Virtue," in *Changing Values and Virtues*, ed. Dietmar Mieth and Jacques Pohier (T. & T. Clark, 1987), 69.

to those that beset the Philippines. There are places where people are oppressed and marginalized, or that are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. Looking at patterns of fear in the world, a new dimension for fortitude emerges. A recent study states that as many as one in three Europeans suffer from some sort of mental disorder, with anxiety, depression and insomnia topping the list.²⁸⁰ What sort of fortitude does someone with depression need?

Yet Patrick's challenge also provokes new questions for Filipino fortitude. What is inadequate about Filipino fortitude? Does it lead to flourishing for all? Why is it exalted? These questions form the subject for our next chapter.

The ways in which the Philippines "thickens" the virtue of fortitude offers other cultures a useful model with which to deal with the arduousness of life, whether it be oppression, natural disaster, or mental disorders such as anxiety. Filipinos add something of their own culture to the virtue of fortitude, giving it distinctive elements that contribute to a greater understanding of fortitude as a general virtue. Characteristics such as adaptability, affableness, dislike for conflict and a desire for smooth interpersonal relations color fortitude and give it its 'thickness.' In the same way that the story of the tortoise and the hare transcended culture and became a universal fable teaching all youngsters who read it the value of doing things slowly and surely, perhaps the story of the mango tree and the bamboo can teach people the value of resilience, of being able to go with the flow of things and to be able to avoid direct confrontation when it is the more prudent course. Filipino resilience and joy also offer possible avenues to expand and enrich the human experience of fortitude across many cultures.

²⁸⁰ Sarah Boseley, "A Third of Europeans Are Suffering from a Mental Disorder in Any One Year," *The Guardian*, September 5, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/sep/05/third-europeans-mental-disorder>.

Chapter 3: A Critique of Filipino Fortitude

Introduction

The third chapter explored how the Filipino affinity to the *Pasyon* narrative inclined them to a sort of Thomistic fortitude. Let us take for example Thomas' point that the main act of fortitude is in the endurance of hardship for the sake of faith or justice. Influenced by the *Pasyon* narrative, the endurance of suffering for justice and liberation became an overarching ideal in Filipino culture exhibited in their choice of a national hero, Jose Rizal and exemplified at the EDSA revolution. Further, Filipinos thickened their social inclination to fortitude, so that while it is grounded on a Thomistic framework, it possesses characteristics of joy and resilience that are uniquely Filipino.

This chapter will have two parts. The first part will engage in a social-ethical critique of fortitude in the Philippines. There are reasons to be suspicious of the virtues that a society exalts. Virtue language has often been used to maintain an unjust social order. The honor attached to certain virtues and the shame that is conferred on those with certain vices have a long history of being used to subtly control the way a society behaves. Courage, as one of the most prominent virtues, is particularly susceptible to this misuse. There are two common pitfalls in the exaltation of courage in the context of a particular society. The first is highlighted by Rorty, who is concerned that the acclaim and honor given to the courageous disposes people to become overly combative. A second danger is exemplified in the Philippine context where fortitude has become overly resilient. Each is an exaggeration of one of fortitude's integral parts to the detriment of the other integral part. This chapter provides a critique of Filipino fortitude. My main

contention in this chapter is that the exaltation of Filipino fortitude leads to a lopsided practice of the virtue where resilience or the aspect of *sustinere*, is exalted and practiced to the detriment of *aggredi*. This lopsided practice promotes a type of resilience that is passive. This is problematic as it works to reinforce a cultural disinclination to justice, making fortitude in this context vicious.

The second part of this chapter will argue for the importance of anger as a corrective to an overly passive Filipino fortitude. Anger is a complicated emotion in Philippine society. It is not that Filipinos do not feel anger, rather, there are cultural norms about how anger is something best kept in and not expressed. This disinclination to express anger feeds the culture of passive resilience and injustice. This section will use philosophical and theological sources on good anger to demonstrate its importance, particularly in its liberating effect. Anger is the passion that fuels the demand for change and reform for a more just society.

A contemporary retrieval of fortitude in the Philippines takes into account the unique features of Philippine society, such as the tendency towards a passive, resilient fortitude, and the disinclination towards justice and the reluctance to show anger. These deficiencies hinder the development of true fortitude that upholds justice and leads to flourishing for all.

Filipino Fortitude, A Critique

Suspicious of Virtue

The most common and effective way of communicating and teaching the virtues is through stories. Not only are they an effective pedagogical tool as they show one the

sort of actions that constitute that virtue, but they also portray the context-specific nuances of a virtue. William Spohn says that “Virtues are internally shaped by cultural stories that indicate how to be fair, honest, or chaste. Virtues take on different forms from culture to culture because they are backed by different paradigmatic stories.... paradigms exercise a normative role through the analogical imagination, which seeks to act in novel circumstances in ways that are faithful to the original pattern.”²⁸¹ We learn from the stories in our culture what sort of virtues are ideal and praised and we often seek to emulate and live the virtues that we imbibe from our cultural stories.

Because virtues are able to be conveyed subtly, through stories, they are ideally suited to being used for political means. Hauerwas reminds us that “Too often politics is treated solely as a matter of power, interests, or technique. We thus forget that the most basic task of any polity is to offer its people a sense of participation in an adventure. For finally what we seek is not power, or security, or equality, or even dignity, but a sense of worth gained from participation and contribution to a common adventure. Indeed our ‘dignity’ derives exactly from our sense of having played a part in such a story.”²⁸² Many political leaders or parties maintain their power because they propagate a compelling myth that resonates with their citizens, allowing them to take part in a story.

A particularly potent myth is one that appeals to the fears of a rich, conservative base that plays on their fear of instability. An excellent example of this is found in the myths and stories that propagated the spread of fascism in Italy. In fact, one historian, Tracy Koon contends that Benito Mussolini’s successful leadership lay not in his political acumen but in his understanding of the hopes and fears of his people and his ability to

²⁸¹ Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise*, 32.

²⁸² Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 13.

“manufacture and communicate myths and slogans that captured the popular imagination.”²⁸³ Mussolini’s government made use of the most effective tools for communication and dissemination of propaganda, the media and the educational system in order to tell stories that portrayed the fascist virtues of loyalty and obedience that Mussolini’s government wanted the Italian people to inculcate. She says “Fascism made widespread use of the media and the educational system to push a whole series of myths that were, by virtue of repetition and familiarity, more real to many.... In these myths is the essence of fascism as it was presented to the Italian people: they tell us what the regime’s leaders wanted the Italians to believe and what they wanted them to become.”²⁸⁴

Mussolini and his government used the language of virtue to establish an order that allowed grave abuses of power and human rights violations. Koon describes their propaganda as advocating the virtues of a religious warrior using terms such courage, discipline, obedience, self-sacrifice and martyrdom. Political machinery created a myth, that “portrayed Fascist Italy as a new army on the march in the service of a rejuvenated nation”²⁸⁵ where discipline and obedience were the most important virtues a citizen could possess.²⁸⁶

In the United States, the inculcation of similar virtues was propagated by William Bennett, a former United States Secretary of Education in his New York Times Bestselling *Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Moral Stories* published in 1993. Taking Plato’s *Republic* as the model, Bennett says “The purpose of this book is to show parents, teachers, students, and children what the virtues look like, what they are in practice, how

²⁸³ Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943* (UNC Press Books, 1985), 3.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

to recognize them, and how they work.”²⁸⁷ His aim is to enable a ‘moral literacy’ so that through the stories and poems children can see what these ten virtues and their vices look like in order to emulate or avoid them. Though largely popular, Bennett has drawn criticism for which virtues he chose to include and which virtues were left out. In an Aristotelian fashion, with Aristotelian-like limitations, Bennett’s virtues benefit a particular stratum in American society. Aristotle’s virtues were for the men in Greek society who possessed the potential to reach his top tiered virtues, by virtue of their social status. Women and slaves are excluded from the flourishing that Aristotle envisions. Similarly Bennett’s virtues are written for a particular stratum of American society. His critics accuse him of ignoring the marginalized in his list of virtues. For example, Ian Heston Doescher accuses Bennett of picking virtues that will form faithful and patriotic citizens of the United States, that disregard racial tension and that maintain the status quo of white supremacy.²⁸⁸ The virtues a culture chooses reflects the values of that culture while at the same time re-enforcing them in an externalization – objectification – internalization cycle. In this way, virtue has been, and continues to be used as a method of social control that benefits some at the expense of others.

The myth of imminent moral decay in society is a commonly used political tool in the United States. In the ‘The Corrosive Politics of Virtue,’ James Morone says the language of virtue has been, and continues to be, used by influential people who give speeches and write books about the rise of crime, drugs, violence, and promiscuity in society to play on the fear of its citizens, segregating the populace into a virtuous ‘us’ and a vicious ‘other’. Aside from being divisive, this type of moralizing is detrimental in

²⁸⁷ William J. Bennett, *The Book of Virtues* (Simon and Schuster, 2010).

²⁸⁸ Ian Heston Doescher, “Virtue in the Key of Justice: Reshaping Christian Virtue Ethics in Light of White Supremacy” (Union Theological Seminary, 2010), 163, <http://gradworks.umi.com/34/11/3411554.html>.

addressing the root of the problems in society. Morone says: “Once those lines are drawn, you can forget about social justice, progressive thinking, or universal programs. Instead, the overarching policy question becomes “How do we protect ourselves and our children?” Never mind healthcare build more jails.”²⁸⁹ Virtue language is used to incite ordinary citizens into calling for stricter rules or stricter implementation of laws in order to protect themselves and their loved ones. In this narrative, care for the marginalized, and social justice are left to fall to the wayside.

Suspicious of Fortitude and its parts, Courage and Patience

A suspicion of the virtues exalted by a society is a recurrent theme in Rorty’s work. Her first objection to courage is that in its very nature, courage tends to be aggressive whether against an external tangible foe or an internal spiritual one.

A person of traditional courage, for whom courage is centrally active in eliciting other dispositions, tends to interpret situations as presenting obstacles to be overcome, seeing situations as occasions for confrontation and combat. Even when soldierly *andreia* has become moral *fortitudo*, and courage requires facing ostracism or exile, the courageous person tends to see herself in an oppositional stance: habits of endurance, persistence, risk-taking becomes strongly developed, sometimes dominant. The enemy may have moved inward: courage may be required to withstand disease, flaws of character, or the temptations of certain trains of thought. Yet courage still treats its domain, its objects as External Others to be endured, overcome or combated.... The confidence that is part of courage tends to dampen imaginative foresight directed to avoiding oppositional confrontation. Perceiving actions as victories or defeats, seeing compromise as a partial loss, the courageous do not usually promote, and often resist, cooperative, compromising attitudes.²⁹⁰

Rorty accuses courage of being polemical in its very nature. The person with courage always sees an enemy to be overcome, whether that enemy is external, on the

²⁸⁹ James Morone, “The Corrosive Politics of Virtue,” *The American Prospect*, December 19, 2001, <http://prospect.org/article/corrosive-politics-virtue>.

²⁹⁰ Rorty, “The Two Faces of Courage,” 154.

battlefield, internal as in the case of a person with cancer. Certainly our words of encouragement to those with the disease reflect a very martial sort of courage. For example, we encourage people to fight the disease as if they were fighting a battle or else sometimes refer to them as having lost the battle with cancer. This is perhaps the right attitude to cancer, but an unhelpful one when it comes to ordinary human interactions like business or personal relationships. Rorty rightly points out that the habit of courage disposes people to face obstacles aggressively when there are other ways of dealing with them. This type of attitude encourages people to see the world polemically where sides are defined in contrast to each other and people are entrenched in their respective positions. However, there are opportunities for agreement among disputing parties that do not involve winning or losing but coming to some sort of compromise. This attitude of courage is particularly harmful in personal relationships where there should be no winners or losers. The need to “win” in these situations is harmful to the flourishing of the relationship. Arguments need to be settled in a manner that maintains the relationship and the dignity of the people in the relationship.

Rorty is not working with a Thomist notion of virtue. Her conceptualization of courage that is focused on winning and unsuited to creating situations of compromise is what Thomas would call a semblance of a virtue. While fortitude is about the struggle to attain the difficult good and conquering one's fear, Thomas shifts the emphasis in fortitude from *aggredi*, the aggressive, martial part of fortitude to *sustinere*, the persevering and enduring part. *Sustinere* is an aspect of fortitude that would be essential to fostering good relationships in the long run. Reaching agreement is often a long and arduous process and one needs the potential parts of fortitude, the virtues of patience,

perseverance, and even magnanimity to build, repair, and strengthen relationships. Thus while Rorty's conception of courage works well on the battlefield but is fundamentally unsuited to compromise and reaching agreement, Thomas' more holistic account of fortitude shows it to be a virtue that works well on the battlefield and is at the same time essential to relationships.

Rorty's second objection to courage is that it tends to be overly valued and praised in societies. She cautions people over the uncritical acceptance of these virtues claiming that societies tend to praise those traits that are beneficial to the society as a whole or to those in power as virtues; regardless of whether these traits are good for individual and communal development and flourishing. She says:

Character traits are classified as virtues whenever they are admired or thought beneficial, even though they sometimes conflict with one another and often fail to secure individual thriving. There is considerable social pressure to acquire and exercise such traits.... Typically such traits are admired when they are the expression of a cultural ideal that is thought to be relatively difficult to realize, an ideal that usually involves modulating some natural tendencies such as self protection or the desire for whatever conduces to one's own happiness. They are regarded as beneficial when they are thought to serve social welfare, especially when doing so appears to involve some cost to oneself. A culture can of course be mistaken about the traits that serve its thriving, failing to identify characteristics that are central to social welfare and admiring those that damage it.²⁹¹

Following Rorty's line of argument, it will be helpful to examine reasons for being suspicious of courage and patience in particular, in order to assess the patient fortitude of the Philippines. Virtues are culturally conditioned as people acquire particular traits because these are the traits that are admired by society. Thus, heroes arise out of the needs of a particular society or culture. For example, one of the most enduring paradigms of courage traces its roots to Homeric times where heroes were expected to be physically

²⁹¹ Amelie O. Rorty, "Virtues and Their Vicissitudes," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 13, no. 1 (2008): 136.

strong, to win over their opponent in the battlefield in a contest of speed, agility, reflexes, but most of all strength. Many contemporary societies still regard physical strength and the willingness to fight as essential characteristics in a hero.

In his article on *Patience and Courage*, Eamonn Callan asks that if one must be perceived as having a vice, would one rather be perceived as impatient or cowardly? He posits that almost everyone would rather be seen as impatient rather than cowardly.²⁹² This seems to be the case for most vices, most people would pick almost any vice other than cowardice. Perhaps this is due to the fact that many vices have lost their negative status. In modern day usage, ‘impatience’, ‘rashness’, even ‘stinginess’, have become personality quirks rather than vices. Only cowardice continues to elicit disgust. Not even being rash or unjust is as terrible an insult as being cowardly. Similarly in his book *Courage*, William Miller notes that despite efforts to play down courage as a “primitive” virtue, it continues to be the virtue most people would like to be known for. “Courage has a special cachet; people care about it desperately. They compete for it and want to be known for having it. Courage still ranks people morally (and in honor-based societies it ranks them socially and politically).”²⁹³ The perception of cowardice is that it affects the very being of a person; cowardice seems to diminish a person, whereas most other vices like impatience or rashness, are dismissed as quirks or personal flaws. A lot of shame is attached to cowardice; for example in England during World War II, a white feather given by women to men who had not gone to war became a symbol of cowardice and a source of great shame. Conversely, the honor and recognition that is given to the

²⁹² Eamonn Callan, “Patience and Courage,” *Philosophy* 68, no. 266 (October 1993): 523.

²⁹³ William Ian Miller, *The Mystery of Courage* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 9.

courageous is highly desired. The desirable status that courage confers makes the virtue a convenient tool for social manipulation.

The public acknowledgement and acclaim of courage makes it susceptible to impulses masquerading as courage, or what Aristotle calls the semblances of courage. For example, the first semblance of courage he names is courage that acts for the sake of honor. People who are courageous because they wish to be honored for their courage do not possess true courage though Aristotle seems to think that this semblance is very close to true courage. The difference is that true courage is exercised for its own sake and not for the sake of honor. Rorty explains how this semblance of courage can be vicious as it is potentially harmful to individual persons and societies.

Rorty says that courage that is practiced for the sake of honor is dangerous because the traits that are promoted by society become dominant at the expense of other virtues. She is worried that not only is there social pressure to acquire the virtues, but once they have been acquired, there is the desire to be in situations where one can exercise and display them.²⁹⁴ So one not only gravitates towards those types of situations, but creates, perhaps unconsciously, situations where they can be displayed. A courageous person might create situations where they can show off their bravery despite the risk of unnecessary danger to the people around them. Because courage receives so much acclaim, she says: “courage is most dangerous when a person acts for the sake of being courageous, taking it to be an independent good, rather than one measured by its ends, bounded, checked and directed by other virtues.”²⁹⁵ People forget that courage is measured by its end, the extent to which it maintains justice. That the desire to practice a

²⁹⁴ Rorty, “The Two Faces of Courage,” 153.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

skill in which one excels, coupled with the heady feeling of basking in glory, is not sufficient reason to put oneself in situations where courage is needed. Rorty thinks that because courage is often exalted by society, the desire for societal praise leads people to endanger themselves and others in their eagerness to display courage. This idealization of courage leads to an excess and needs to be checked and kept in balance by the other virtues otherwise it becomes dangerous. She explains that:

[P]rima facie virtues need to be secured within a balanced system of dispositions and character traits, to assure that they are not only locally beneficial in securing their specific goods but also globally beneficial, exercised in a way that does not threaten other prized goods, all things considered. Because the virtues are assumed typically to promote good ends, they come to be treated as among the goods of life. Because we assume that they promote, and sometimes even that they constitute the goods we prize, we resist their continuous re-evaluation. But detaching *prima facie* virtues from their place in the systematic structure of virtues can threaten their status as virtues...²⁹⁶

When virtues are valued and exalted independently of their interconnections with other virtues, they lose their status as true virtues. Courage valued in itself easily becomes a vicious sort of courage that violates justice and promotes a daring, warlike person and society.

Karen Lebacqz in ‘Vicious Virtue? Patience, Justice, and Salaries in the Church,’ provides an excellent example of Rorty’s critique and takes it a step further by linking virtue to justice. Patience is a virtue that society promotes as an independent good, often not realizing its connection to justice. People are frequently told that patience is a virtue, and they must therefore wait patiently for things, lacking the knowledge that the true meaning of patience is much more complex than the ability to wait in line without causing a scene. Patience is a form of enduring evil when no other recourse is available;

²⁹⁶ Rorty, “Virtues and Their Vicissitudes,” 152.

“it is the strengthening of the spirit precisely to sustain the struggle for good or for justice.”²⁹⁷ Lebacqz uses the example of a church board who exhorts a deacon who has waited over two years for a promised raise to be patient. They would like him to wait patiently until they are ready to give him a raise despite their long overdue promise of one. In a deceptive interpretation of the virtue, the church board makes it appear that the deacon needs to be more virtuous by being more patient and thereby evading their own responsibility to justice.

What the church board is asking for is not true patience but silence and passive submission from the deacon, they are really asking for a semblance of patience. This is an abuse of virtue language, as Lebacqz rightly points out, because the deacon is being asked to be patient in the face of an injustice. He was promised the raise years ago, other people have been hired and promoted while he waited. The deacon is not being given his due. He is being told to endure an injustice in the guise of cultivating the virtue of patience. Lebacqz insists, “The proper stance of patience, therefore, is not spineless submission but a spirit of endurance that continues the struggle for justice.”²⁹⁸ Patience as a potential part of fortitude is intrinsically tied to the struggle for justice.

David Harney makes a similar point about the deceptive nature of promoting patience. We often ask for patience when what we actually want is silence and submission. He says: “When we tell our children to be patient, moreover, are we not acknowledging that we ourselves are vulnerable to annoyance and vexation, and not really very patient at all? What we are asking for is not patience but silence, no matter

²⁹⁷ Lebacqz, Karen and Macemon, Shirley, “Vicious Virtue? Patience, Justice and Salaries in the Church,” in *Practice What You Preach: Virtues, Ethics, and Power in the Lives of Pastoral Ministers and Their Congregations*, ed. James F. Keenan and Joseph J. Kotva (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 284.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 290.

how unwilling and sullen and angry. Here patience is wholly identified with passivity and submission.”²⁹⁹ Once again, a distorted use of virtue language is seen to be a mastered exercise of power, which is all the more insidious because of its appeal to morality.

Patience in Lebacqz’s article and courage the way Rorty describes it are not true patience nor true courage but rather the semblance virtues of patience and courage.

Rorty’s has two main objections to courage. First is that it tends to be too martial for its current context. Because it is necessarily geared towards overcoming an enemy, a person with courage naturally sees the world as a series of obstacles to be overcome. The second objection is that the praise of courage in society leads it becoming detached from its place in the system of virtues so that it is no longer formed by prudence, temperance and justice. Exalted on its own it tends towards an overabundance of *aggredi*, of daring, of initiative taking and aggressiveness and becomes essentially a vice. Now clearly, she sees an excess of daring as a dangerous aspect of courage, in need of moderation and hindering flourishing. Similarly, Thomas sees an excess of daring as a dangerous aspect of fortitude, in need of moderation. He says: “Now daring, in so far as it denotes a vice, implies excess of passion, and this excess goes by the name of daring. Wherefore it is evident that it is opposed to the virtue of fortitude which is concerned about fear and daring....”³⁰⁰ Both Rorty and Thomas display a distrust for a perceived propensity in their cultures for an overabundance of the daring and aggressive aspects of courage. They do not seem to think that too little daring and aggressiveness is a likely problem in their respective cultures.

²⁹⁹ David Bailly Harned, *Patience: How We Wait Upon the World* (Cowley Publications, 1997), 19.

³⁰⁰ ST II.II.127.2

But what if a culture were structured differently, where it didn't have an abundance of daring and aggressiveness but rather, too little? The Philippines is just such a culture. It suffers from a deficiency of daring and *aggredi* and the opposite extreme of being perhaps too prone to resilience and suffering endurance.

Suspicious of Filipino Fortitude

Rorty and Lebacqz are both concerned with the abuse of virtue language, where a semblance of a virtue is exalted. Because courage in particular among the virtues receives much public acclaim and honor, it is particularly susceptible to misuse. An aspect of fortitude that is prone to abuse in the Philippine context is resilience, and patient endurance of suffering. In the Philippines, because of the natural disasters that plague the country, affecting the poorest inhabitants, resilience and fortitude are highly acclaimed virtues. In this context it is beneficial to revisit Rorty's suspicion of societally acclaimed virtues. Filipino endurance and resilience is constantly affirmed and praised in Philippine society, yet extolling these virtues benefit those who are in power and function to suppress and repress the poor and the marginalized. Cultivating a hermeneutic of suspicion of Philippine resilience and patience means we must ask whether Philippine resilience upholds justice or injustice. Are resilience and endurance, on their own, necessarily good qualities? Are they being abused in the Philippine context as they are being used to support unjust hierarchies?

Titus notes a natural abuse of patience in Christian societies. He says: "Christian conceptions of patience and suffering must face challenges that arise from certain resilience and psychosocial research, for example, challenges that involve whether Christian patience creates vulnerable individuals and passive communities, who are

willing to suffer wrong rather than correct it.”³⁰¹ Perhaps the main problem with Filipino resilience is that it creates vulnerable individuals and passive communities who are willing to suffer injustice.

These thinkers provide a hermeneutic of suspicion for societally acclaimed virtue that is relevant to any discussion on Philippine fortitude. Filipinos should be suspicious of this tendency to revere the characteristics of resilience and endurance as a virtue and an ideal in the Philippine context. What is the agenda in choosing to exalt the virtue of resilience and martyrdom over other virtues? Why not the virtue of heroic soldiers who led their troops to victory in battle? Who benefits from a society that promotes patient endurance, quiet suffering, and self-sacrifice and who is expected to endure, suffer and sacrifice?

A prime factor of the resilience of Filipinos is life in a country prone to natural disasters. While typhoons, floods, landslides hit areas indiscriminate of wealth or social status, it is always the poor who are most vulnerable. The rich have the means to build homes on land away from flood prone areas, using materials that can withstand the wind and heavy rain that the storms bring. The poor are the most vulnerable, building their homes near waterways, using flimsy scraps for building materials. Their homes and possessions are washed away and they become completely reliant on aid that is provided for by the government, private sectors of society, and in media worthy disasters, international aid organizations.

In November of 2013, typhoon Yolanda, code name Haiyan, the strongest storm in recorded history to ever hit land, devastated portions of the Philippines. In its wake, Philippine resilience has again garnered international praise making these questions

³⁰¹ Titus, *Resilience And the Virtue of Fortitude*, 349.

raised by Rorty's and Lebacqz's hermeneutic of suspicion particularly relevant. Heads of foreign organizations, foreign newspapers and journalists sang praises for Filipino resilience. Katherine Donovan, UNICEF spokesperson, said "The people of the Philippines have shown the world what it looks like to be tough as nails, sweet as honey, with more bounce than a pail full of ping-pong balls. With that kind of resilience, it's only a matter of time before things are better."³⁰² On November 15 during a broadcast of AC360, Anderson Cooper paid tribute to Filipinos: "The Filipino people, the people of Tacloban, and Samar and Cebu and all these places where so many have died—they're strong not just to survive the storm; but they are strong to have survived the aftermath of the storm. Can you imagine the strength it takes to be living in shock, to be living, sleeping on the streets next to the body of your dead children? Can you imagine that strength? I can't. And I've seen that strength day in and day out here in the Philippines. And we honor them with every broadcast that we do." BBC reporter Andrew Harding remarks on the 'phenomenal resilience' of the Filipino people: "This place was cut off for so long it's not surprising things got pretty tense, pretty desperate here. There's been a lot of looting and still a state of emergency. And yet, what's really striking about this town is how quickly the community has come together again and started to get things done. People may not have insurance here, but they have phenomenal resilience."³⁰³

In an impassioned plea at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, just a few days after Typhoon Yolanda swept through the Philippines, Philippine delegate Yeb

³⁰² Sunshine Lichauco de Leon, "Resilient Filipinos Still Struggle a Month after Typhoon," *USA TODAY*, December 8, 2013, sec. News Special, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/12/08/typhoon-haiyan-one-month-anniversary/3901753/>.

³⁰³ Luigene Yanoria, "International Media Laud Filipino Resilience amid 'Worst Disaster' Yolanda," *Yahoo News Philippines*, November 15, 2013, sec. The Nation, <http://ph.news.yahoo.com/international-media-laud-filipino-resilience-amid--worst-disaster--yolanda-113842924.html>.

Saño challenges our use of the term ‘natural disasters.’ He suggests that climate change and the storms that ravage the Philippine islands every year are a result of humanity’s actions. They are a result of human greed and not merely the convergence of natural phenomena beyond the responsibility of society. He says:

We must stop calling events like these as natural disasters....Disasters are never natural. They are the intersection of factors other than physical. They are the accumulation of the constant breach of economic, social, and environmental thresholds. Most of the time disasters are a result of inequity and the poorest people of the world are at greatest risk because of their vulnerability and decades of maldevelopment, which I must assert is connected to the kind of pursuit of economic growth that dominates the world; the same kind of pursuit of so-called economic growth and unsustainable consumption that has altered the climate system.³⁰⁴

In a speech reminiscent of recent papal encyclicals, Saño lays the blame for Super Typhoon Yolanda on the ambition and greed of the wealthier nations and the habits that consumerism engenders. He does not advocate passive resilience but a change in global spending habits. The connection between climate change and our habits as consumers has been the subject of many studies. Our use of cars, coal generated electricity and even our increased consumption of beef have all been linked to climate change. The choices we make about our lifestyle, for example, owning a car or eating hamburgers, have an impact on the global climate. Calling storms natural disasters allows us to distance ourselves from their cause, to blame the tragedy and devastation on factors beyond our control. Saño forces us to take responsibility for these tragedies by pointing out how our actions, our decisions of how we spend our money are not private choices but have far reaching effects.

³⁰⁴ Yeb Sano, “It’s Time to Stop This Madness” (UN Summit, Warsaw, 2013), <http://www.rtcc.org/2013/11/11/its-time-to-stop-this-madness-philippines-plea-at-un-climate-talks/#sthash.TVUin6cZ.dpuf>.

Columnist Diane Desierto, drives the point closer to home. Whereas Saño was speaking to an international community in the hopes of changing global spending habits, Desierto lays the blame, the lack of preparedness for the natural disaster squarely on the Philippine government. Referencing the Philippine disinclination to injustice, she points out how the public funds that are lost to corruption could be used to solve many of the problems that plague the Filipino people. ‘Lost’ public funds could have been used to build an early storm warning system that could help save the lives of people who live in coastal areas, relocate people away from areas frequented by the storm path, and fund disaster relief operations, evacuation centers and humanitarian assistance for people who are inevitably affected. Lost public funds could also have been used to reconstruct the villages that are devastated, building schools and houses out of sturdier materials.

Unfortunately for the Filipino people, “corruption has made accessing those technologies lost opportunity costs.”³⁰⁵ Not confining her lament on the lost public funds to loss of aid and relief for the victims of natural disasters year after year, she maintains that many more of our country’s problems could be addressed through these public funds if only they were utilized properly. For example they could be invested in improving our education and health care systems and even create job opportunities to keep our young and talented work force. Yet it seems she has little hope that any of these problems will be remedied as she notes with a touch of cynicism: “In the meantime, Filipinos and Filipinas born, bred, and raised will continue to live out our cycles of loss, adversity, and rebuilding. All at the price of our country's best, ablest, and most hardworking leaving

³⁰⁵ Diane A. Desierto, “Corruption, Climate, and Congress: Preying on Philippine Resilience and Faith,” *GMA News Online*, November 9, 2013, Online edition, sec. Opinion, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/334717/opinion/feedback/corruption-climate-and-congress-preying-on-philippine-resilience-and-faith>.

our families to find ways and means to help our communities rebuild. Everyone will again note our typical "Philippine resilience and faith" in how we deal with this every year.”³⁰⁶

Both Saño and Desierto betray a suspicion of Filipino resilience, the virtue that is praised by society and functions to maintain status quo. They exhibit a growing awareness of the real and deadly effects of corruption in the country. The funds that are siphoned away into the pockets of greedy politicians do not just affect the quality of life of the poor, but often spell the difference between life and death for many of the country's poorest citizens.

Like Rorty's courageous person who welcomes opportunities to exhibit courage and be honored for it, Filipinos welcome the opportunity to exhibit resilience and bask in international acclaim for being such a resilient people. On the one hand, resilience is a virtue; the capacity to endure tremendous hardship without bending and breaking, the capacity to pick up the pieces of one's life, when one has, like the biblical Job, lost everything is a remarkable human capacity. On the other hand, perhaps Filipinos are too resilient, too passive and uncomplaining. Rather than allocating resources to build early warning systems, to build sturdy evacuation centers, remove dead bodies from the street, the people are content praising Filipino strength and resilience. Resilience in this context has become unhinged from the cardinal virtues, justice in particular. Rather than supporting justice, Filipino resilience tolerates and masks rampant injustice.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

Praise for Filipino resilience masks Filipino Injustice

Every society grapples with questions of justice. Anyone who is familiar with Filipino government or Filipino institutions knows that Filipino inclination to justice is desperately deficient according to any reasonable and universal account of justice. This section will expound on a few examples of injustice that exemplify how unjust systems prosper in the Philippines. Unjust systems flourish from a lack of consistent commitment to justice and are supported by an attitude of passive resilience from Filipinos.

Every day, Filipino newspapers are filled with stories of graft and corruption being uncovered in government dealings. Perpetrators are prosecuted, trials are sensationalized but when new cases emerge on the scene, the old cases are forgotten and perpetrators go unpunished. A prominent and recent example is the case of a former president, Erap Estrada, who was president in 2001, convicted of plunder in 2007 and ran for president again in 2010, coming in 2nd place and garnering almost 9.5 million votes.³⁰⁷ 9.5 million people, 26.25% of the voters seemed unconcerned that he had been found guilty of stealing huge sums of money from the Filipino people when he was last president. This is arguably not a society that holds the virtue of justice in priority. This section will give examples of Philippine injustice and corruption to demonstrate that corruption is a habit of injustice and that pervades society, effecting a societal disinclination to justice.

An investigative study in 1998 details evidence of corruption in both the House of Congress and the Senate:

Each member of the Lower House of Congress therefore gets P62.5 million a year in pork. Senators get more. And in both houses the

³⁰⁷ Former President Erap Estrada, President (1998-2001), removed by EDSA II in 2001. Convicted of plunder in 2007. Ran for president in 2010, garnering over 9 million votes.

members closest to the leadership get hundreds of millions of pesos in pork. The amounts skimmed off are massive. For “ghost deliveries” where contracts for materials are faked, the standard congressman’s take is 60 percent. For books, magazines and medicine, 40 to 50 percent, more if the medicine is expired or soon to be expired. For infrastructure construction, the congressman’s take ranges from 12 to 15 percent, with a few congressmen demanding as much as 20 percent.³⁰⁸

Another example of this exploitation of the poor and helpless occurs in the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS). Yvonne T. Chua, an investigative journalist, wrote a report on the flagrant corruption in DECS “an education bureaucracy so ridden with graft that it is barely able to deliver the most basic educational services to the country’s 15 million public school students.”³⁰⁹ In her report, she documents the different forms of corruption, from petty corruption to corruption at the highest levels of the organization. She says:

Money changes hands at nearly every stage of procurement, from the accreditation to the payment of suppliers. Money is also given out from the time a teacher applies for a job up to the time she requests for a change in assignment or works for a promotion. In some cases, expensive gifts replace money in cash-less transactions that take place in the education bureaucracy.

Furthermore, embezzlement, nepotism, influence peddling, fraud, and other types of corruption also flourish at the DECS. Indeed, corruption has been institutionalized in the DECS because “payoffs have become the lubricant that make bureaucracy run smoothly.”³¹⁰

This system victimizes Filipino children who come from families who cannot afford private school and are not given the opportunity to improve their circumstance in life through hard work and a quality education. They make do with substandard teachers who were hired because they are related to someone in the bureaucracy and often have

³⁰⁸ Sheila S. Coronel and Cecile C. A. Balgos, *Pork and Other Perks: Corruption & Governance in the Philippines* (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1998), 14.

³⁰⁹ Yvonne T. Chua, *Robbed: An Investigation of Corruption in Philippine Education* (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1999), 1.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

neither the knowledge nor the passion for teaching. Not only are they often indifferent or bad teachers, but they pass their warped values on to the students. There have been documented cases where students are taught to cheat on nationally administered tests because the teachers are evaluated based on the students' performance on these tests.³¹¹

Filipino public school students do not even have recourse to correct information in their textbooks as they have to make do with whichever publishing company offers DECS the biggest kickback. Not only are these books frequently written by people who have only the most basic education, they perpetually arrive long after classes have begun, filled with incredulous errors about basic information. For example, one textbook offers a history of the Filipino people that traces their genealogy back to Adam and Eve.³¹²

Not even school feeding programs are impervious to corruption as was uncovered by a reporter at the *Daily Tribune*. A feeding program was set up to encourage children to come to school. The company that won the bid to supply school children with nutritional meals in school was eventually suspended for supplying "overpriced and substandard noodles to schools." (Daily Tribune, 2009). They charged three times the supermarket price for these noodles.

Another area where corruption and injustice abounds is in through the system of aid for victims of natural disasters. Greg Bankoff, a historian who is interested in the role of disasters in human societies says that these natural disasters in the Philippines become

³¹¹ Ibid., 1.

³¹² "A more recent study of the Textbook Delivery Program (TDP) in the DepEd has confirmed that "documented corruption linkages in the TDP are alarmingly high" with corrupt practices taking the form of "(i) falsification of records to obtain substantial money transactions; (ii) delivery of substandard textbooks, delay in actual deliveries and insufficient amounts; and (iii) the misuse and diversion of resources to unauthorized uses" (Reyes, 2007, p.121)...."

opportunities for politicians to further exploit the victims of the disaster by misappropriating public funds and using it to increase their hold over people.

More than simply making political capital out of disasters in the Philippines, however, some among the political elite and those with family or social ties to them actually make a profit from these emergency situations through corruption, fraud, and graft. Specifically, they are able to consolidate and even enhance their financial and political position in society directly through the misappropriation of public money designated for relief and rehabilitation programmes or, more circuitously, through the patronage that control over such funds confers upon them. (Bankoff, 2005, p. 173)³¹³

These examples merely begin to describe the state of justice in the Philippines. Injustice in the Philippines has been systemized, a corrupt system living on a legitimate system, corrupting its vital processes. In their book, *Pork and other Perks*, Coronel and Balagos compare the corruption and injustice that is so endemic to Philippine government and way of life to a cancer that has metastasized. “Although there are no academic studies measuring the pervasiveness of corruption in the Philippines, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that corruption is common practice from Malacañang down to barangay governments. Like cancer cells, corruption has spread – metastasized to all parts of the government and surrounding society.”³¹⁴ Similar to the way that people are habituated to be inclined to Thomistic fortitude, through our cultural heritage, people are inclined to corruption and injustice through the widespread acceptance for this way of life and the coercive societal forces. Even people who are not initially corrupt go along with the corruption and eventually become unjust people because they see no alternative. The system practically forces people to become unjust as it seems impossible to go against the system. This is perhaps the very nature of social sin. People are born into an environment

³¹³ Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asian Countries: An Impossible Dream?* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2011), 115.

³¹⁴ Coronel and Balagos, *Pork and Other Perks*, 11.

with unjust, oppressive systems and thus are conditioned to becoming unjust people who in turn incline other people to behave unjustly. Coronel and Balagos note:

...when corruption is common, it is difficult for individuals in government service to remain honest. Social interaction in an office, promotions, and even simply being able to perform one's duties depend on being "one of the boys." "Marginal officials and private individuals become corrupt because they believe there is no feasible alternative. When corruption is common, law enforcement resources are spread too thinly to be effective. The low probability of being caught induces even more people to become corrupt, further reducing the efficacy of law enforcement. High expectations about others' corruptibility and ineffective enforcement can entrench high levels of corruption." (UNDP, 1997:66)³¹⁵

While this is not to say that all Filipinos are unjust, many are vicious and many more become vicious because of the environment they are in. The vice of injustice grows and consumes people becoming their driving passion. Describing corruption in vice language, Alatas says: "Top officials become focused on corruption. "Corruption is psychologically addictive. Like a drug addict, the corrupt man organizes his thoughts and actions around the consummation of the corrupt act. It becomes the dominant passion to which other goals are subordinated." (Alatas, 1991:148)³¹⁶

The complexity and longevity of these corrupt systems point to another aspect. While many Filipinos are not themselves unjust, they have been in the habit of enduring, and tolerating injustice. Filipino societal fortitude has acquired a very passive quality that often endures injustice and lacks the initiative to take action against it.

There is a vicious cycle which begins with massive injustice that prompts an attitude of resilience that in turn encourages those who commit gross injustices to continue to do so and use their power to continue to promote resilience. In an abuse of the virtue, the Filipino people, like the deacon in Lebacqz's article, are often told to be

³¹⁵ Ibid., 11–12.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 14.

resilient in the face of massive injustice. Using the term resilience, to make it sound like a virtue when what they are actually being told to do is to passively accept the scraps that are given, that is left over after the rich and powerful have taken the lion's share, to submit without complaint. Thus, Filipino fortitude has a dangerous tendency towards passive resignation in the face of widespread societal injustice.

Is Philippine Fortitude a burdened virtue?

A perspective offered by Lisa Tessman on 'burdened virtues' may help us to understand this societal disinclination to justice. Burdened virtues for Tessman are virtues of resistance and endurance that are developed in trying circumstances; they enable a person to survive great hardship but, at the same time, because they were acquired in oppressive circumstances, they hinder personal flourishing.³¹⁷ The condition of being oppressed negatively impacts the virtues that a person develops. Because of oppression, a person fails to develop certain virtues that they would need in order to flourish. Tessman explains that "Moral damage occurs when there is a certain sort of a self that one ought to be, but the un-conducive conditions of oppression bar one from cultivating this self.... Moreover, if the virtues that are interfered with include those that could enable people to resist their own subordination, moral damage will actually help to sustain structures of oppression."³¹⁸

Tessman discusses two ways in which oppression affects the individual. The first way is external, in that oppression blocks an individual's access to external goods such as freedom, material resources, and political power. The second way is internal and has to

³¹⁷ Lisa Tessman, *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

do with the way an individual is barred from developing virtues and thus achieving flourishing. This second way that an individual is affected by oppression is relevant to my argument on the Filipino resilience hindering the practice of justice. She says: “The second way oppression interferes with flourishing is that it gives rise to moral damage in the oppressed agent; one way that it does this is by creating inclinations that conflict with liberatory principles, thus barring the possibility of full virtue.”³¹⁹ It is possible that the circumstances under which Filipinos develop resilience burden the virtue by creating a disinclination towards justice. Because Filipinos develop resilience to survive and weather injustice when they have no other options, they cultivate an attitude of passive resilience towards injustice which they often find difficult to change. They become habituated to tolerating injustice even when options for resistance become viable.

Tessman describes the virtues associated with political resistance as “burdened virtues” which she explains are “traits that while practically necessitated for surviving oppression or morally necessitated for opposing it, are also costly to the selves who bear them.”³²⁰ In particular, she singles out the traits of political resisters that enable them to be effective in their resistance goals, but are damaging to their individual growth and development. She says:

the resister will be in a position of perpetual struggle, with a constant demand for the virtues of resistance. The struggle itself requires character traits that may strain if not wreck psychological health, and presumably such health is part of the good life imagined to follow an end to oppression.... When political resisters have virtuous characters, these characters are often, unfortunately, either unable to contribute to the resisters’ flourishing or are themselves vulnerable to damage.³²¹

³¹⁹ Ibid., 27.

³²⁰ Ibid., 107.

³²¹ Ibid., 108.

As we saw in the last chapter, Filipinos developed the social virtue of fortitude under conditions of oppression. It was only because of the increasing oppression by the Spaniards that the Filipinos cultivated the virtue of fortitude, their empathy for the suffering Christ in his passion provided the context for their own suffering. Similarly, the abuses of a tyrannical dictator provided the impetus for the Filipinos to arise again in 1986, resisting power in a non-confrontational manner. While in these two circumstances, the people eventually arose to actively resist the injustice, it seems there are long lulls of suffering endurance between active resistances. It is possible that the form of inchoate fortitude that is developed under the context of oppression by the Filipino people is ‘morally damaged’ fortitude and does not necessarily contribute to their individual and communal flourishing.

Like Rorty, Tessman is particularly concerned with courage and the danger that it presents if taken on its own without reference to the other virtues: “Courage is a virtue that – especially if not balanced with other virtues that have a better connection to their bearer’s well-being – is burdensome: the courageous actually risk sacrificing themselves.”³²² Tessman’s concern about courage is nuanced by a very specific context, that of people living in systemically oppressive circumstances. The best response to oppression is resistance, but systemic oppression is not easily defeated and often requires prolonged courage to maintain resistance.

Tessman’s observations about the courage of a political resister give rise to new dimensions in the virtue of courage. Both Aristotle and Tessman speak of courage, but in vastly different contexts. Aristotle’s soldier displays courage fighting on the battlefield. There is clarity with this type of courage: the battlefield is clear, one can clearly identify

³²² Ibid., 126.

the enemy and even the objective is clear - to defeat one's enemy in a battle of skill, strength and cunning. Also, one fights to defend and protect one's *polis*. While Aristotle's soldier may not be part of the dominant force on the battlefield, he is strong enough to fight the enemy out in the open. The battle may last a day or a few years but there is a definite end. This paradigm is in sharp contrast to Tessman's courageous political resister. In a society where systemic oppression is entrenched, the battle is fought in unexpected places and takes surprising forms; resistance may occur on an innocuous bus as in the case of Rosa Parks or on an airport tarmac as in the case of Ninoy Aquino. The political resister is ridiculously overwhelmed, unable to meet the enemy in open battle. Also, the enemy is difficult to identify as the most obvious oppressors are merely part of a larger system of oppression that society upholds. It is difficult to gauge when the war has been won as victories and losses are incremental. People may struggle as political resisters their entire lives.

The hardship of living under oppression places a burden on the virtue of courage. Tessman notes that people who have to constantly be courageous are likely to fall into an excess of courage. She says "they might instead develop a deficiency of fear regarding things that are truly fearful; or, the attempt to become courageous may give rise to an insensibility toward pain... and an inability to feel any emotions, or a reluctance to form attachments...."³²³ Thus while courage might be a necessary virtue for people who live in situations where there is systemic oppression, the kind of courage that is required to sustain resistance over a prolonged period of time is perhaps the best possible response in the circumstances yet the effort to maintain this courage damages the person so that he or she is unable to flourish on a personal level. So while developing courage to resist

³²³ Ibid.

oppression is the best response in the context of systemic oppression, the way the courage is developed necessitates the sacrifice of goods that are essential to a person's flourishing. Being a courageous political resister possibly puts one at the risk of danger, of great physical harm and even death. Certain habits essential to survival yet detrimental to flourishing would develop under this pressure. For example, one might deprive oneself of close personal relationships for fear that the threat to one's safety might involve those one is close to. One might develop into the type of person who is suspicious of people and their motives, becoming nervous and paranoid. Living under constant and sustained threat to one's life may help to develop one's courage but it often comes at the price of being detrimental to other areas of personal development.

In his investigation of courage, William Miller's proposes that courage has a half-life, a thesis that would argue in support of Tessman's analysis of courage as a burdened virtue. Citing a World War II study he says that the soldiers had a limit to the number of days they are effective in the field of battle. Soldiers who stay on the battlefield longer became subject to a host of psychological issues commensurate with the amount of time they spent in the midst of active combat:

One World War II study found that a soldier had, by most generous computation, a useful life of 200-240 days of combat, at which point he became "so overly cautious and jittery that he was ineffective and demoralizing to the newer men." Another study, sampling troops during the intense fighting in Normandy in 1944, found their maximum period of efficiency occurred between 12-30 days, after which it decayed rapidly through stages of hyperreactivity to complete emotional exhaustion ending in a vegetative state by day 60... British soldiers were believed to last longer because they were rotated in and out of the front lines on a regular basis...³²⁴

³²⁴ Miller, *The Mystery of Courage*, 61.

Miller believes that while people can cultivate a courageous disposition through acting habitually in a courageous manner, courage is an exhaustible resource: “the point is that those who qualify as good Aristotelian men of virtue – those who have cultivated a disposition for courage so that their courageous deeds are properly motivated, not just accidents – have only a fixed sum to spend.”³²⁵ The studies Miller cites concretizes Tessman’s theory of the burdened virtue, people can be courageous, yet exposure to long periods of time to dramatic and traumatic situations such as those of modern warfare has profound psychological effects on a person, such as emotional exhaustion, jitteriness, paranoia. A person is able to maintain courage, but at the cost of other equally important goods.

A more concrete example of courage as a burdened virtue is seen in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is “a complex, often chronic and debilitating mental disorder that develops in response to catastrophic life events such as combat, sexual assault, natural disasters...”³²⁶ It has a variety of symptoms including alterations in personality, marked impairment in intimacy and attachment, depression, substance abuse, anxiety disorders.³²⁷ While the term itself is fairly new, coined in the 1980s, the phenomenon is not. “During the First World War it was referred to as “shell shock”; as “war neurosis” during WWII; and as “combat stress reaction” during the Vietnam War.”³²⁸ Miller’s studies and the growing awareness of the psychological effects of prolonged warfare, paint a horrifying picture of Tessman’s burdened courage. One better

³²⁵ Ibid., 62.

³²⁶ Edna B. Foa et al., *Effective Treatments for PTSD, Second Edition: Practice Guidelines from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies* (Guilford Press, 2008), 23.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ “What Is PTSD?,” *Combat Stress The Veteran’s Mental Health Charity*, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.combatstress.org.uk/medical-professionals/what-is-ptsd/>.

appreciates Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of courage for preserving peace and stability in a *polis* where life and virtue can flourish.

When courage is a burdened virtue, not only is psychological health strained, but the very form of the virtue being developed has been damaged. While PTSD does not accurately describe damaged Filipino fortitude, Filipinos exhibit a different kind of impairment of their fortitude. The years of oppression and hardship have formed a people who are conditioned to being resilient in a passive and resigned way. In an article on resilience, Columnist Conrado de Quiros accuses Filipinos of having a burdened type of resilience that was developed under oppression:

The other face of resilience is a long-suffering people. Or worse, the other face of resilience is an uncomplaining people. Religion may have something to do with it, with its promises of a better berth in heaven in exchange for a poorer one on earth. Colonialism may have to do with it, the experience of being oppressed imbedded deep in the national psyche, making people think it is their natural lot in life.³²⁹

There are Filipinos who fight for justice, who resist in active ways, and while their victories are small, their efforts are beginning to create a counter culture of justice. However, most Filipinos are resigned to the systems of corruption that deprive them of their due as citizens, keeping them marginalized and isolated. Many Filipinos are resigned to being resilient and foregoing social justice.

Is Filipino fortitude burdened by unrelenting oppression, or is it possible to maintain true, 'unburdened' virtue? The fact that we recognize the burdened nature of the virtue points to better, more ideal form of a virtue that is unburdened. Thomas integral and potential parts of fortitude offer insight into how one might survive prolonged combat or resistance in a truly virtuous, unburdened manner. One integral part of

³²⁹ Conrado de Quiros, "Filipino Resilience," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 20, 2009, sec. Opinion, <http://www.inquirer.net/specialreports/ondoyreliefdrive/view.php?db=1&article=20091020-231079>.

fortitude is patience which is “the voluntary and prolonged endurance of arduous and difficult things for the sake of virtue.”³³⁰ He anticipates the need to endure difficult things for a prolonged period of time and the ability to bear these things without being ‘broken’ by them is the true meaning of the virtue of patience. He says: “Patience is said to have a perfect work in bearing hardships: for these give rise first to sorrow, which is moderated by patience...”³³¹

In order to ‘unburden’ their fortitude, Filipinos would need to develop true patience which enables one to not only bear hardship without being broken by it, or made apathetic, but also patience that resists injustice, that refuses to be victimized. Patience is not about being uncomplaining, or silent, or a doormat. Filipinos need true patience to counter their apathetic resilience. David Harned describes true patience: “Those who are patient neither permit an injury to become an obsession even more painful than the original hurt, nor do they retaliate, which would cancel out the difference between themselves and those who harm them.”³³² People who are truly patient do not allow themselves to become victims, but neither do they become bullies creating victims by retaliating against injury. People who are truly patient seek creative, constructive resolutions, working to create lasting reforms. This is what ‘unburdened’ Filipino fortitude should look like.

People whose courage is subject to burdening have not attained the fullest perfection of the virtue. True fortitude would resist being burdened through the integral virtues of patience and perseverance.

³³⁰ ST.II.II.128.1

³³¹ ST.II.II.136.2.ad.1

³³² Harned, *Patience*, 53.

The lack of justice has also affected the form of Filipino fortitude, hindering it from becoming a perfect virtue. Fortitude is intrinsically ordered towards justice. So fortitude in an unjust society remains an imperfect virtue because it functions to maintain corruption and an unjust socio-political system. Whereas courage in Athens meant fighting and dying for the *polis*, and fortitude for Thomas Aquinas in the middle ages meant being willing to be persecuted and die for your beliefs, fortitude in present day Philippines should be shaped in a way that leads people to fight the corruption and injustice that is endemic to most sectors of the government and society.

Chapter 4: Anger, a Corrective to Filipino Fortitude

Introduction

This section will discuss more concrete steps that we need to move from this incipient fortitude to a fortitude that promotes justice, fights corruption and leads to flourishing for all Filipinos. The first step, begun above, was an internal critique, an acknowledgement that there is a problem of injustice and of marginalization. The poor are not granted equal access to goods that the rich are. They generally do not have access to good education, given the corruption within the department of education. They also do not have access to good healthcare. The disasters which strike our country do not affect all people equally, the poor are much worse off than the rich.

Despite the overwhelming praise for Filipino resilience, there is a small but vocal minority of Filipinos, among them Saño and Desierto, who have begun to question and criticize this same Filipino resilience. This self-critique is an important step forward as Filipinos have become far too accustomed to being praised for their resilience, believing resilience to be necessarily a good thing because it garners international acclaim.

It is a sign of progress that people like Desierto have begun to name the goods that corruption robs from the people. While these things might seem obvious to the most casual observer, many Filipinos are resigned to the status quo, they believe that resignation is part of resilience. The current response of resigned resilience is inadequate. It does not prompt social change and neither does it lead to individual or communal flourishing.

The second step, upon naming the injustices, is cultivating an appropriate emotional response. My argument in this section is that the appropriate response to injustice is anger. Anger functions in an interruptive manner, allowing for a break in the cycle of injustice and resignation. Anger acts as an impetus to fuel action for social change.

A Deficiency of Anger in Filipino Culture

In the aftermath of Ondoy, another devastating typhoon in 2009, columnist Conrado de Quiros both praises and criticizes Filipino resilience saying that Filipinos should stop being resilient and become angry: “But that’s the part where I get bothered by that phrase, Filipino resilience, especially when chanted by government and the media like a mantra, or platitude. It sounds like humoring the people: Never mind the pain, you’ll always get by.... Maybe it’s time the Filipino stopped being resilient. Maybe it’s time he got bloody furious.”³³³ Unlike Desierto who seems resigned to the cycle of injustice and resilience, Quiros refuses to accept that resilience needs to be passive. He calls for action, demands that Filipinos become angry at the injustice being done unto them.

Four years later, after Typhoon Ondoy, in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda, he again criticizes Filipino resilience. He says: “Well, there are other words for resilient. Those are vulnerable, frail, insignificant, negligible, forgettable, dismissible, miserable, not really there. Or indeed passivity, acceptance, resignation, getting by, making do, moving on. What you call resilient, we call forced to good.” Like Harned’s point about asking children to be patient when we really want them to be quiet and obey, similarly Filipinos

³³³ de Quiros, “Filipino Resilience.”

are praised for their resilience, when they are really being told that they are negligible, forgettable and should passively accept their lot in life. Quiros believes that while the typhoons are ‘acts of God’ the corruption that has led to the deprivation and poverty and increased vulnerability for so many is not an act of God and again demands that people respond in anger:

Some things we can’t do anything about. Acts of God are one of those... Other things we can do something about. We can always get angry at the terms of our existence. We can always burn and rave at our vulnerability, at our powerlessness, at our poverty. We can always be as outraged about our deprivation as we have been of late about our corruption. We can always be oppressed by our lot as we have been of late about their plots. We can always refuse to be humored and called resilient, we can always refuse to have our grief waved away by faint comfort, we can always say, “Leave us be, we are hurt and we are angry.””³³⁴

Quiros’ exhortations to anger are prophetic in Philippine society. Prophetic because much like the prophets exhortations, they represent constructive insight on the need for reform in society, and like many of the prophets, his insight is not well received. This has to do with how Filipinos perceive anger. Whereas a display of resilience is honored and praised in Philippine society, a display of anger elicits reactions of disapproval and condemnation. An examination of old Filipino proverbs³³⁵ shows that *galit*, the Tagalog word for anger, is an emotion that it is best to keep in and not express. In her linguistic study of the ‘*galit*’, Angela Lorenzana notes that the Filipino proverbs on

³³⁴ Conrado de Quiros, “Resilience,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 11, 2013, Online edition, sec. Opinion, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/65207/resilience>.

³³⁵ “Care must be taken when looking at proverbs as expressing aspects of a certain worldview or mentality of a people that no stereotypical conclusions about a so-called “national character” are drawn.... Nevertheless, the frequent use of certain proverbs in a particular culture could be used together with other social and cultural indicators to formulate valid generalizations. Thus, if the Germans really do use the proverbs *Morgenstunde hat Gold im Munde* (The morning hour has gold in its mouth, i.e., The early bird catches the worm) and *Ordnung ist das halbe Leben* (Order is half of life) with high frequency, then they do mirror at least to some degree the German attitude towards getting up early and keeping things in good order.” Wolfgang Mieder, “*Proverbs Speak Louder Than Words*”: *Folk Wisdom in Art, Culture, Folklore, History, Literature and Mass Media* (Peter Lang, 2008), 23.

anger display a preference for silence as a response and a non-confrontational attitude: “*Kung ikaw ay nagagalit, ikaw ay tumahimik* (Esso 1996:124). ‘If you are *galit*, keep quiet.’”³³⁶ In fact, Lorenzana notes that many emotions which are similar to anger are often expressed with ‘*loob*’ appended, such as ‘*ngitngit ng loob*’ where ‘*ngitngit*’ means fury, and thus the phrase means fury which is harbored deep inside one; or ‘*sama ng loob*’ where ‘*sama*’ means bad and the phrase means ill-feeling.³³⁷ In proverbs and even in the linguistic composition of the language, anger and negative emotions are meant to be internalized and hidden from public view.

An interesting thing she notes in her semantic explication of *galit* is that Filipino anger is usually directed towards a person, that Filipinos rarely become angry at a situation. She gives an example of someone losing their car key. In itself, the lost car key simply causes annoyance, which is an emotion that the Filipino can express freely. However, if someone took the car key, then anger is directed at that person, but not expressed. This understanding of how Filipinos are unaccustomed to becoming angry at a situation sheds light on the radical nature of de Quiros’ exhortation to the Filipino people to become angry at their situation of poverty and deprivation. Filipinos are hindered on several levels by their socio-cultural mores. First, by their inability to direct anger at a situation, even the situation of poverty and deprivation. Second, even if they were to overcome the first and find a way to direct their anger towards people in government who are responsible for stealing public funds and thus depriving them of the social services

³³⁶ Angela E. Lorenzana, “Galit: The Filipino Emotion Word for Anger” (Tenth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics, Palawan, Philippines: S.I.; Linguistics Society of the Philippines and SIL International, 2006), 4, <http://www.sil.org/asia/philippines/ical/papers.html>.

³³⁷ Ibid.

which government is supposed to provide, they are then bound by the social mores that enjoin them not to display anger, but to keep it in.

This curious lack of anger has been noted and remarked upon by western scholars visiting the Philippines. Frank Lynch, an American social anthropologist who specialized in Philippine studies, coined the term Smooth Interpersonal Relations (SIR) in the 1970s to characterize the Filipino preference for peaceful interactions. Lynch observed that Filipinos abhor confrontations and prefer to settle their differences in a non-confrontational manner. For example, he says that while Americans will settle their differences by agreeing to disagree, Filipinos prefer to agree not to disagree in public. He concludes that Americans value integrity over peaceful interactions and Filipinos value peaceful interactions³³⁸

Lynch uses the term *amor propio* to refer to the self-esteem of the Filipino. He notes that a Filipino's *amor propio* is not aroused at just any insult or slight, but only those insults that strike at what he perceives to be his excellences. For example, a Filipino farmer will be humiliated rather than angry if he is disparaged for his lack of literacy, however he will become very angry if he called a bad provider for his family or a cuckold.³³⁹ Similarly, "the Tagalog scholar who is quite willing to accept corrections for his lapses into poor English may be incensed by any questioning (even legitimate and justified) of his Tagalog."³⁴⁰ Thomas makes a similar observation about anger saying one of the causes of anger is when one's excellence is insulted. He says: "Now it is evident that the more excellent a man is, the more unjust is a slight offered him in the matter in

³³⁸ Frank Lynch, "Philippine Values II: Social Acceptance," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 10, no. 1 (1962): 85.

³³⁹ Ibid., 98.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 99.

which he excels. Consequently those who excel in any matter, are most of all angry, if they be slighted in that matter; for instance, a wealthy man in his riches, or an orator in his eloquence, and so forth.”³⁴¹ Lynch observed that people go to great lengths to avoid arousing *amor proprio* in their colleagues by avoiding direct challenges and treading carefully.

A Filipina, Corazon B. Kawi, concurs with Lynch in her thesis on ‘The Emotional Experience of Anger: Its Sources and Expressions.’ Kawi explores and evaluates the situations that trigger anger in Filipinos and one of the conclusions she arrives at is that Filipinos tend to not express felt anger and she attributes this to their propensity for SIR.³⁴²

In his article on “Engaging Virtue Ethics in the Philippines”, James Keenan noted this lack of anger among Filipino social interactions. It is not that Filipinos don’t feel anger, rather he observed that it seemed that it was not socially acceptable to express it as it could possibly constitute a threat to group cohesion and unity. Keenan discusses anger in the context of reconciliation among the different social classes in the Philippines and was worried that the inability to express anger may hamper efforts at true reconciliation. “Anger and reconciliation together allow us to rethink the ways we are related. Together, they allow us to recognize that perhaps we are too patient with one another or too condescending or too pitying or too “understanding.” They help us to see our differences, how we need to face conflict, how we need to respect diversity as we forge forward.”³⁴³

³⁴¹ ST.II.47.3

³⁴² Corazon B. Kawi, “The Emotional Experience of Anger: Its Sources and Expressions” (Ph.D dissertation, Saint Louis University, 2000), <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/212>.

³⁴³ James F. Keenan, “Engaging Virtue Ethics in the Philippines,” *Landas: Journal of Loyola School of Theology* 15, no. 1 (2001): 110.

Keenan believes that the cultural inability to express anger may hinder the efforts of true reconciliation among the Filipino people.

Diana Fritz-Cates points out that one of the things we can learn from Thomas' exposition on anger is how his "experience of anger was socially constructed out of an enduring, taken-for-granted, and publicly shared sense of appropriate social order that he and other members of his thirteenth-century European community inherited from Aristotle and other classical thinkers." Here, she is referring to an explanation and example that Thomas gives when talking about an insult being given by someone who is below one in station or intelligence being a cause of anger. He says: "Consequently deficiency or littleness in the person with whom we are angry, tends to increase our anger, in so far as it adds to the unmeritedness of being despised.... Thus a nobleman is angry if he be insulted by a peasant; a wise man, if by a fool; a master, if by a servant."³⁴⁴ This example reflects as much about Thomas' world view of the hierarchy and rank of people in society as it reflects his understanding of how anger operates, as an insult is more egregious when it crosses rank from a lower ranked person to a higher ranked person yet there does not seem to be a similar degree of offense warranted for an offense by a higher ranked person against a lower ranked person.

Fritz-Cates points out that our own experiences of anger are similarly a construct of the culture mores in our own societies. Using the example of twentieth century America, Fritz-Cates says that many women have difficulty getting angry with sexist men because they are not truly convinced that these sexist slights are undeserved. She says

³⁴⁴ ST.I.II.47.4

that women believe, because they have been conditioned by society to believe that they are worth less than men and therefore deserve this treatment.³⁴⁵

Applying Fritz-Cates' insight to Filipino society, we can infer something similar about the lack of anger that the poor and marginalized express. Perhaps they have been conditioned by society to believe that they deserve their lot, and to not expect help, not even the most basic of services from their government. Society has conditioned them to believe they are undeserving of the wealth of riches and natural resources that our country is capable of producing. There is evidence of this in Lorenzana's study of *galit*. One of the things she noted was that the ability to express anger seems to be influenced by whether one is in an in-group. For example, one of the respondents in her study noted that she could express anger about something when she was with her close friends or close family members but not to a co-worker or a superior.³⁴⁶ This shows that Filipinos have been conditioned by society to not express anger towards people perceived to be superior to them in rank or social hierarchy and breaking this norm is difficult for them. The poor in the Philippines feel that the powerful and wealthy are superior to them in rank and social hierarchy, thus it is difficult for them to express their anger towards the powerful and wealthy. The oppressed have been culturally and socially conditioned to not express their anger and to be resilient instead.

This attitude is not entirely accidental. In his dissertation on anger and its relationship to justice, Michael Jaycox points out that "members of privileged groups have a strong political interest in portraying anger as a destructive impulse. The fact that they benefit from structural injustices creates a general disincentive to resist or reform the

³⁴⁵ Diana Fritz-Cates, "Thomas Aquinas and Audre Lorde on Anger," in *Aquinas and Empowerment: Classical Ethics for Ordinary Lives*, ed. G. Simon Harak (Georgetown University Press, 1997), 56.

³⁴⁶ Lorenzana, "Galit: The Filipino Emotion Word for Anger," 5.

status quo and an interest in believing that specific means of resistance and reform will be ineffective.”³⁴⁷ By advocating and praising Filipino resilience, the Filipino privileged are subtly discouraging anger and encouraging the marginalized to channel their energy into passive resilience and endurance which are traits that are viewed more positively in society.

Returning to de Quiros’ appeal for Filipinos to become angry at the injustice being perpetuated against them, we can better appreciate the radical nature of his demand. Becoming angry at the situation, expressing their anger, are difficult things for Filipinos to perform. Yet, de Quiros’ exhortation is prophetic in that it heralds God’s promises of the kingdom of God where justice reigns and the need for reform in society to bring it about. Anger is an integral step in restoring right relationships in society.

Like the Stoics, Filipinos have the tendency to view anger and vengeance as a negative emotion. Thomas and the classical philosophers had a more positive view of anger. For both Aristotle and Thomas, anger is an emotion, a passion that must be directed according to one’s reason. Being angry in the right way, for the right reason is good while anger which is excessive or deficient is evil. In fact, Thomas sees the need for anger in the act of fortitude, particularly the act of *aggredi*.³⁴⁸ Fortitude needs anger to strike at injustice which is a cause of sorrow. Sorrow has a paralyzing effect which perhaps explains Filipino inaction in the face of injustice.

Anger and the desire for vengeance are good in that they are essentially passion for justice. Concern over excessive anger is understandable. Anger, particularly in excess, can do terrible damage and often has swift and direct impact. Also, anger is a strong

³⁴⁷ Michael Jaycox, “Righteous Anger and Virtue Ethics: A Contemporary Reconstruction of Anger in Service to Justice” (Ph.D dissertation, Boston College, 2014), 224.

³⁴⁸ ST II.II.123.10.ad.3

emotion that often clouds one's reason. As the prevalent vice of courage is cowardice and not rashness, the prevalent vice of anger is its tendency towards excess and not deficiency. Many cultures are understandably wary of the excess of anger and believe it to be in need of moderation.

For example, Filipino proverbs seem solely concerned about the excess of anger, cautioning people against becoming angry too quickly, as one of them says: "Sudden *galit* is a sign of ignorance."³⁴⁹ Or of the evils that accompany anger that is not held in check, such as fraud, violence, and murder, that a person does in anger to avenge themselves are evil. "Being *galit* brings with it many evils."³⁵⁰ Other proverbs are about holding *galit* in today and expressing it tomorrow, and about *galit* making one ugly. Yet there are no proverbs about expressing one's *galit* in order to bring about justice. These proverbs along with the sociological studies³⁵¹ on Filipino anger reveal that their expression of anger is deficient. Filipinos need not only to feel anger, they need to be able to express their anger as its expression acts as the catalyst for change. By keeping their anger in, they perpetuate and even condone the cycle of violence being done to them. Anger is necessary to right the unequal relationship.

Good Anger

Much of Thomas' treatise on anger cautions against the excess of anger. While he begins his section on anger by saying that anger is lawful and good if it is in accord with reason, in his structure of the virtues, he puts anger under the virtue of temperance, seeing it as a passion that needs to be moderated. He is very concerned with the sinfulness of

³⁴⁹ Lorenzana, "Galit: The Filipino Emotion Word for Anger," 5.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 6.

³⁵¹ See Frank Lynch and Corazon Kawi.

excessive anger.³⁵² For example, anger is sinful when one becomes angry with no good reason, or if one feels immoderate anger over something.³⁵³ Anger has the potential to become a mortal sin if out of excessive anger, one blasphemes God or harms one's neighbor.³⁵⁴ And while he concludes that anger is a less grievous sin than concupiscence because its object is justice and not merely the pleasurable or useful good, his examples about the inordinateness of anger are always of anger being excessive and not about anger being inordinate due to deficiency.³⁵⁵

However, in his last article he acknowledges the viciousness of too little anger saying "lack of anger is a sin."³⁵⁶ While examples of excessive anger abound, he explains that the lack of anger is also vicious. Anger is a passion of the sensitive appetite, therefore it is moved by perception and when it is moderated by reason, it is good. Thus when there is good reason to be angry, one should feel angry. Not being angry when the situation calls for it is sinful and vicious and portrays a lack of good judgment.

Anger is not only a good emotion to feel when there is good reason, but it is also a useful one. Thomas says that anger is useful because it is "conducive to the more prompt execution of reason's dictate."³⁵⁷ Anger functions as the spark that ignites movement for change. Fortitude is about pursuing the difficult good and anger gives one the impetus to fuel the struggle. Pieper says: "Wrath is the strength to attack the repugnant; the power of anger is actually the power of resistance in the soul."³⁵⁸

³⁵² ST II.II.158

³⁵³ ST II.II.158.3

³⁵⁴ ST II.II.158.3.ad.1

³⁵⁵ ST II.II.158.4

³⁵⁶ ST II.II.158.8

³⁵⁷ ST II.II.158.8.ad.2

³⁵⁸ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 193.

Not only is anger good when in accordance with reason and useful, but feeling the passion of anger is also a praiseworthy and becoming part of life. It is not enough to perceive a wrong and act with reason but passionlessly to correct it, one must also feel angry at that wrong and use the passion that one feels in one's actions. Thomas says that "one who does good with passion is more praiseworthy than one who is 'not entirely' afire for the good, even to the forces of the sensual realm. Gregory the Great says: 'Reason opposes evil the more effectively when anger ministers at her side.'"³⁵⁹ Passions and emotions are integral part of the human experience. While, many times people experience anger that has spun out of control causing them do stupid and damaging things, Thomas emphasizes that anger that is harnessed by reason is a good passion.

In his book on *Good Anger*, J. Giles Milhaven investigates anger, convinced of Thomas Aquinas' conclusion, that anger and vengeance are good if in accord with reason because ultimately they serve justice. Using both philosophical and empirical sources, J. Giles Milhaven's book *Good Anger* is an investigative account into the nature of anger and vengeance. We have instinctive disposition to view anger and vengeance with mistrust, which is understandable because we have seen from experience the havoc that anger and vengeance are capable of wrecking. However, Milhaven arrives at the conclusion that good anger and vengeance are not only good in themselves but acknowledging them as good is important if they are to play a role in liberation.³⁶⁰

Contrary to Filipino mentality, Milhaven believes that vindictive anger can be good. He says: "Vindictive anger is good because it is an elemental lunge of our self to be with others as their equal in power and will. Our wanting to make others suffer for

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 194.

³⁶⁰ John Giles Milhaven, *Good Anger* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1989), 176.

making us suffer is our wanting to make ourselves equal to them in personal power and freedom.”³⁶¹ Vindictive anger is good because it claims equality with person who has done them harm, belittled or insulted them. Filipinos who are marginalized or poor need vindictive anger in order to assert themselves. To recognize that they are equal to those who are insulting them, to those who are keeping them down. Unless they recognize and claim equality, they lack the impetus to demand change, because secretly they feel like they deserve to be downtrodden. Vindictive anger enables the marginalized to claim equality the rich and the powerful in order to claim their share of the country’s wealth and resources. Jaycox says that the marginalized need social anger in order to fuel their demand for reform:

Social anger is our moral judgment that these minimal conditions are not being met because a vulnerable social group is subject to systemic deprivation of a specific social good under the current institutional arrangements. ...

Finally, social anger is our primary motivation for participating in resistance and reform efforts. Without the motivation of anger, it would be at least improbable, if not impossible, that agent would be able to effectively resist and reform structures and systems that stymie the historical struggle to promote basic human flourishing.³⁶²

Milhaven insists that the ability to feel and express one’s anger towards the person who has done one harm is a crucial step in being able to transform that anger into constructive passion. He gives an example of a woman in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting who confesses that she felt anger for the first time the night before when her husband came home drunk. Instead of feeling pity or despair, she felt the urge to push him down the stairs. Milhaven says everyone applauded, not because they wanted her to push her husband down the stairs but because her ability to express this anger heralded a

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Jaycox, “Righteous Anger and Virtue Ethics: A Contemporary Reconstruction of Anger in Service to Justice,” 242.

positive change in her, one that would allow her to put her own well-being and care ahead of his, and refuse to be the victim any longer.³⁶³ Only anger that is acknowledged and owned “can liberate a person to rise to more positive passion and constructive action.”³⁶⁴

Filipinos have a tendency to repress their anger, to feel *galit* but keep quiet and internalize it. Milhaven finds that repressed anger does no good. He says: “anger works as energy for more constructive passion to the extent that we recognize our anger and let ourselves feel it in full consciousness.”³⁶⁵ Awareness and acknowledgement of one’s anger aids in its transformation to constructive passion. Thus, Milhaven’s conclusion that anger that is reasonable is good in itself. And recognition that it is good, that one’s anger is justified is a step towards transforming it to a constructive passion.

Filipino Anger Expressed

There is another old proverb, *ang taong walang kibo, nasa loob bang kulo*, one of its translations is ‘a quiet person has anger boiling inside’³⁶⁶ that vividly draws the analogy between an angry Filipino person and a pot that is boiling. This description of the bubbling pot, aptly describes Filipino anger that is kept in, kept simmering below the surface. It also describes the threat of the bubbling pot, of anger accumulating, of anger getting hotter until such a time when it can no longer be contained by the pot and bubbles over. This proverb “do[es] not only speak of individuals boiling over or overflowing, but

³⁶³ Milhaven, *Good Anger*, 188.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 182.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 195.

³⁶⁶ Paredes-Canilao, Narcisa, “Sa Loob Ang Kulo: Speaking the Unconscious in the Transformations of a Filipino Proverb,” in *Re(con)figuring Psychoanalysis: Critical Juxtapositions of the Philosophical, the Sociohistorical and the Political*, ed. Aydan Gülerce (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 76.

also of a community or society seeking ruptures or lines of escape from repressive regimes.”³⁶⁷ These times when collective Filipino anger has accumulated and reached critical levels, and like a bubbling pot or a volcano that has become overly hot, their anger erupts into those historical instances where Filipinos have shown their anger, and said enough is enough.

The theme of accumulated anger that can no longer be contained is evoked as well in the compact outrage: *Tama na, sobra na* (Enough, too much). This outcry during the dictatorial and martial law regime has become the protest slogan of contemporary Filipinos whenever government, business leaders, school administrators or foreign employers become abusive. It speaks of what is humanly endurable.”³⁶⁸

It speaks of the rage of the quiet person, who has quietly endured and been resilient until he reaches the point where he can endure no more, he can contain his anger no longer. He was willing to endure up to this point but the line has been crossed and he is forced to act on his anger. One of the first instances of the eruption of this anger was the revolution that won Filipinos their independence in 1898, and then again, anger bubbled over into what is now famously known as People Power. Jaycox emphasizes the importance of social anger for liberation. He says “Social anger is integral to the attainment of these practical aims of Catholic social ethics because it is the “no” that we, as citizens and non-citizen members of political societies, utter in response to societal injustices.”³⁶⁹

The most recent display of anger was the exposure of a scam that was using Non Government Organizations (NGOs) to siphon millions of pesos into the pockets of greedy politicians. People began clamoring for the abolishment of the pork barrel system of fund

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 77.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 78.

³⁶⁹ Jaycox, “Righteous Anger and Virtue Ethics: A Contemporary Reconstruction of Anger in Service to Justice,” 213.

disbursement, culminating in a Million People March in August, 2013. Since then, the person seen as masterminding the operation and three senators who were implicated are in jail. People expressed their anger and the government began a program of reforms. The way that this situation unfolded demonstrates a couple of principles that Milhaven gives about effective liberation. He says that people need to form groups with other similarly oppressed people in the fight for justice, and for their efforts to yield results, they need the oppressor to cooperate in some way.³⁷⁰

Unfortunately, these all seem short lived. The problem with the anger of the bubbling pot, is that once it boils over, it quickly loses steam. This too is descriptive of Filipino temperament. Their anger accumulates over time, steaming and bubbling with resentment until a critical point is reached and it erupts, escaping the depths to which a person has confined it. But like the water in the pot that has bubbled over, it quickly loses its heat, energy and force. When Filipino anger reaches a critical point, they show it and quickly initiate change, usually by overthrowing a regime. Yet, because they lose steam, the change and reforms that are instituted are rarely permanent as they are uncomfortable with conflict, with the prolonged effort and confrontation that would be necessary to truly change the system, preferring to let things slide back to status quo.

Soon after the overthrowing Spanish colonial rule, the Philippines became a colony of the United States. Soon after becoming their own republic, they quickly fell prey to a tyrannical dictator, Ferdinand Marcos. Soon after People Power where they liberated themselves from Marcos and dictatorship, the Marcos family has once again risen to power, with his wife, Imelda Marcos as Congress woman, his son, Bong Bong

³⁷⁰ Milhaven, *Good Anger*, 189.

Marcos, a Senator, and his daughter, Aimee Marcos, a Governor of their home province, Ilocos.

The Filipino people have shown time and again the capacity to wield anger for liberation. Unfortunately, the deficiency seems to lie in maintaining this anger and continuing the struggle for justice even after the liberation. Revisiting Jose Rizal's sentiments about the revolution, we find that his objections to it have proven to be well founded. Rizal objected to the revolution, not because he didn't want liberation for the Filipino, but he did not believe they had cultivated the fortitude that is rightly ordered towards justice that is required to sustain liberation. He believed that people needed to study and develop character in order to become worthy of liberty.³⁷¹ He cautioned against revolution because he believed it was doomed to fail and on some level he was right. Externally, as an event in history, the revolution succeeded, yet true liberty eludes the Filipino people. There is still an oppressive upper class and a marginalized underclass, except now, the oppressive upper class is Filipino and not Spanish. As Jose Rizal feared, the Filipino people merely exchanged one tyranny for another.

Conclusion

Any discussion of a virtue is 'thickened' to a certain extent. While Aristotle and Thomas were elaborating on universal attributes of the virtue, they could not keep their own context and concerns out of their description. The goal of this dissertation has been to do contextual yet critical social virtue ethics. It is contextual because the virtue of fortitude in the Philippines has been 'thickened' by our history and culture. It is also a critical social virtue ethics because it provides a critique of Filipino fortitude by

³⁷¹ Rizal, "Manifesto to Certain Filipinos (Rizal's Disavowal of the Revolution)."

comparing and contrasting it against the classical tradition of Aristotle and Thomas. This comparison achieves two things: first it exposes flaws in Filipino fortitude, like its lack of anger and its lack of justice. Second it reveals attributes of fortitude that were not in the classical tradition, such as joyful resilience.

Much of the value of this dissertation is in its description and critique of a specifically Filipino fortitude. In the Philippines, fortitude takes a unique form. Filipinos endure suffering patiently, and handle great adversity with resilience – all the while maintaining the ability to be joyful. Occasionally they will arise together and resist injustice, showing true fortitude. Yet, more often their fortitude is a mere semblance of the virtue because it is disordered and divorced from its true function which is to support justice and faith.

While fortitude is universally exalted and honored, it takes different forms in different cultures. This last chapter has been concerned with critiquing the form the virtue has assumed in the Philippines as well as the abuse of virtue ethics language. In many societies there is a danger of over idealizing courage that leads to it becoming very aggressive and martial. In Philippine society the opposite occurs, virtue language is used to promote resilience and passive suffering, paving the way for injustice to flourish.

This legitimate critique of the abuse of virtue ethical language should not lead us to reject a virtue ethical approach altogether. On the contrary, a recovery of virtue which contributes to equality and the flourishing for all members of society is both possible and desirable. For fortitude to lead to flourishing for all, the quasi integral parts must function together. For truly virtuous courage, one needs both *sustinere*, which Filipinos seem to possess in abundance, and *aggredi*, which Filipinos often lack. Filipino fortitude is

disordered because it has come to mean the passive endurance of suffering divorced from any facets of resistance and initiative taking. It lacks a commitment to justice and it lacks anger which is the appropriate emotion in the face of injustice. While there have been instances in Philippine history where anger has culminated in a display of fortitude, it has not sustained the reforms it has sought.

A firmness of resolve and commitment to justice needs to be developed, otherwise resilience is in danger of becoming passive, and passive resilience allows injustice to flourish. The form of fortitude must change from a passive sort to a more active sort, one that uses the energy that anger brings and takes seriously a commitment to justice. Many societies, including the Philippines, are worried about the excess of anger and its effects. Anger is often seen as a passion in need of moderation, and in most cultures, for most people, this is a good mean for anger. Not in the Philippines. In the Philippines anger is overly moderated and the expression of anger is deficient as anger is seen as an emotion that one must keep in and not express. This kind of deficiency of anger is often noted in the marginalized and oppressed in other societies, yet in the Philippines this deficiency is a cultural norm.

Anger is vital for liberation, but to be effective it needs to be owned and acknowledged in order for it to be transformed into constructive energy that works towards reform and liberation. Filipinos need to learn to harness their anger appropriately, to find the mean between releasing it in an explosive outburst of temper and keeping it in so that it dies out. They need to acknowledge it in order to be able to use it to fuel their desire for justice and reform in the country. History has shown us that winning a revolution is not enough to guarantee justice. Revolutions merely remove an

injustice, and frequently, new injustices arise in the vacuum that is left. A state of justice needs constant work. The principles of individual virtue apply to social virtue. To become a person with fortitude, one must continuously practice fortitude, in all aspects of one's life. To become a people of fortitude, a single act of fortitude, or several discreet acts of fortitude are not enough. As Aristotle says, it is the work of a lifetime. The act of fortitude in resisting injustice must be practiced constantly and continuously across generations of Filipinos. This practice of actively resisting injustice imprints fortitude on our societal character. Only then can Filipinos be a people of fortitude.

A constructive retrieval of fortitude in the Philippine context would include, not just the basic commitment to justice, but the ability to express anger constructively, and to use that anger to fuel a long term fortitude of resistance that not only fuels the energy to overthrow a government, but also resists succumbing to passive tolerance and instead initiates and sustains the energy for setting new standards and initiating reform. Fortitude needs to be more than the immediate reaction to injustice, it needs to be the virtue that follows through with the reforms that maintain justice and lead to flourishing for all.

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