AN ACCOUNT OF VIRTUE AND SOLIDARITY FROM *PAKIKIPAGKÁPUWÂ*

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ABSTRACT

There has been a resurgence of interest among philosophers in Asian conceptions of virtue. In this paper I derive and develop an account of virtue in general, and solidarity in particular, from two Filipino concepts: *pakikipagkápuwâ* (comradeship with fellow humans) and *pakikiramdám* (emotional sensitivity). The primary source used for the discussion of these concepts is Filipino psychology, which allows for an account of virtue that is grounded in a particular cultural practice. The ensuing account of virtue, however, is not just context-sensitive; it also showcases an aspect of Filipino culture that has a potential for universality. More specifically, the account of virtue and solidarity from *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám* is shown to have affinities with the interdependent construal of the self, which is discussed by some psychologists; and the relational understanding of autonomy, which is discussed by some philosophers.

Introduction

Although many are now interested in what are sometimes called alternative accounts of virtue from non-Western sources, especially early Confucian texts (Hutton 2015; Mi, Slote, & Sosa 2015; Wong 2004; Wong 2015), little work has been done on developing an account of virtue from the work that psychologists have done on non-Western subjects. Elsewhere I argue that the resurgence of interest in Asian accounts of virtue is impaired by an almost exclusive focus on classical texts, which does not allow for an account of virtue that can be empirically tested and calibrated for contemporary needs (Cleofas 2016a). In this vein, I develop an account of virtue and solidarity from work done by Filipino psychologists.

The account of solidarity developed in this paper turns the focus on two crucial concepts that have been investigated by Filipino psychologists: *pakikipagkápuwâ* (comradeship with fellow humans) and *pakikiramdám* (emotional sensitivity).The discussion below is organized as follows: First, I explain why it is important to use Filipino psychology for developing a conception of virtue and solidarity. Second, I show that virtue and solidarity necessarily involve context-sensitivity. Third, I give a detailed discussion of *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám.* Finally, I provide an initial account of virtue and solidarity from the foregoing Filipino cultural characteristics.

Why Filipino Psychology?

Filipino psychology is an especially important source for developing an account of virtue in general and solidarity in particular. Here is the first reason: it is not possible to develop a distinctly Filipino account of virtue without drawing from psychological research done in the Philippine context. The Philippines does not have classical philosophical texts such as those that are associated with the early Confucians or the Vedas of classical Indian philosophy. Because most forms of theologizing about virtue occur within the Roman Catholic tradition, there is sometimes a tendency to construe virtue in an excessively Western, i.e. Thomistic-Aristotelian, way. Consequently, philosophers and theologians have had to use research from the social sciences and the humanities to develop a culturally-rooted approach to ethics. The moral theologian Eric Genilo rightly points out that the ensuing methodology is interdisciplinary. He says, "Filipino ethicists have taken an interdisciplinary approach in their efforts to fashion an inculturated ethics for Filipinos. For example, in order to propose Filipino images of Christ that can inspire and motivate ethical living, ethicists have referred to the work of scholars in vernacular literature" (Genilo 2010, 16). In this paper I use evidence from psychology instead of literary studies, while nevertheless pursuing the interdisciplinary approach to ethics which was identified by Genilo.

Because the Philippines has a rich tradition of indigenized psychological research, it makes a lot of sense to draw from such a resource to develop an account of virtue. According to David Ho (1998), Filipino psychologists were among the first to advocate a return to and re-validation of psychological conceptual schemes and modes of investigation that are indigenous to Asia. The Indian psychologist, Durnganad Sinha (1997), says, "Of the countries in Asia, the trend to indigenizing psychology is strongest and most articulate in the Philippines" (153). There are two things that support Sinha's claim. First, there is already a well-developed understanding of indigenous concepts, indigenous research methods, and indigenous personality testing that allow psychologists to contribute to a body of knowledge on Filipino thought and experience (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino 2000). Second, Filipino psychology has influenced social psychologists working in the Philippine context to work on the distinct patterns of social life and pressing social issues (Macapagal et al. 2013). Because this vibrant field of research features investigations that have significant behavioral components, evidence from social psychology in the Philippine context is especially relevant for a contextualized account of virtue that can be empirically tested and calibrated for contemporary needs.

Developing a contextualized account of virtue that can be empirically tested and calibrated for contemporary needs is especially relevant in the face of philosophical situationism, which is an empirically-minded challenge against any and all virtue-theoretic approaches. Situationists believe that evidence from social psychology demonstrates that virtue is neither robust nor reliable in producing morally desirable behavior (Doris 2002; Vranas 2005; Alfano 2013).[1] Because indigenous Filipino psychology was pioneered by social psychologists and because current social psychological research in the Philippines is directly informed by some elements from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, psychological research done in the Philippine context is especially suited for developing an account of virtue that avoids the situationist challenge. Indeed, if the empirically-grounded approach that I am using in this paper succeeds, then it would later be possible to develop a response that gives situationists a dose of their own medicine.

Before closing this section, it is worth mentioning that Filipino morality is oriented towards character or virtue. According to the theologian Dionisio Miranda (2002), "Philippine morality is more character oriented than ontological, not grounded on a metaphysical order but aiming at a moral balance or harmony of human relationships….In traditional theological language, the Filipino conscience responds to virtue summons more than it does to imposed duties deriving

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[1] See my discussion of the situationist challenge in the context of Catholic Social Tradition for a more detailed discussion of situationism (Cleofas 2016).

from norms…" (10). Consequently, an account of virtue developed from Filipino psychology is perfectly in keeping with the overall outlook of Filipinos on morality.

Virtue, Solidarity, and the Particularity of Practice

The task of this section is twofold. The first is to define virtue and solidarity. The second is to show that both these concepts necessarily involve sensitivity to context and a practical understanding of local norms.

Any discussion of virtue requires attention to specific contexts and acknowledgment of the importance of local norms in figuring out what to do. Indeed, what differentiates virtue-theoretic approaches from those that focus on deontological requirements, or the demands of promoting utility, is the rejection of a generalist or theoretical approach to morality. Where deontologists focus on universalizable or rationally justifiable maxims, virtue theorists pay close attention to the properties of a person that enable her to apply moral rules or principles in the right way, at the right time, and for the right reason. Where utilitarians single-mindedly focus on promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number, virtue theorists recognize that there is no single right specification for the good life. There is substantial agreement, however, on what counts as a virtue.

According to Linda Zagzebski (1996), virtue is "a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end" (137). In the moral domain such an excellence arises from an experience that all human beings have and make decisions about (Nussbaum 2013, 632). For instance, all human beings have to cope with the limitedness of available resources and make difficult decisions about their equitable distribution. The virtue of justice characterizes the qualities of a person who reliably makes the right decisions about such matters. Both the Confucian and Aristotelian perspectives on virtue discuss such a quality of a person in terms of a doctrine of the mean (Yu 2007, 79-88). This mean is usually understood as an intermediate state between two extremes, one that involves doing too much and another that involves doing too little of something. One such extreme, which we associate with the term "injustice," is a distribution of limited resources that unduly favors a certain group while leaving all others with little or no provision. The other extreme probably involves distributing benefits and burdens by thinking in terms of a literal equality, which amounts to a thoughtless understanding of proportion. On this understanding, extreme benefits and burdens are simplistically divided by the number of people involved without any consideration for differences in level of need or the reality that certain resources cannot be divided up or even counted in the way required by a purely mathematical calculation of equal pieces. The foregoing vice of extremism is to justice as recklessness is to courage; in some cases the vice of extremism gives the appearance of an exaggerated distortion of the relevant virtue.

Someone who possesses the virtue of justice does more than avoid both extremes; she manages to do the right thing in particular situations by exercising good practical judgment. The latter involves wisdom in managing the complexities of the situation and competing demands in particular cases. In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (2011) an analogy is drawn between practical wisdom in one's moral life on the one hand and the arts of medicine and seafaring on the other (NE 1104a 1-5, 1112b1-10).[2] In the case of medicine, successfully diagnosing and treating illness depends on a practitioner's ability to navigate her way between the particularities of a given case and general rules, which are in turn based on correct judgment of past cases. The latter implies a commitment to both particularism and objectivity; doing the right thing is a matter of finding

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[2] The convention of using Bekker's numbers to cite passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) is followed here.

objectively correct solutions in particular cases. Such particularism also implies that making decisions about the moral life involves finding a balance between general rules and specific cases, with greater emphasis on the latter. And yet the right decision in both ethics and medicine is an objective matter. The right diagnosis and treatment for a particular patient is analogous to the right distribution of burdens and benefits in a specific case: an elusive mind-independent target that must be hit with unerring precision. Hence, the virtuous person can only do the right thing if she is thoroughly familiar, not only with the particulars of a case, but also with the specific persons and practices involved. Such sensitivity to context and insightful understanding of the particularities of practice is best illustrated by discussing a specific virtue.

But before turning to a discussion of solidarity, let us note that the practice of doing theology in Asia fully coincides with the kind of sensitivity to context and insightful understanding of the particularities of practice that I have mentioned. According to Michael Amaladoss (2008), in contrast with Euro-American theology, Asian theology is "unashamedly contextual." Amaladoss characterizes Asian theology as a process that begins with faith-experience and then becomes "faith urging transformation" instead of the more familiar process of "faith seeking understanding." He says:

> In Asia, as in Africa and Latin America, theology starts with faith-experience. Lived in a particular historical and cultural context, this experience raises questions to faith-tradition. We try to understand the question more sharply and clearly by analyzing the situation, making use of the sciences, particularly social, like psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology. Once the question is clear, there is an effort to correlate the faith-experience with faith-tradition mediated by the question. A two-fold hermeneutic or interpretation follows. There is an attempt to reinterpret tradition in the context of experience. There is also an effort to find new meaning in the experience in the light of tradition. This dialectical reflection is philosophical. In the light of this reflection faith may get a new formulation and experience may acquire a new meaning. This new vision suggests new interventions that seek to transform reality and experience. Discernment follows reflection. Theology then becomes "faith urging transformation."

The point here seems to be that both philosophical and theological reflection on a specific phenomenon, such as the experience of shared humanity, can give rise to a new formulation or account of a dimension of tradition, say, virtue, but only after experience gives rise to a specific question. Here the relevant question is how a specifically Filipino experience of being in solidarity or comradeship with others through emotional sensitivity can bring about a new way of understanding virtue in general and solidarity in particular.

Let us now turn to solidarity, which is an important concept in the Christian ethical tradition even though there is no consensus on what it means and how it ought to be applied in specific contexts (Beyer 2014). Part of the ambiguity lies in different usage or treatment of the concept; solidarity can be considered a state of affairs, a moral principle, a type of action, or a virtue. In this paper the focus is on the last of these. However, the virtue of solidarity is inseparable from the experience or state of affairs that makes it possible. Here is a succinct account of the relevant experience from James Keenan (2013):

> We enter solidarity…not from a condescending position of strength but from the vulnerable position of being human. Solidarity is not first and foremost a principle of action; solidarity is affective and spiritual union with others whose life situations are also being challenged and compromised. From that union we are called to act in justice. Solidarity is then first a fundamental, existential, deeply felt sense of union; but

secondly it is a call to engage in certain moral practices to better the life situation of the other. (49-50)

Keenan rightly points out that the entry point to solidarity is a lived experience that allows someone to see the same humanity, vulnerability, and suffering in herself and in others. Virtually all humans have had this experience and make decisions about it. Keenan's account implies that the virtuous response is to improve the situation of the other even though one is similarly troubled and suffering.

We can identify two extreme responses to the grounding experience of solidarity.[3] At the extreme of deficiency a person is inclined to negate the experience of union with the other. As soon as she sees herself and another experiencing the same or very similar tribulations, she begins to despise the neediness that she sees both in herself and the other. Here the virtuous response becomes impossible, because a person moves toward concealing or denying any similarity she has with the other and perhaps also concealing and denying her own neediness and peculiarly human vulnerability. At the other extreme lies the complete identification and union of a person with another to the detriment of both herself, the particular other with whom she tries to create a sham union, persons who are somehow excluded from such an experience or encounter, and the relationship between human beings with the supreme Other from whom comes their humanity. Here the virtuous response becomes impossible because a person moves toward sustaining a sham unity between herself and another or particular others, instead of improving the situation of the other without necessarily linking them to herself. The deficient and excessive responses to the grounding experience of solidarity can only be avoided by aiming for the end of solidarity and by being familiar with the contingencies that accompany an agent's exposure to the experience.

Let us take these components of the solidarity in turn. First, to attain the desired intermediate state between the foregoing extremes, it is necessary to recognize that virtue in general and solidarity in particular are means to an end. For Aristotle (2011), virtue is a necessary, but not sufficient means for attaining *eudaimonia* (NE 1098a 15-19); for Confucians, virtue is associated with finding the human *dao* or "the right way which a human life should take" (Yu 2007, 25). Because we are social beings, the good life necessarily involves others so that social virtues such as generosity, justice, and solidarity are integral for our flourishing. To understand the particular end of solidarity let us turn to Meghan J. Clark (2014) who characterizes this social virtue as follows: "For solidarity, the formal object is our common humanity. The end of solidarity is participation in the universal common good. To be more specific, it is the participation by all in the universal common good" (112-113). What Clark calls the formal object has been discussed above as the grounding experience to which solidarity is the appropriate response. To say that the end of solidarity is the participation of all in the common good is to affirm that affective and spiritual union with others who are suffering is not an end in itself. Proper solidarity leads to human flourishing or to the right way that human lives must take.

Second, it is important to look into the way in which the grounding experience is felt in specific circumstances involving local norms and particular practices. Although the grounding experience of solidarity can be described in general terms and defined in a way that makes sense across different cultures, finding the right way to create and sustain union with others in a way that enables all to participate in the common good depends on following local norms and the idiosyncrasies of particular practices to good effect. Here the medical analogy is once again relevant. Promoting the health of a particular patient requires doing different things in different conditions. Similarly, properly practicing the virtue of solidarity is realized in different ways

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[3] The phrase "grounding experience" comes from Nussbaum (2013, 633). For Nussbaum, the thin or nominal definition of a virtue is whatever it is that consists in choosing and responding well in a specific domain of a human life or a grounding experience.

among different peoples who live in dissimilar conditions and follow unique local norms. In each case there is an objectively right answer, but the application of a virtue to a specific case requires extensive and insightful familiarity with particulars. For instance, living out the virtue of solidarity requires knowledge about the specific ways in which particular peoples experience emotions that are relevant for developing affective and spiritual union with their fellow human beings and the unique interpersonal dynamics that govern specific communities.

To close this section, let us look at the characteristic motivation that stands behind the virtue of solidarity and the moral imperative that goes with it. To illustrate both, Clark cites the following words from Martin Luther King, Jr.:

> As long as there is poverty in the world I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in this world cannot expect to live more than twenty-eight or thirty years, I can never be totally healthy even if I just got a good checkup at Mayo clinic. *I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be*.…No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. *We are interdependent*. (Clark 2014, 101; King 2001, 45-46; emphasis added)

Here King nicely captures the connection between affirmation of the interdependence of human beings and promotion of their well-being. At this point we can add that appreciation of such interdependence that moves towards the participation of all in the common good requires familiarity with different ways in which people are interdependent and the unique features of peoples who inhabit such networks of relationships.

Kápuwâ and *Pakikiramdám*

Let us consider two crucial concepts from Filipino psychology that are relevant for developing a contextualized understanding of virtue and solidarity: *kápuwâ* (the root-word of *pakikipagkápuwâ; kápuwâ* literally means co- or fellow human) and *pakikiramdám* (emotional sensitivity). In this section these two concepts will be explained in preparation for the account of virtue and solidarity from a Filipino perspective, which will be given in the following section.

According to Virgilio Enriquez (1978) *the* core concept in Filipino social psychology is *kápuwâ*, which is a foundational source, not just of a relational, but also a pro-social orientation. He gives several reasons for the claim that *kápuwâ* is the core concept in Filipino psychology. First, recognition of others as *kápuwâ* or fellow human transcends different modes of relating that usually vary according to insider-outsider categories. There are eight different terms for relating with others in the Filipino language that correspond to different types of behavior towards others:

1. *pakikitúngo* (transaction/civility with)
2. *pakikisalamuhà* (interaction with)
3. *pakikilahók* (joining/participating with)
4. *pakikibágay* (in conformity with/in accord with)
5. *pakikisáma* (being along with) [getting or going along with]

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6. *pakikipagpalagáyan/pakikipagpalagáyang-loób* (being in rapport/understanding/acceptance with)
7. *pakikisangkót* (getting involved with)
8. *pakikiisá* (being one with). (Enriquez 1978, 102)

The first five types of relating with others are applied to *ibang tao* (outsiders or those that are not one of us), while the rest are applied to those who are *hindi ibang tao* (literally, not

outsiders or one of us). The line dividing insider-outsider categories is very important for Filipinos and norms that govern dealing with people in these categories are very different. However, *kápuwâ* covers all people: a stranger whom one is only expected to treat with transactional civility is as much one's *kápuwâ* as an intimate friend whose suffering is mirrored in one's own consciousness. The focus on *kápuwâ* is so important that it is a central feature of the language; the prefix *ka-* specifically derives from *kápuwâ* and is used to form nouns that denote companion or fellow in some specific domain or activity. This prefix is used to form familiar terms such as *kaklase,* which means classmate, *kalarô,* which means playmate, and *kababayan,* which can mean compatriot or someone from the same hometown. However *ka-* is also used to form important words that seem to constitute a foundational experience for Filipinos. *Kapatid*, which means sibling, is a combination of *ka-* and *patid*, which means a broken or separated piece. *Kasama*, which is a combination of *ka-* and *sama* (something joined together), covers everything from companion, partner, comrade, fellow traveler, or associate. Some philosophers, most notably Roque Ferriols (1991, 31-34; 1992, 10-12), have reflected on the significance of the prefix *ka-* for the unique way in which Filipinos experience and understand important philosophical concepts such as *katotohánan* (truth) and *kahulugán* (meaning).

Secondly, for Filipinos the *kápuwâ*-orientation is normative. Because I am no different from others and others are no different from me, I should deal with others in the way that I want others to deal with me. When combined with the prefixes *paki-* (denoting a request or an appeal to oblige) and *pag-* (a suffix that expresses the act or manner of doing something),[4] *kápuwâ* becomes *pakikipagkápuwâ*, which roughly means obliging to interact with others as fellow humans. *Pakikipagkápuwâ* can also be appropriated as "acting with a sense of fellow-being." The University of the Philippines' *Diksyonaryog Filipino* (2010) defines *pakikipagkápuwâ-táo* as the expected behavior or disposition towards society or other people (*táo* means human being). Here I translate *pakikipagkápuwâ* as comradeship to signal its reference to treating others like oneself as in fellowship. The crucial difference from the English term comradeship is that comradeship implies dealings with those who are part of one's community or organization; the term *pakikipagkápuwâ* implies no such exclusivity. Instead it implies that all fellow humans are to be treated as comrades, companions who inhabit the same condition and suffer similar tribulations.

According to Enriquez (1977), *pakikipagkápuwâ* has important implications for Filipinos because it involves "accepting and dealing with the other person as an equal. The company president and the clerk in the office may not have an equivalent role, status, or income but the Filipino way demands and implements the idea that they treat one another as fellow human beings (*kápuwâ táo*). This means a regard for the dignity and being of others" (7). Even though this edifying standard is often recognized, it is not always similarly followed in daily life. Filipinos, like the rest of humanity, are liable to hurt, disrespect, and discriminate against others. But because failure to recognize others as *kápuwâ* is always recognized as a form of wrongdoing, it remains appropriate to characterize the *kápuwâ*-orientation as morally normative. Indeed, Enriquez (1978) notes that for Filipinos the worst kind of person is someone who has no *kápuwâ táo* (106). He says someone who counts no one as a comrade or companion because she always distances and differentiates herself from others can sink no further; she has reached rock bottom. For Filipinos then, excellence importantly consists in recognizing another as *kápuwâ* and sustaining such a connection of comradeship through action.

Finally, the significance of *pakikipagkápuwâ* for Filipino social psychology is supported by its marked difference from similar terms that refer to modes of relating with others. For instance, the term *pakikisáma* (getting or going along with others), is notorious for including mindless conformity with the herd and capitulation to peer pressure. The same is not true for *pakikipagkápuwâ*, which is only taken to include morally desirable behavior. For this reason

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[4] The translation of the prefixes are derived from *Vicassan's Pilipino-English Dictionary* (Santos 1995).

Enriquez claims that Filipinos know "that *pakikibáka* (joining a struggle) is a valid aspect of *pakikipagkápuwâ* in the face of injustice and adversity" (107). It is noteworthy that the term *pakikibáka* is associated with political activism among Filipinos, and is connected with one of the most important slogans of the resistance movement and revolution that ended the Marcos dictatorship: *hindi ka nag-iisa* (you are not alone).

Contemporary Filipino social psychologists, such as Ma. Elizabeth Macapagal, Mira Ofreneo, Crstina Montie, and Jocelyn Nolasco, agree with Enriquez. They say "the core descriptive concept for Filipino psychology is relational rather than personality or value-laden" (Macapagal et al. 2013, 13). Further, they add that patterns of relating that presuppose the concept of *kápuwâ* imply that Filipinos have a relational or interdependent conception of the self. Jaime C. Bulatao (1964) arrives at the same conclusion from his psychological analysis of *hiyâ*, the Filipino sense of social propriety that is sometimes translated into "shame," but is closer in meaning to "shyness," "timidity," "embarrassment," and "sensitivity." Bulatao famously depicted the Filipino self by comparing a hard-boiled egg (sharply individuated self) with scrambled eggs (unindividuated selves) and a batch of fried eggs in which the yolks are still clearly separated but the whites of the different eggs have been joined (individuated but unseparated selves). He says that the Filipinos conceive of the self as something that is individuated but not separated from others (431). In other words, the Filipino conception of the self is best illustrated using the last of the three images Bulatao gave: a batch of fried eggs in which the yolks are still clearly separated, but the whites of the different eggs have been joined. Although Filipinos see themselves as individuals, they think of themselves as inseparable from others.

Interaction among interdependent selves requires an ability to have a shared inner perception, which is precisely what *pakikiramdám* (sense of shared inner perception) is all about. *Pakikiramdám* also comes with the prefix *paki-* (denoting a request or an appeal to oblige) and with the root word *ramdám* or *damdám*, which means to feel. *Damdám* is related to the word *damdámin*, which means emotion, so *damdám* literally means to feel emotion. According to Rita Mataragnon (1998), "The combination of a prefix and a root in *pakikiramdám* seems to take on a character of its own" (252). She reports that Filipinos associate the term *pakikiramdám* with the need to give tentative and flexible responses in unknown, ambiguous, or unstructured situations involving other people. Mataragnon offers the following explanatory translation of *pakikiramdám*: "[B]eing sensitive to and feeling one's way toward another person" (252). Enriquez (1992) considers *pakikiramdám* to be a pivotal aspect of *pakikipagkápuwâ* and central for knowing how to behave in interpersonal contexts (61-64). To understand the significance of *pakikiramdám*, it is necessary to look at how it works and determine in which specific social contexts it plays an important role. According to Mataragnon (1998),

> In social interaction, the degree of pakikiramdám exercised normally *depends on both the situation and the target person involved*. Novel, ambiguous, or unpredictable situations generally require the exercise of more pakikiramdám; so do delicate, emotionally loaded, or threatening situations. The exercise of pakikiramdám would be advisable in situations where there is a danger of being misinterpreted, losing face, making social blunders, or hurting others unwittingly. Certain behaviors are likely to be highly charged with pakikiramdám: courting, consoling, negotiating, asking for favors, selling, campaigning, striking up a conversation, getting to know someone and so forth. To exercise pakikiramdám people have to care enough about the target person or the situation. They have to be…motivated…to please, to make a good impression, to show concern or respect, to size up the target person, and to avoid misunderstanding, hurting someone, or getting hurt. (254; emphasis added)

Pakikiramdám is then necessary for navigating one's social environment well. It is a kind of affective vigilance directed towards specific persons and/or particular situations that is partly

constitutive of some Filipino social practices. *Pakikiramdám* is also associated with specific character traits such as being thoughtful, caring, humble, and friendly (Mataragnon 1998, 255). So there is an implicit understanding that *pakikiramdám* is a consciously cultivated capacity or skill. Mataragnon goes so far as saying that *pakikiramdám* is "characterized by deliberate thoughtfulness" that helps someone who possesses the skill to deftly manage social interactions. *Pakikiramdám*, however, does not necessarily imply being virtuous; practicing it is not incompatible with promoting self-interest (e.g., anticipating the demands of a temperamental boss, making sure not to lose the esteem of peers, etc.). Nevertheless *pakikiramdám* is still relevant for virtuous behavior. Someone attuned to the feelings and dispositions of the other is in a better position to help, provided that the disposition to help is already present.

It is worth noting that the perspective from which *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám* spring is not exclusive to Filipinos. In the literature on social and cross-cultural psychology, such a perspective is sometimes called "collectivist," [5] "relational," or "interdependent," and is observed in subjects from Japan, Korea, China, other parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Markus and Kitayama 1991, 225). According to Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (1991), people in these so-called interdependent cultures feel that social interactions require them to be aware of others' thoughts and feelings. They characterize the interdependent orientation as follows:

> [M]any non-Western cultures insist…on the fundamental *connectedness* of human beings to each other. A normative imperative of these cultures is to maintain this interdependence among individuals. Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent, organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of *others* in the relationship. (227)

What seems to distinguish *pakikipagkápuwâ* from such a morally-neutral characterization of the interdependent perspective is that it includes only those aspects of the perspective that are relevant for morally desirable behavior, i.e., promoting an individual other and the greater community's flourishing. And for this reason *pakikipagkápuwâ* is normative in a distinctly moral sense. To say that acting in accordance with other people's thoughts and feelings is normative can mean only that such action is expected and enforced in the community. This non-moral normativity applies to rules of etiquette or sartorial conventions that do not carry the force of moral norms. Not so with *pakikipagkápuwâ,* which connotes prosocial or altruistic behavior accomplished through affective capacities such as *pakikiramdám*. Indeed, it is on this point that Enriquez's bold claim about the potential of indigenous Filipino psychology for universality can be realized (Enriquez 1977, 14-16). To say that *pakikipagkápuwâ* is morally normative implies that all peoples, not just Filipinos, are expected to act in accordance with it.

Virtue and Solidarity Based on *Pakikipagkápuwâ*

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[5] Sometimes the term "collectivist" is misunderstood or used misleadingly to characterize non-Western cultures in terms of denigration of the individual in favor of the greater community. For a repudiation of such an interpretation of a specific culture—the Chinese moral tradition—see David B. Wong's "Relational and Autonomous Selves" (2004). It is also worth noting that as far as psychologists are concerned, collectivist cultures are not monolithic. In an interesting study, participants from Hong Kong and Indonesia, Murphy-Breman and Breman (2002) discovered that there are interesting differences of opinion on choices about the distribution of benefits and burdens, even though both cultures can be considered collectivist. Indeed, Murphy-Breman and Breman emphasize that collectivism is a multidimensional construct and that their study was premised on the understanding that Hong Kong and Indonesia "represent different faces of collectivism" (158).

We are now ready for an initial sketch of virtue and solidarity from *pakikipagkápuwâ*. But before we begin, it is worth noting that what was previously said about the resonance between this unique Filipino cultural characteristic and the interdependent perspective of subjects from Japan, Korea, and China, allows for the establishment of a conceptual connection between *pakikipagkápuwâ* and the interdependent or collectivist orientation of Confucian-heritage cultures. Such a connection is consistent with the agreement among some researchers in the social sciences who think that the Philippines can be considered a contemporary collectivist culture (Church 1987; Guthrie 1961; Triandis 1995). Bulatao's claim about Filipinos' differentiated but interdependent conception of the self, and Enriquez's belief that *kápuwâ* is the core concept in Filipino social psychology, fit well with the aforementioned agreement. In a paper in which he uses the Chinese moral tradition to develop a response to situationism, David Wong characterizes relational autonomy and selfhood in a manner that closely resembles the picture given in the previous section's discussion of *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám*. Establishing a connection between these concepts and the Confucian tradition is potentially fruitful for philosophical reflection on a Filipino account of virtue because, as mentioned earlier, the Philippines does not have classical textual sources such as the ones associated with the early Confucians. Wong (2004) says:

> [We] reject the conception of a self who is conceived apart from others and then subordinated to them. In its place stand selves who are not human apart from social relations, who become selves in relationship to others, and who should strive for a kind of autonomy that does not separate them from others but makes them worthy of others' trust (427).

The core features of the understanding of virtue from an interdependent perspective can be derived from the conjunction of Wong's description of relational selfhood and autonomy on the one hand, and *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám* on the other. First, virtue is realized from a relational conception of selfhood or personal identity. In Wong's case, he goes so far as to speak of developmental relationality. He says, "the social conception of the person and the developmental sense in which we are relational by nature are notable and significant features of the Confucian conception of personhood, but they do not provide the sense in which we are *constituted* by our relationships" (Wong 2004, 425).[6] If one's personal identity is rooted in the unique pattern created by the different roles that one inhabits, then virtue must similarly be rooted in how well one inhabits and coordinates these roles. Here the implication is that whatever admirable traits a person possesses are a by-product of ongoing relationships with specific others from whom one gets specific kinds of support and to whom one owes specific kinds of obligations. Moreover, such a conception of virtue would necessarily include an account of the way in which context-specific group dynamics buttress virtue from potential hazards.

It is striking how Wong's characterization of relational selfhood and autonomy resonates with an account of moral goodness from a Filipino perspective developed by Miranda. According to Miranda (1992, 83), Filipinos' understanding of moral goodness comes with the need to satisfy two principles of *pakikipagkápuwâ*: (1) equality based on the experience of similarity, obtained through communication between myself and an individual other or members of the greater community; (2) reciprocity based on dialogue about differences. Agnes Brazal and Emmanuel de Guzman (2015) express a similar idea when they say, "*Pakikipagkapwa* [sic] in a Philippine Perspective, is rooted in our belief in our shared *loob* (inner self) with others.…Thus

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[6] Some psychologists are making a similar point. See Dien (1982), who argues that Kohlberg's theory of moral development should be replaced by one that recognizes the Confucian understanding of the human being, not as an autonomous individual, but as an integral part of an orderly universe.

pakikipagkapwa (relating justly with the one who is similar and different) in the form of respect for cultural rights embraces the stranger, the migrant, the alien" (Part II, Chapter 4, para. 49). Here we see a direct connection between Filipinos' relational conception of the self and *pakikipagkápuwâ*.

The foregoing depiction of relationality should, however, feature a reference to the moral force or authority of an agent's obligation to others. And this is precisely where *pakikipagkápuwâ* is crucial. It reminds us that we owe it to others to behave altruistically towards them, not because they are related to us in a particular way, but because they are human like us. The focus on shared humanity, instead of on similarities that depend on contingent connections such as familial or transactional bonds, can serve as a reminder that relationality should not translate to nepotism or a problematic personalism. At the level of theory, the implication is that an adequate account of virtue must be built on a unit of analysis that does not focus on an isolated individual. Coincidentally, the same conclusion has been reached by at least some psychologists. After considering evidence from indigenous Chinese and Filipino psychology, Ho (1993, 240-259) propose what he calls a social psychological conceptual framework with a relational orientation. On this framework the most basic unit of analysis is the individual-in-relation. Roughly, the idea is that understanding and predicting human behavior without detailed consideration of an individual's embeddedness in a complex social network would fail (Ho 1993, 254). If Ho's idea is adopted for philosophical purposes, then it might be possible to develop an account of virtue that makes use of such a relationality to avoid some of the problems associated with the situationist challenge against virtue.

Secondly, the conception of virtue from an interdependent perspective comes with a context-specific understanding of different character traits that constitute virtue. For instance, it makes sense for a mother of young children to manifest warmth and generosity towards members of her family, but not manifest the same traits to people at her workplace. This does not necessarily make her insincere or problematically inconsistent. Perhaps her work requires strict professionalism or careful management of the threat of insubordination. The material point is that on the interdependent view, the hypothetical woman can still be virtuous if she behaves appropriately although differently across various contexts. Insights from *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám* indicate that such morally appropriate behavior can only be attained by being attentive to persons with whom one is relating and by regulating one's emotion-infused responses towards them. The sensitivity and tracking responses associated with *pakikiramdám* are especially relevant in novel, ambiguous, or unexpected situations. It is not always clear what role we ought to play in relation to specific others, nor is it easy to discern whether we ought to act in a familiar or professional manner towards someone.

Finally, from an interdependent perspective, virtue is a co-authored achievement. Whatever morally desirable qualities or excellences a person possesses are made possible by others whom she trusts and whose trust she tries to be worthy of. This idea is not exclusively associated with interdependent or relational cultures. According to the philosopher Robert Adams (2006), "it is inappropriate and misleading to think of virtue primarily as an individual achievement. But that is no tragedy. We may have a richer as well as less self-centered view of virtue if we regard it largely as a gift—a gift of nature or of grace, or both, and normally also of people with whom one has lived" (165). The important difference is that on the interdependent view there is a greater emphasis on what seems to have been an afterthought for Adams: relating with people whom one encounters in different aspects of one's life. Moreover, from the perspective of *pakikipagkápuwâ,* virtue crucially depends on being the subject of other people's vigilance and solicitude. Elsewhere I have argued that this particular aspect of their culture could help Filipino business leaders solve a problem that they have in behaving compassionately towards the poor (Cleofas 2016b).

It is worth reiterating that *pakikipagkápuwâ* involves dealing with others who are not only the recipients of one's help, but also the focal point of conscientious vigilance that almost

amounts to suspicion. In turn, one is also subjected to other people's conscientious vigilance. This kind of arrangement presupposes that although virtue is attainable for ordinary folk, it needs to be sustained by the concerted effort of a community. The resulting arrangement is not very different from the one described by the Japanese social psychologist Toshio Yamagishi (2003), wherein arrangements that feature mutual monitoring and sanctioning are necessary for generating morally desirable behavior. The material point seems to be that an appreciation of being fellow sufferers from the same weaknesses requires a system of mutual support and group accountability. Albert Alejo's (1990, 86-87) characterization of a deeply rooted awareness of others as *kápuwâ* adds a further dimension to the notion of accountability. He draws a connection between *kápuwâ*-consciousness and the question raised by Cain: am I my brother's keeper? According to Alejo, such a question is a poor attempt to cover up a deeply-rooted connection with others, one's *kápuwâ*, for and towards those to whom one is accountable.

Now let us turn to the narrower account of solidarity from *pakikipagkápuwâ*. The most distinctive point offered by the Filipino perspective is that solidarity is lived out by sustaining an emotional connection and responsiveness towards others. For Filipinos, the opposite of exercising *pakikiramdám* roughly translates to being numb and unfeeling towards others. When someone chooses to thwart relating with others by deliberately taking up this attitude, it becomes impossible to be in solidarity with them and to promote the participation of all in the common good. This gives us a new way of understanding deficient responses to the grounding experience which is associated with solidarity; it is tantamount to deliberately stunting an important dimension of one's life and sabotaging one's own well-being. Becoming numb to an emotional connection with others arguably amounts to being disconnected from emotions altogether. In terms of the response that amounts to a sham union instead of genuine solidarity, the error lies in turning towards treating another as a fellow member of some preferred grouping or association instead of as another human being. On the appropriate response to the grounding experience we see that attention to particulars and sensitivity to context must be centered on persons and focused on cultivating a network of connections with others. But most important of all, *pakikipagkápuwâ* and *pakikiramdám* enable us to appreciate that virtue itself, not just solidarity or the other social virtues, involves appreciation of our relationality and interdependence.

Conclusion

We have seen that an account of virtue and solidarity from *pakikipagkápuwâ* locates excellence in the recognition and proper cultivation of relationship among interdependent human beings. Although *pakikipagkápuwâ* is a distinctly Filipino notion it resonates with the account of the so-called interdependent perspective discussed by some psychologists, and the depiction of selfhood given by philosophers coming from the Chinese moral tradition. And because *pakikipagkápuwâ* carries the distinct force of moral norms, it is linked to a norm that is recognizable across different cultures and that requires us to recognize and honor others as humans like ourselves.[7]

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