

OVERCOMING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: NIETZSCHE'S *ÜBERMENSCH* AND THE FILIPINO NOTION OF *MAGPAKATAO*

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ABSTRACT

*Driven by the pathological situation caused by this COVID-19 pandemic, this paper discusses the human ideal as argued by Nietzsche in his concept of the *Übermensch* (Superman). It also exposes the Filipino's yearning to live the human ideal through "magpakatao" (to be human). Using textual analysis, I attempt to see the similarities and the differences between Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and the Filipinos' "magpakatao" in order to come up with a synthesized and better concept of human ideal. To be Superman, Nietzsche encourages one to live life on earth to the fullest by rejecting inter alia, Christianity. Opposed to Nietzsche, Filipinos need to surrender themselves to Bathala (God) which at times hinder them live this material world to the fullest in Nietzsche's sense. However, this paper concludes the relevance of Nietzsche's philosophy to reconstruct the Filipino notion of "magpakatao." With this reconstructed notion of human perfectibility, I believe Filipinos and people all over the world could overcome any challenges that will come in their lives and still live and authentic and meaningful life amid this pandemic.*

*Keywords: *Übermensch*; Magpakatao; Human ideal; Covid-19 pandemic; Nietzsche.*

INTRODUCTION

With the many problems and challenges that we are facing today, most specifically on the dreaded effects brought about by the Corona virus worldwide, one cannot avoid to pose several questions: What is happening? How can we fight against this invisible enemy? What is required of me amid this pandemic? As a victim, how do I see myself now? And as a fellow human being with those victims what ought I to do? And how I ought to live today and after this pandemic?

In the Philippines, the pandemic forces the government to put all communities of different regions under quarantine in different levels or degrees; E.g., from Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), to Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), to Modified General Quarantine (MGCQ), and the least to General Community Quarantine (GCQ). The degree of quarantine determines who, when, how, and what movements are allowed in a community. The quarantine or health protocols required by the government caused some businesses and industrial establishment to either temporarily or permanently close down. Hence, the Department of Labor and Employment observes that the unemployment rate rose to a high record. This challenging situation uncovers the unpreparedness of the Philippine government in terms of addressing this kind of problem. The pandemic reveals that the country needs more hospital and digital infrastructures (Calonzo 2020). Not only hospitals but also hospital workers like doctors, nurses etc. are lacking.

This want of hospital workers, facilities and dearth of hospitalization budget prompt the Filipinos to be careful with the virus. Such situation creates more anxiety and/or psychological stress to the Filipinos especially in those areas infected with the virus.

This fierce and deadly force and effect of Covid-19 may have changed the positive mindset of so many Filipino people. Some feel hopeless and wait for the government or other non-government organizations to aid them for their needs. Some become drifters and/or passive to their life. They don't know any more what to do with their life. They just surrendered themselves to their fate or to God.

There are so many disciplines that try to address the existing problems caused by this pandemic but little do I know of philosophical approaches to answer the difficulties we are facing today. Hence, it is one of the reasons for this paper. Perhaps, with the application of critical analysis of this dismal situation, people specially the Filipinos and the whole Asians will be guided what they ought to do to defeat this invisible and intangible enemy --- the Corona virus.

So, how can we overcome this Covid-19 pandemic? To avoid the possible adverse effects of this pandemic, people may need to be enlightened or reminded about their existence. This pathological situation invites each and every one of us to self-introspection. Hence, this prevalent crisis may be examined by going into the deeper dimension of man's being.

Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I headed to? Knowing and understanding the human person is fundamental to every man for him to find meaning in his life in the midst of crisis. In the words of Olaopa (2020), he says: "There is no way human can make sense of their world and their place in it if our existence lacks the solid self-reflexivity required to constantly monitor how our affairs impact on ourselves and on our world.". Indeed, how the person treats himself, fellow human beings, environment and all other contingencies around him depends largely on his concept of what he is --- his nature and his existence. Hence, man's belief and understanding of himself serve as a foundation that would help him survive in the midst of several calamities he has suffered.

But the most important question today is the human ideal. What we ought to be despite this pandemic? How are we going to respond the prevalent problematic situation in the ideal way or as an ideal person? I strongly believe that it is by living the human ideal that we can effectively overcome the ill effects of this COVID-19 pandemic. But what is an ideal person?

For Plato, it is the philosopher-king who is worthy to become a ruler – the ideal person whose nature is to love the truth, appreciate beauty and do the good. The human ideal for Aristotle is the megalopsychos – the person with a great soul who lives life with great honor. For Spinoza, the key to human liberation is the intellectual *amor dei intellectualis* or the intellectual love for God. For Kant, the human ideal is the genuinely moral person whose actions are always and only governed by the categorical imperative (Magnus 1983).

Surely, Nietzsche continues the ancient project of articulating the human ideal or say the conception of human perfectibility (Magnus 1983). This is manifested in his concept of the *Übermensch* or "Superman." Filipinos, on the other hand, have their notions of human ideals expressed in the concept of *magapakatao*. This human ideal of the Filipinos may in some way differ or conform to the above-mentioned philosophers' views most specifically that of Nietzsche's. Both Nietzsche's ideas and the Filipino concept on human perfectibility have their advantages and disadvantages when each is used as a tool to overcome the prevalent problems. To avoid the disadvantages, or let us say, the weaknesses of the two, a synthesis of the two concepts will be introduced in this paper. I believe that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* will surely complement

what is lacking or disadvantageous in purely applying Filipino concept of *magpakatao* or vice versa.

Hence, this paper consists essentially of three major parts. The first part is an exposition of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* which is the central theme of his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. The second part of this paper is an attempt to expose and provide insights into the Filipino concept of *magpakatao*. The reflections here are merely based on the available published books and articles of some writers who have worked about the Filipinos in a more or less philosophical way. More so, this paper makes a reconstruction of the Filipino human ideal through a synthesis of the two variables. It is hoped to reconstruct the Filipino concept on human ideals by incorporating Nietzsche's brilliant ideas and thereby help properly address the existing problems. In other words, this better notion of the human ideal or human perfectibility may help Filipinos to overcome challenges they are facing today and live in an authentic and meaningful life in the midst of today's pandemic.

I. NIETZSCHE'S ÜBERMENSCH

Perhaps the most interesting doctrine of Nietzsche is that of the *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* (Superman) is Nietzsche's dichotomy made flesh, a man who at once despises his all too human self while at the same time affirms himself as the master of all his ideas and actions. But how does one become a "Superman?" What makes him different from the man of his time and today?

In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche through *Zarathustra* says:

I teach you the Superman. Man is something that shall be surpassed. What have [you] done to surpass man?

All beings [so far] have created something beyond themselves: and [do you] want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beasts than surpass man?

What is ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: A laughing-stock, a thing of shame (Nietzsche 1931).

Certainly, Nietzsche challenges every man to go beyond the situated self in order to avoid painful embarrassment. He looked with disdain those with herd mentality. Man must go out from his comfort zones and be creative. He urges every man to embrace instead of denying the beauty of the earth. Man must be a sculptor of himself. He must work hard for himself and live his life on earth to the fullest. Thus, Nietzsche challenges man to create the "Superman out of himself. Indeed, the person who has attained the "Superman" definitely rejects with detestation his previously limited self (Welte 1981). For a man to become *Übermensch*, he may undergo a process of self-actualization, that is, the metamorphoses of his spirit.

A. Metamorphoses of the Human Spirit

The transformation of man to "Superman" may undergo into three stages. Nietzsche calls this the three metamorphoses of man's spirit, namely the camel, the lion, and the child (Nietzsche 1931).

In the first stage, man is likened to a camel (Nietzsche 1931). Unlike the herd animal, a strong camel just carries whatever loads laded on him without any hesitation. In the same manner, man in this stage accepts with rejoice and follows whatever is commanded, taught, and imposed on him by religion, culture, and traditions or by anyone who has authority over him. He follows

whatever the “table of moral values” teaches even if he suffers while following it. This is so since he believes that this table of values gives the truth (Gambardella 2018). In other words, the camel stage of man is characterized by strength, reverence, respect, and patience in carrying traditions.

“But in the loneliest wilderness [happens] the second metamorphosis: here the spirit [becomes] a lion...” (Nietzsche 1931). In this nihilistic stage, man goes against the old table of values. This is the way he takes out all his burden and frees himself from imposition by making his own destiny. He aesthetically creates his life on his own terms. He goes against the “golden dragon,” the forces that he followed as a camel. He already learns to reject the values that the dragon imposed on him. He gives the holy “no” to the duties that the dragon had given him and does the things that the dragon forbids him to do. Nevertheless, the affirmation of life here means affirmation of the nihilistic character of life (Gambardella 2018; Hollingdale 1999).

In the lion stage, furthermore, man sees the existence of things as without meaning and aim. All things and events are unavoidably reoccurring. However, man’s life in the melancholic reality is not altogether hopeless. Liberation from the meaningless existence has to be done through the affirmation and love of one’s life. In doing so, meaning of man’s life is created. In this situation, man is already free as he accepts and masters his own life. He is now courageous to face challenges that come into his life (Gambardella 2018; Hollingdale 1999).

Although, the lion had already gained freedom, he is still not capable of creating new values. So here comes the last metamorphosis, the child stage (Nietzsche 1931). This stage gives a new beginning for the man. Like a child, he is innocent. He is free from anger, hatred, guilt and other negative emotions in him. He forgets everything in the past. He no longer minds any rules so that nothing forces and pressures him anymore. He now affirms to the new creation of new values. In other words, man as he transformed into the child stage manifests the characteristic of being innocent, searching for his strong foundation, and a time for starting a new life, new faith, and new world. And this is the stage where the *Übermensch* is born.

B. The Birth of the *Übermensch*

Nietzsche contends that the creation of the *Übermensch* must start with the examination of one’s own life. Man must begin his new evolution by carefully looking at himself with an eye not clouded by the constraints of religion, morality, or modern society or in Kierkegaard’s term, the “anonymous crowd.” One must realize that man is flawed, and that within him he has the possibility for evolving into a better creature. One must embrace the possibility of and be willing to change what is wrong not only with oneself but also with mankind in order to be a better creature.

Nietzsche attacks and vehemently criticizes Christianity. He despises Christian teachings and thinks of them as the corruptors of man. They are the roots of man’s sickness because every man has not affirmed these things for himself. By passively allowing Christian society to tell him what was good or evil, just or unjust, reasonable or absurd, he has relinquished his will. It is for this reason that man has lost its shining destiny. Moreover, this situation of society and state of humanity hinder the birth of the *Übermensch*.

Certainly, Nietzsche does not attack Christian religion itself but the questionable practices and dogma of Christianity, most specifically of the 19th century European culture (Urbano 1999). Nietzsche says, “I do not reject your virtues, I reject your virtuous people.” (Gleiman 1967). Indeed, he acclaimed Jesus Christ for his virtue. In Nietzsche’s words, “there was never more than

one Christian, and he died on the Cross.” (Biser 1981). In short, Nietzsche is not anti-Christ categorically speaking but just anti-Christians --- specifically the Christians in his time. Nietzsche only rejected the Christians of the 19th century who teach and practice values that prevent man “from thinking, from investigating, [and] from facing courageously the whole of human condition.” (Biser 1981). These Christian values and customs, which sound to be “anti-Christ” in its strict sense, make the Christians sick and hinder them develop fully their potentialities.

But Nietzsche believes that this sickness can be cured. To do so, man has to reclaim his will and life by abolishing these Christian teachings from himself or ridding himself of the sickness of Christian society. For Nietzsche, man has the power to reclaim his life by disaffirming what has blithely handed to him and by actively affirming what he himself believes to be right (Biser 1981). It is by this attitude that the *Übermensch* is born.

Thus, the *Übermensch* is independent, creative and original. He has sublimed life. He puts emphasis on life. He is active, not passive or complacent. He accepts rather than avoids suffering. He embraces the material world which is sometimes painful. However, in doing so, he overcomes his need for or reliance upon God. The *Übermensch* comes to terms with his own life and no other. He exercises his will rather than shows blind obedience or complacency. Thus, he experiences acceptance, bravery, self-reliance, and loneliness. He is a creator of his new values. This reflects his strength and independence and his liberation from all values except those that he deems valid and acceptable. For this reason, the *Übermensch*, as Nietzsche sees it, is the exemplar of the true humanity. Nietzsche believes that it is by becoming an *Übermensch* that one can attain the meaning of the world -the entire world (Welte 1981).

II. THE FILIPINO NOTION OF MAGPAKATAO

Perhaps, the Filipino concept of human perfectibility is expressed in his notion of *magpakatao*. What is the Filipino concept of *magpakatao*? The Filipino’s notion of *magpakatao* may be specified into essential parts, namely: the Filipino in relation to God and the Filipino in relation to his fellowmen and/or his society. To the Filipinos, a good relationship to his fellowmen, society and God cannot be divorced from their notion of *magpakatao*.

A. The Filipino and his Creator

The Filipino concept of *magpakatao* can be generally described as very religious. This is so since Filipinos are Christians in majority (Mercado 1994). As a creature of God, it is believed that every person has an inherent goodness and spirituality in him. As the Filipino song “Sino Ako?” (Who Am I?) goes: “Sinong may pag-ibig, sinong nagmamahal kundi ang tao Diyos ang pinagmulan.” (Who has love, who loves but man whose origin is God). The song expresses Filipino recognition of his nature as a lover and as a gift of God as he originated himself from God. Hence, Filipinos owe their life from God (Javier 2010). Alongside with it, Javier, in his ethnolinguistics study explores the close connectivity of the *katawan* (physical aspect of man) and the *katauhan* (humanhood) with *pagpapakatao* (being human), *pakikipagkapuwa-tao* (becoming a human person) and *pagpakatao* (sharing the self with “other” selves). Filipinos need to go beyond his biological or physical being (tao) to move themselves to a higher level of existence through *magpakatao*, *pakikipagkapuwa-tao* and *pagpakatao*. More so, *magpakatao*, *pakikipagkapuwa-tao* and *pagpakatao* may be done only when Filipinos live their spiritual nature by connecting

themselves with their fellow human beings and God. The study of de Leon, Jr. supports Javier's interpretation. De Leon contends that *pagpapakatao* is putting oneself to a higher spiritual self. In his words, de Leon says: "Bringing out the truly human (higher self) in [man] means developing strength of character, wellness, self-control, loving kindness, wisdom, and creative intelligence." (de Leon 2016). Indeed, such will not happen as Filipino thinks if he will not relate himself with God.

As a being of spiritual nature, the Filipino believes that his ultimate destiny is an eternal union with God, his Creator. Hence, it is by transcending one's earthly desires that a person can attain unity with his Creator. For this reason, the Filipino person has to cultivate his relation to God for him to become a dignified human and a perfect person (Mercado 1994). In other words, the invitation of becoming a true person or a true human being is as well an invitation to become a true Christian.

Even before the coming of the Spaniards, the native Filipinos already had their own system of beliefs. Their moral-religious concept was based mostly on the unwritten customary laws which were the interpretations of the natural moral law. The pre-Hispanic Filipino was said to have worshiped animals, spirits called *anitos*, nature and all sorts of idols. Some of these beliefs consciously or unconsciously still continue to influence the lives of the Filipino people today.

One of the manifestations of these beliefs is the *bahala na* (literally translated as "come what may") attitude which means leaving everything to fate. This fatalistic outlook at times rests on the strong dependence on supernatural beings believed to be spirits or *anitos* who would take care of everything including the human beings (Panopio et al. 1994). On the other hand, this *bahala na* attitude also shows the Filipinos' determination and courage to face any danger as well as full acceptance to whatever comes or happens to his life. It shows the patience and hope that the powerful spirits (*anitos*) ruled by *Bathala* (God) will give what is due to every person. The Filipino believes that the gods known as *anitos* will reward the goods and will punish the evil ones (Bulatao 1966).

To the Filipinos, a religious life is a moral life. Filipinos subscribe to the concept of moral integrity as the ideal, the ultimately desirable ideal. Hence, a person's success is measured in terms of moral respectability. The Filipino philosophy that goes "Di baling mahirap, basta't may dangal" (To be poor is nothing as long as you have dignity) expresses the noble aspiration of being morally acceptable (Gorospe 1974). However, this moral acceptability may not also happen without connecting oneself with fellow-human beings and/or society. Thus, moral acceptability signifies social acceptability.

B. The Filipino and his Fellowmen and Society

For the Filipinos, to be truly human is to be with others or be concerned of the welfare of others. "Being with others excludes 'using' others as things; it means personal concern, [care], loving and serving others." This is manifested in his value of "pagmalasakit sa kapwa." The development of moral life is propagated with good works not only towards oneself but also towards others. Thus, the Filipino takes the essence of a person as a being who relates with others. The "others" may mean his family in particular and society in general.

"Walang taong nabubuhay para sa sarili lamang" (No man has ever lived for his/her self alone) so goes the Filipino philosophy of a human person. The Filipino is a person-oriented, seeking emphasis on the Filipino "communitarian spirit," communitarian in the sense that he tries

to be in harmony with the community (Gorospe 1974) and family. One best example for this one's sacrifice for the sake of the group. The Filipino thinks of himself as belonging to a group and identifies himself with them. Thus, he at times considers the success and welfare of the group as his own fulfillment.

Filipinos learn not to isolate but to actively associate or engage themselves with others either in their families, peers, officemates, or neighbors. Independent behaviors and solitude are discouraged and given negative interpretations. For this reason, a person who isolates himself is liable to be thought or called either as "asuwang" or "ungo" (witch), "pilosopo" (sophist) or a being with evil designs (Ardales 1974).

Furthermore, the value of "pakikisama" (going along with) is also rooted in the intrinsic Filipino value of "pakikipagkapwatao" (human concern and interaction as one with others). It is translated into acts of helping, sharing, and cooperating with others. This is borne out by camaraderie, friendship, neighborliness or plain fellow-feeling attitude (Miranda 1990). Thus, to make one's actions favorable, in the name of "pakikisama," one must conform to the norms imposed by the society and accepted by the family. Failure to do so, a person has to be punished or labeled "bad." That is why, when Filipino makes decision, he has to consult or ask approval first either with his peers, family or community. But Enriquez made a distinction between *pakikisama* and *pakikipagkapwa* (Enriquez 1977). For him, the word *pakikipagkapwa* is more deep and profound in its implication. Hence, it connotes total acceptance of fellow human beings as equal although they differ in their status, conditions, income and others (Enriquez 1977).

One important thing to consider also is the Filipino idea of self as illustrated in a famous Filipino song --- "Sapagkat Tayo Ay Tao Lamang" (Because We're Just Human). This is a manifestation of the Filipino's admission of his limitations and weaknesses. Being "tao lamang" is one of the lame excuses or rationalization made by Filipinos for the wrong doings that they have done (Gorospe 1974).

For this reason, the reality of being "tao lamang" calls every Filipino to go beyond. And by going beyond (tao lamang) is responding the call to be truly human or *magpakatao*. In the words of Javier, "ang magpakatao ay nag-uugaling tao at hindi nag-asal hayop", (To be truly human is to conduct oneself humane and does not behave like a brute) (Javier 2010). Moreover, a truly human being has *paninindigan* (conviction or commitment). By following the right path, every man develops in him, in his being human, the *paninindigan*. With *paninindigan*, Filipinos live with *dangal* (honor) and dignity. They live life with a deep sense of morality and empathy towards fellowmen (in the form of *pakikipagkapwa-tao*) (Roman Jr. n.d.). Doing otherwise is shameful. Indeed, *hiya* (sense of propriety) manifests the Filipino interpersonal relationship or connection with the *kapwa* (fellow-human). Hence, it connotes social acceptability. Dagmang (1996) in his article stressed that Filipinos see their "self" not in the abstract but in the concrete way; that is through their good relation with fellowmen. Here, *hiya* makes the way and capability for the Filipinos to live humane (*magpakatao*) through *pakikipagkapwa*.

For the Filipinos to live a truly human or an ideal human life is to be in harmony not just with oneself but also with his relationship to God, family and with his fellowmen (Manuel 2013). When he achieves such harmony among the three relationships, only then can a Filipino achieve human perfectibility (*magpakatao/pagpapakatao*) and only then can a Filipino's life be authentic and worth living." (Gorospe 1974).

Gregorio, Jr. in his study summarizes the Filipino concept of *magpakatao* in three domains, namely:

1. Cognitive Domain- *Pagkatao* is the wholeness of a person. It is about knowledge and understanding of what a person is or what a person should be.
2. Affective domain- *Makatao* is being humane or sensitive to the feeling and situation of the other person.
3. Psychomotor Domain- *Pagpapakatao* is about realization of being fully human shown more concretely through action and determination to attain the goal of total development as a human (Roman Jr. n.d.).

The cognitive domain of *magpakatao* talks about Filipinos' knowledge and understanding of the essence or "whatness" of the human person ---the *pagkatao*. The domain refers to the being of "tao" or human. Here, Filipinos understand himself to be good by nature as they are created by God. But being *tao lamang* (just human), he has his frailty that need to be overcome. Hence, to overcome man's limitations and weaknesses is to live the affective domain of *magpakatao* --- the *makatao* (to be humane). To be humane is to be *maka-Diyos* (God-loving), *may loob* (having inner and external self) at *nakikipagkapwa* (showing concern for others). Teodoro (2013) adds that *magpakatao* involves the act of respecting and valuing the environment and nature. This is a way to make life meaningful in this world. The psychomotor domain is the fulfillment or realization of being human - the *magpakatao* or *pagpapakatao*. It manifests the Filipino moral obligation to live and act fully as a human being. Certainly, *magpakatao* is a measure of greatness to Filipino (*sukatan na kadikalaan*). Such measure is value-laden which includes but not limited to moral integrity, honor, dignity, credibility, honesty, good reputation and God-fearing.

III. NIETZSCHE'S ÜBERMENSCH AND THE FILIPINO'S MAGPAKATAO: A SYNTHESIS

While it is true that both Nietzsche and the Filipino view of a person as endowed with good potentialities that may lead him to live his life to the fullest, their ways of actualizing such potentialities differ. Since Nietzsche's way to live life to the fullest is to destroy all values including Christian values and make his own. Man must go beyond the concept of morality. Hence, he must be beyond good and evil. Moreover, for Nietzsche, to be an "unconventional" is indispensable to become an *Übermensch*. For the Filipinos, it is living the Christian values that a person can overcome his limitations. The aim of the Filipinos is not to become an *Übermensch* in Nietzsche's idea but to become a truly human being (*magpakatao*). To become a truly human being is to live with God's teachings.

Thus, the ideal human life for the Filipino is expressed in his notion of *magpakatao* while for Nietzsche's is in his concept of *Übermensch*. *Magpakatao* for the Filipinos is to live in harmony with God, with fellowmen and/or with the society (*pakikipagkapwa*), and with himself. This is exactly different from Nietzsche's *Übermensch* who lives his life without the Christian God, without letting himself be determined by his society and with contempt of himself.

However, both Filipino and Nietzsche agree with the idea that whoever does not strive to make himself better or to challenge the terrible and tragic situation is a "bad" and unworthy person. But the way to do it differs from each other. Again, the former is to be truly human (*magpakatao*) while the latter is to be an *Übermensch*.

The affirmation and development of this material world and of man's life, the will to love and enjoy one's destiny in this world, the nature of man as an agent of change --- as procreator,

cultivator and sower of the future, the pursuit of creating one's authentic self in the midst of the crowd, and the power to overcome one's weaknesses and develop one's strengths. These are just but few of Nietzsche's ideas which are relevant to the life of the Filipinos. No doubt, these are ideas necessary for the reconstruction of Filipino concept of *magpakatao*.

However, I disagree on some points that he says. For instance, the growth and development of every Filipino as an individual and as a society are needed (the idea of an *Übermensch*), but perhaps not to the extent of eliminating absolutely Christian values. Moreover, the *Übermensch* being the sole creator of values and himself may result to diversity rather than unity among individuals. This is because the *Übermensch*, unguided by the fundamental and unquestionable lifeworld or standards may fall astray in making and transcending values for himself. Perhaps, this could be avoided by incorporating Filipino's notion of *magpakatao*.

CONCLUSION

The ideal human of the Filipino in *magpakatao* as embracing Christian values, abiding God's laws and living in harmony with his fellowmen are worth appreciating. Perhaps, I'm wrong in saying that the Filipinos only have failed in knowing and understanding fully the essence of *magpakatao*. In this instance, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* will surely help in the reconstruction of the notion of *magpakatao* for the Filipinos to fully understand it.

Incorporating Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, the *magpakatao* is not to lose one's self in a crowd but rather to overcome the temptation of being just contented with a sick, weak and mediocre life, like that of a herd animal. Hence, Filipinos shall stand out from the crowd and live life with a free spirit. With free spirits, Filipinos must live life like a camel not by blindly taking obedience to the dictates and traditions of the Church and/or reluctantly doing social expectations afraid of being criticized or worse, ostracized by fellow Filipinos. It is rather by philosophizing, understanding and heavily carrying Church teachings, Filipino social customs and traditions, etc. as they see them to be true. The life of *magpakatao* is not to antagonize all the times like a lion the practices and the dogma of the Church and social practices. Moreover, *magpakatao* is not merely being after of the reward after death, to the extent of forgetting his nature as an agent of change. Rather, *magpakatao* is to be concerned with developing himself and the material world he lives in. An authentic human person has the determination to be the master and co-creator of one's self, is responsible and lives life on earth to the fullest (as Nietzsche asserts). An authentic Filipino must have the character of the innocent child who sincerely asks for strong foundation necessary for living his life, faith and his society. With this reconstructed notion of human perfectibility, I believe Filipinos could overcome any challenges that will come in their lives and still live and authentic and meaningful life amid this pandemic. Indeed, this may not apply only to the Philippine context but also to the whole of Asia.

In a nutshell, to overcome this Covid 19 pandemic, the Filipinos and all people need to revive and continue the project of Plato's philosopher-king, Aristotle's megalopsychos, Spinoza's *amor dei intellectualis* and Kant's moral man whose action is solely governed by the categorical imperative. Most important of all is to embrace the reconstructed notion of *magapakatao* incorporating with it the great idea of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.

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