

**Action in the *vita activa*: Plurality, freedom, power, and the language of  
*Daang Matuwid***

**Joefer Maninang**

University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon Philippines  
Email: jgmaninang@gmail.com

*“A life without speech and without  
action...is literally dead to the world; it  
has ceased to be a human life because it  
is no longer lived among men.”*  
– H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*

**INTRODUCTION**

In her celebrated philosophical work *The Human Condition (HC)*, woman philosopher - political theorist Johanna “Hannah” Arendt (1906-75) writes in the *Prologue*, “*What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing.*” What we are doing, Arendt reiterates, is the central theme of her philosophical work which investigates the *vita activa*, a term she uses to designate three fundamental human activities namely *labor*, *work*, and *action*. These activities according to Arendt correspond to the basic human conditions of *life*, *worldliness*, and *plurality* respectively which in turn are under the most general condition of existence: *birth* and *death*, *natality*, and *mortality* (Arendt, 1998).

The central theme “what we are doing” is from where this whole papers reflective expository analysis of the current Philippine government administrations political battle cry of *Daang Matuwid* or “straight path” - the national anti-corruption campaign or honesty in the government platform proceeds and takes inspiration (Casiple, 2014).

As we may have known, *Daang Matuwid* is executed as a public policy by President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III (popularly addressed as “PNoy” for President Noynoy) in his legitimate capacity being the highest official of the country. *Daang Matuwid* is implemented in all branches of the government: the executive, the legislative, the judicial and their departments. It applies to all institutions in their functions, to all offices and their affiliates. *Daang Matuwid* is mandated to be observed by all government personnel;

elected and appointed officials (the president himself included), administrators and staff, and extends to employees of corporations in the public service. *Daang Matuwid* simply means honesty in the government and is therefore the guiding principle from which all political, legal, and civil action emanates. *Daang Matuwid* therefore serves as the context of this discursive endeavor.

## METHOD

By reflective expository analysis, this paper just combines the methods of reflection, exposition, and analysis. To reflect here is basically to think from my individual existential experience (Dy, 2001) of the “language” of *Daang Matuwid*. This language of the sort I propose is, employing Arendt, *the on-going web of speech-action-consequence process* that shapes the current landscape of the Philippine political culture. This shall mean that my individual existential experience is somewhat the same with the individual existential experiences of all if not most of the Filipino citizens. I say this for there has to be something objectively common to all of our experiences as a Filipino nation and people, as citizens that we are. There is something in our political cultural experience that we share about.

Arendt explains that “...men can be held responsible for their actions but the consequences of their deeds can no longer be undone. The consequences multiply which endures in the realm of human affairs as processes. She adds that the process of a single deed can quite literally endure throughout time until mankind has come to an end” (Arendt, 1998, p. 233-236). It is because of this valuable insight of the concept of process that I come in this paper to consider the language of *Daang Matuwid* and propose it as a general idea *the on-going web of speech-action-consequence process*.

Our political culture is obviously democratic in nature as manifested in our daily discourses and affairs with one another which depicts a recurring progression when looked from the outside. Our democratic political culture revolves around what can be described as the language of *Daang Matuwid*. Though this language is closely identified with PNoy and his entire executive branch in the “space of appearance” or the political public realm as they propagandized us with it in the manner of their speeches and actions especially that of PNoy’s every time he delivers his State of the Nation Addresses (SONA), we cannot deny that we are within such political language and that we

still play a role, in fact a vital one, in it. But at least as concerned democratic citizens, we should perform that role even in our own little efficient fashion of doing it especially in times when our country faces serious issues and challenges that affect or may affect our individual lives and the lives of the next Filipino generation.

Man's existence is an experience of man as situated and this idea of situated-ness is only one of the common features in existentialist thinkers, there are four more. ...man is situated to mean that "I" as an individual man is situated. I understand that my being situated encompasses the "facilities" (facts of existence) of my experience. In this sense, I am saying that I am "a Filipino citizen" is a fact of my experience and that I share this fact with others who are similarly situated. Another fact, a subsequent one, is linguistic in character, the experience of the language of *Daang Matuwid* (Dy, 2001).

Back to my method and in addition to reflection, by exposition I wish to elucidate more Arendtian elements that can be abstracted from our commonly shared democratic political cultural experience of *Daang Matuwid* - from what we practically know about, say about, and do about within the confines of the language. In this way, I hope to provide though limited a fair analysis of our living political language of *Daang Matuwid*.

## DISCUSSION

### *Polis-genesis: The Advent and Ideal of Daang Matuwid*

Arendt's investigative discussion of the *vita activa* specifically the discussion on the fundamental activity of *action* corresponds to the condition of *plurality* she defines - "the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world...because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, and will live" (Arendt, 1998).

This paradoxical but insightful definition refers to plurality's twofold character of *equality* and *distinction*. Arendt explains, "[i]f men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them. If men were not distinct, each human being distinguished from any other who is, was, or will ever be, they would need neither speech nor action to make

themselves understood (Arendt, 1958) hence, she refers to the fact that we are all human beings who can understand one another yet each of us “are endowed with a unique biography and perspective on the world (d’Entreves, Maurizio Passerin, 2008).

Action’s featured categories include *freedom* or for Arendt, “to take an [initiative], to begin...to set something into motion” (Arendt, 1998) which in other words is understood as the capacity to act or “make new beginnings;” *practical reasoning* or persuasion; *speech*; *responsibility*; and *power* which in general means the capacity to “act in concert,” contrasted from *strength*, *force*, *violence*, and *terror* - as in Arendt’s other works (Arendt, 1998). These categories and others like *frailty*; *uncertainty*; *irreversibility*; and *unpredictability* I believe, are intimately intertwined in Arendt’s concept of action and that I am motivated to exhibit a comprehensive sense of the mentioned interrelated categories and their contextual application to a lesser or to a greater extent. For this section, let us briefly see what Arendt says about speech and action and what these two have to do with power. Then we figure out where speech and action vis-à-vis power really takes place and how power springs and charges itself.

Arendt gives special emphasis to speech and action. She even traces from the ancient Greeks in that “speech and action were considered to be coeval and coequal, of the same rank and [of] the same kind” (Arendt, 1998). Earlier I noted that speech and action go together, that they complement each other, and that they are inseparable. This agrees with Arendt when she further says that “through [action and speech], men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* man (Arendt, 1998).” And so without speech, action loses its truth or becomes meaningless and has no relevance. Without action, speech would lack a means to confirm the veracity of the speaker. Speech also functions to coordinate one’s action with others’ actions.

With the preceding descriptions I can only say that the connection of speech and action is central to Arendt’s characterization of power because “power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities.” Power to Arendt “is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance, between speaking and acting men in existence.” However, “*power is always, as we would say a*

*power potential and not an unchangeable, measurable, and reliable entity like force or strength.*” Simply put, speech plus action equals power that has to be consistently maintained in the public because it “vanishes the moment [men] disperse.”

At this juncture, we are driven to ask what this public realm is, the *polis*. Under the section “The Greek Solution” Arendt discusses this and she says in part that “the *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.” This means to say that the public realm, the *polis*, is that political space where speech and action really takes place and that power springs and charges itself out of the speech and action of men in that very same space.

I find myself delighted by the revisited ancient Greek insight in Arendt’s discussion of the *polis* which can be summed up by another statement found in the same section that goes “Wherever you go, you will be a *polis*.” I believe that this recovered insight reminds not only where speech and action takes place and how through these power surges up to keep the *polis* in existence but also and most importantly what democracy is in the first place or properly speaking, what its definition is.

With regards to the insight of what the *polis* is, allow me to use it in transforming this political public realm as the Philippine *polis* in so far as this country as a modern democratic state, a liberal democratic representative state in fact since the current Philippine government administration under PNoy is explicitly speaking and acting from a liberal democratic point of view, adheres to the original Greek democratic *polis*-tical ideal that Arendt herself has revived in her works like the *HC*.

This brings us to the application of the categories of action proper, that is, to think from my individual existential experience of the language of *Daang Matuwid*, the *on-going web of speech-action-consequence process* which a while ago I said shapes our commonly shared democratic political culture as citizens.

Given the *Arendtian* insight on what the *polis* really is and by the *on-going web of speech- action-consequence process*, I precisely refer to the Filipino citizens in their on-going web of affairs and relationships who, presumably, are

consistently engaging themselves as equal human beings in rational or reasonable, deliberative or critical and persuasive discourse by speaking and acting from their differing knowledge and perspectives on whatever public concern they talk about or do about to make themselves understood, thus, maintaining their political power in the space of appearance, the Philippine *polis* or political public realm that endures as a recurring progressive process. This rough schema is precisely what I have at the back of my mind to serve as lens in applying the categories of action.

Now let us reminisce our past. Let us recall an event and some of its momentous succeeding turn of events in the not so distant time of our political history. Remember the famous spiritual act of the “EDSA People Power Revolution” or simply the EDSA revolution, EDSA (Spirit of EDSA, 2014). After the tragic assassination at the tarmac of the Manila International Airport (now NAIA) of former Pres. Marcos’s staunch political opponent, the late Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., the maneuver of the results of the Snap Elections that pushed computer programmers to walk-out in protest, the siege of Camps Aguinaldo and Crame led by then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, Vice-Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos, and RAM leader Col. Gregorio Honasan with his comrades, and the broadcasted blessing, encouragement, and go signal of Archbishop Jaime Sin, millions of Filipinos actualized their political power by gathering at Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (or EDSA, the site of the revolution) and had spoken “Tama na, sobra na, palitan na “ (Abueva, 2014; Delos Santos, 2011) in behalf of all Filipinos citizens. EDSA is a revolution not because every Filipino or the majority of the Filipinos participated, this is absolutely practically impossible; the revolution was a modern one wherein a sufficient fraction of the Filipino people who represented the ideals, hopes, and aspirations of all stood and fought for equality, justice, human rights, freedom and dignity.

The spiritual act of the EDSA People Power Revolution has been globally hailed, applauded, and recognized for its symbolic nonviolent, peaceful, and prayerful struggle against the late strongman former Pres. Ferdinand Marcos’s decades-long dictatorial and corrupt and dishonest rule. Such spirit still lives in the hearts and minds of the Filipino people up to this time if not to all, at least to some who were actually there. The mother of PNoy, first woman president former Pres. “Cory” Aquino symbolically saved us, reinstated or restored democracy from Pres.

Marcos's iron-fist or somewhat "totalitarian" rule by assuming the presidency of a new Philippine republic, an administration that created the 1986 Freedom Constitution and then the present *de jure* 1987 Philippine Constitution. Former Pres. "Cory" Aquino's administration even legally created the Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to run after the alleged Marcos family's accumulated ill-gotten wealth which for the meantime has not recovered everything yet.

The Liberal movement or Liberal Party (LP) that supported PNoy all the way through from rising to the ranks to be the standard bearer down to his campaigns, has a sense of the Philippine political history and understands the positive ideals, hopes, and aspirations of the Filipino people that had its birth during the EDSA revolution which can be described and reduced as the desire to be free from the long-time corruption or dishonesty in the government service that must never happen again in order that the Filipino people may be alleviated from the problem of poverty. But the desire to be free from corruption or dishonesty in the government was much more imminent at that time than the supposedly "deeper" problem of poverty. But LP thought that the desire against corruption and dishonesty are two sides of the same coin in that corruption or dishonesty corresponds to the consequence of poverty. LP believes that the political language about the problems on corruption or dishonesty and poverty are still the prevailing political problems in our present democratic political culture that is why LP refabricated, repackaged, designed and translated them to campaign the platform that was *Daang Matuwid*.

Arguably, I think PNoy believes that corruption or dishonesty and poverty on the large scale have never been resolved. He admits that the problems have never been solved even during the term of his mother and of the succeeding presidents: former presidents Ramos, Estrada, and Macapagal-Arroyo. But for sure PNoy still believes in the spirit of EDSA, that "true people power [which] is the strengthening of the people power if the majority of the Filipinos [or] collective effort of citizens" in the words of Abueva (2014) that toppled a totalitarian dictator and his regime, hence, a few weeks after the untimely demise of his mother due to a failing health which reminded the Filipinos of her significant humanizing role during the EDSA and for being the mother icon of Asian modern democracy, PNoy prayerfully discerned and made an expected unexpected decision with the LP prior the 2010 national presidential elections.

The platform of *Daang Matuwid* herein is the setting something into motion, of representing the acting against corruption or dishonesty in the government for the alleviation from poverty. Such platform ensued to be the living political language ever since PNOy got elected and declared president. Electing PNOy implies that we have accepted and recognized the platform or we have let ourselves be inserted into the political language not by necessity or force but with due consultation and voluntary consent. *Daang Matuwid* then became a national political battle cry and public policy that directly affects all government personnel and indirectly the whole Filipino citizenry.

Metaphorically, in *Daang Matuwid* the Filipino citizens are at the audience as spectators of the political stage where the government personnel are expected to observe what has been mandated by the policy. But the citizens at the audience do not only watch passively, indifferently or apathetically for they should be carefully, keenly or cautiously watching the government officials in their words and deeds and check whether or not they are performing their roles well in the name of good service for the people's welfare and should they notice and find out that they are not performing well, the citizens are obliged to rise up from their seats and exercise their role in the public stage, in fact this is their vital role, but at least they must speak up and actualize their political power as concerned citizens to perform in their own little way what is necessary as citizens especially in times when the government personnel's words and misdeeds escalates into something sensitively serious that affects and will affect the country in that the personnel's misdeeds already produces further and much more complex problems that may have an impact in our individual lives in this generation and the lives of those in the next.

I said earlier that PNOy and the rest in the entire executive branch in the space of appearance or political public realm propagandize us with *Daang Matuwid* for the reason that corruption and dishonesty in the government have already reached to the point that any Filipino would feel like saying that the gravity of corruption and dishonesty are so "tagos sa buto na" so to speak in the vernacular that has rotten some of those in the public service. Corruption and dishonesty have become habitual that if only the word recidivist could be used to call those who engage in them so be it. Corruption which includes but is not limited to the delay in the implementation of government programs and projects correspond or only contributes to the deeper problem of poverty. However, PNOy is still positive and constructive about the big big issue of corruption and the challenge to overcome it in order to pave the way for the alleviation of poverty. PNOy and his executive branch propagandize to politicize



us. He thinks we still have that true people power who can really win the fight against corruption or dishonesty and poverty all the more that the problems of EDSA were much more complicated to compare it so if we did it before we can do it now and make a change, a difference differently. And accordingly, the platform-cum-policy of *Daang Matuwid* has begun and turned itself into the language of our democratic political culture, the language of *Daang Matuwid*.

Following Arendt, I simply believe that the advent of the political language of *Daang Matuwid* is so far the intangible manifestation of the Filipino people power. In other words, this political language is the political world where Filipino democratic citizens, like me, reside; it is the public space for our human affairs; it is our moral dwelling place where our web of human relationships and interactions can be found. It is our city-state, the location where “we” as equal human beings though coming from different perspectives, discourse or converse by speaking out our real problems and give practical resolute actions as solutions to such problems.

The vocabulary of *Daang Matuwid* is the locus of our freedom where we reason deliberatively and critically, responsibly and diligently and consensually agree on a common political purpose to *act-ualize* not only our daily lives but also our lives towards the distant future despite our *frailty*, the *uncertainty* of our actions” consequences, their *irreversibility*, and their boundlessness or *unpredictability* that may influence in the right or wrong way others” contingent actions that generate further processes of actions in this generation and the next. These is therefore why I call our world, our democratic *polis* (Arendt, 1979) or our city-state, our actual historical state, our democratic political culture in short as the language of *Daang Matuwid*.

#### *What Are We Actually Doing Within Our Language of Daang Matuwid?*

Now no matter how ideal and noble in its intentions, *Daang Matuwid* these years seems to be in an ironic situation for being plagued by a variety of issues and challenges left and right even involving its own most visible spokesperson and some of his cohorts. This can be verified through their actions, politically and legally speaking. *Daang Matuwid* is in an ironic situation because while it bears its ideal of honesty in the government, the very spokespersons who propagandize us with anti-corruption for the alleviation from poverty are involved in explicit culpability.

In other words, I posit that the true image of the language of *Daang Matuwid* is apparently stained by PNoy and some of the members of his executive branch. PNoy and some of his cohorts project that their actions are rather strategic or instrumental and manipulative as what can be observed through their rhetorical game that we can allege to perpetrate a hidden truth, an agenda that unilaterally prescribes to a select bureaucratic and despotic few about what to do to achieve whatever their hidden agenda is instead of being consistent with the ideals of *Daang Matuwid*.

The previous scenario suggests that there occurs a shift in the ideal language of *Daang Matuwid* because its politicians appear to be grounded by the “end justifies the means” utilitarian mindset that instrumentalizes and degrades their actions which I suspect is in disguise to totalize or control and suppress our democratic *polis* thereby only producing greater passiveness, indifference, and apathy among the majority of Filipino citizens.

So given the above considerations I raise these questions: Is *Daang Matuwid* really a sincere political battle cry as spoken of by PNOy and some of his cohorts or is it just another form of false, hideous slogan undermining our freedom and power – our capacities to act and act in concert - or our sense of true people power - this being already part of Filipino political culture and behavior? How can *Daang Matuwid* confront its problem of corruption and dishonesty in the government - the crooked path - and when achieved, pave the way for the alleviation from the deeper problem of poverty – the end of the straight path if the actions of *Daang Matuwid’s* spokespersons invalidate its truthfulness? But are there remedies to the issues and challenges faced by *Daang Matuwid* during this time of moral and political turmoil to achieve its ideal for this generation and the next?

These preceding questions serve as my initial inquisitive provocations to align myself with other concerned Filipino citizens who interrogate the language of *Daang Matuwid* and whose points I intend to expose and analyze under this section of our discursive endeavor.

Casiple’s article for instance, centers on the appointments PNoy made including that of the two Liberal Party (LP) inner circle members; Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) Secretary Manuel “Mar” Roxas II’s as Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Sec., a position vacated after the death of Sec. Robredo, Representative Joseph Emilio Abaya as DOTC Sec., and especially that of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court

Maria Lourdes Sereno's "deep" appointment as Chief Justice replacing the former Chief Justice Renato Corona after being impeached. I understand that Casiple's use of the word "deep" positively means that since Sereno's appointment runs 18 years, she "has the potential of implementing massive, long-term reforms in the judicial system...a corruption-free justice system, with accountability and transparency." However, worthy to note from the article are the negative undertones about the appointments with Casiple pointing that "[w]hat we witnessed is the unfolding of an Aquino venture to exert influence beyond his 2016 end-term" implied by the appointment of Sec. Roxas which fits the traditional strategy of exerting presidential influence within the context of the 2016 presidential elections. Turning to Chief Justice Sereno's deep appointment, Casiple for me negatively implies that such appointment is also the traditional strategy to exert presidential or perhaps LP's influence until 2030, Chief Justice Sereno's end-term within the context of the LP's organizational interests.

Another book of Arendt prior the publication of *Human Condition* is a journalistic one entitled *The Origins of Totalitarianism* which consists of three parts (Arendt, 1979). The final part of this book she entitled "Totalitarianism" reports "the institutions, organizations, and operations of totalitarian movements and governments, focusing on the two genuine forms of totalitarian dominion in history - Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia." On pages 365-388, Arendt sketches the pattern of the "Totalitarian Organization". I was demystified by her sketch especially within the discussion of the pre-power and power stages of both the Nazi and Communist movements in Germany and Russia respectively. A glimpse of the "totalitarianization" of the organization of the movements include the division of the masses into "sympathizers" and "members," the creation of front organizations of "fellow-travellers" while among the members themselves, ordinary ones are separated from elite formations within which the militant groups belonged. The elite formations are disunited from "the Leader" by an "inner circle" of individuals who surround him "an aura of impenetrable mystery which corresponds to his intangible preponderance." Also in the pages Arendt suggests that the abilities and skills of the Leader like "to spin intrigues" and "the skill to constantly change its personnel", and "the ability to handle inner-party struggles for power rather than demagogic and bureaucratic-organizational qualities" are no longer decisive when a totalitarian movement has been built up because the "whole hierarchy has been efficiently trained for a single purpose – swiftly communicate the will of the Leader to all ranks."

Given Arendt's sketch of the pre-power and power stages of the totalitarian movements and their totalitarianization or organizational arrangement, I cannot help but immediately think of it analogously and make a sense out of it for the context of this endeavor. So analogously, the Liberal movement represents the totalitarian movements while PNoy, the Leader, and some of the members of his cabinet, the elite formations. As the Leader, PNoy executes *Daang Matuwid* to all branches of the government addressing all their personnel (here recall that to "swiftly communicate the will of the Leader to all ranks" means to communicate the ideology of the totalitarian movement – similarly, this is like PNoy executing *Daang Matuwid* as the platform- cum-political ideology of the Liberal Party). Then the branches of the government including the elite formations or some of the members of PNoy's cabinet are expected to actualize or observe "honesty in the government." These descriptions may sound ridiculous but the somewhat analogical semblance suggests that there can be something wrong with how liberal democracy is practiced. Liberal democratic practice might not be able to escape the totalitarian component of the forceful execution of its ideology as in the case of PNoy's coercive execution of *Daang Matuwid* in terms of its projects and programs highlighting the *Disbursement Acceleration Program* (DAP).

Recently the DAP political issue is the most challenging of all involving PNoy and his executive branch. DAP was declared partially unconstitutional by the SC. According to the SC, certain acts under DAP are unconstitutional because of the declaration unobligated and unprogrammed funds as savings, the transfers of savings from one government branch to another, and the funding of projects not stated in the national budget (Calonzo, 2014). In its defense, PNoy questioned SC's ruling in national television. In an interview, former Sen. Joker Arroyo said, which I also rephrase, that PNoy had practically declared a "state of war" when he openly attacked the SC (Ager, 2014). But upon hearing PNoy who said, which I rephrase, that he does not want to come to a point when the legislative branch of the government needs to interfere, I immediately thought that perhaps the war is not only between the two branches but actually between the three independent co-equal branches of the government. In fact, this state of war between the three branches is already happening because as Sen. Arroyo also says which I rephrase, the legislative branch had already threatened to eliminate the Judicial Development Fund (JDF) of the SC to impair its constitutionally guaranteed fiscal autonomy. Sen. Arroyo added that part of the war between the Executive and Judiciary is the Commission on Audit's (COA) publication of the individual justices' earnings to embarrass them and the Bureau of Internal Revenue's (BIR) issuing of a

memorandum order designed to tax a hitherto untaxable additional income of employees of the judiciary from the JDF. All of these speeches and actions of the three branches evidence that the DAP issue is indeed recently the most challenging.

Arendt criticizes liberal democracy but defended a distinctive conception of *grass-roots* democracy as propounded in the journal article by Jeffrey Isaac entitled *Oases in the Desert: Hannah Arendt on Democratic Politics* (Isaac, 1994). Isaac's line in his article to me implies that even non-totalitarian states or modern democracies - representative, liberal, electoral, dominant-party, parliamentary, etc. may have totalitarian components that Arendt herself elicited in her book on totalitarianism. This further leads to the thought that the liberal democratic practice which is undeniably under PNoy should be checked and balanced not only by the governmental institutions and their legal mechanisms but also and most importantly by all democratic citizens, or at least, by concerned democratic citizens - grass-roots level. What therefore I am concretely saying here is that the coercive execution of *Daang Matuwid* in terms of its projects and programs like the DAP must continually be assessed by us as concerned citizens.

At this point let me bring in how our youth or through some of the politically conscious youth view *Daang Matuwid* through a form of speech - a pop-sheet - for they are the ones who will inherit *Daang Matuwid's* vestiges practically after PNoy's term. So one of the statements in a political pop-sheet that was distributed in the streets of the University of the Philippines's premier state university, the University of the Philippines, last July 12, 2014 by the youth members of the coalition between the politically conscious groups of Kabataan Party List, College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), Anakbayan, League of Filipino Students (LFS), SCMP, and Karatula, reads "Sawang-sawa na ang kabataan sa retorika ng „tuwid na daan”."

The pop-sheet calls everyone, every citizen, to act by ousting PNoy due to the partial unconstitutionality of the DAP as declared by the SC. The idea of illegality is the main premise of the pop-sheet to argue for the ousting of PNoy should the citizens especially the youth choose to act by attending the scheduled protest on July 11, 2014, youth and student strike on July 21, march towards Mendiola (near the presidential residence that is Malacañang Palace), and on-site protest during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 28, activities which are all organized by the youth coalition.

The other statements read that DAP is a disguised form of the “Pork Barrel,” the earlier corruption issue involving Janet Lim-Napoles and allegedly other government officials especially Senators Ramon “Bong” Revilla, Jr., Jinggoy Estarda, and Juan Ponce Enrile and that DAP was used to bribe some government officials to support the impeachment of former Chief Justice Renato Corona.

The statements claim that the supposed fund and support for the welfare of the youth like their education and social services were misappropriated to DAP’s “systematic corruption.” Meaning to say, DAP which finances projects to bolster the national economy is only a facade that in reality only benefits some government officials, the rich, the “hacienderos,” and the “alipores,” etc. The statements assert that DAP’s systematic corruption contradicts the anti- corruption campaign of the current administration.

These among many other of our political actions therefore characterize what we are actually doing within the language of *Daang Matuwid*. What we are actually doing especially on the part of our politicians contradicts the very essence of the language itself. But at least there are some of us who still show concern by having the courage to speak out like some of our politically conscious youth.

#### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In conclusion, what is left for me to say is nothing but to stress an Arendtian wisdom from the passage I quoted to begin our discursive endeavor. In relation to our context, the language of *Daang Matuwid* as a web of speech-action-consequence process is not over yet not because PNoy and his administration has two more years to accomplish its platform-cum-policy of *Daang Matuwid* for its ideal of honesty in the government has been there since time immemorial or since modern democratic practice was handed down to us by the Americans to be historically exact and this means that say, bribery, graft and corruption, and betrayal of public trust which have been the identified chief issues or challenges in the public service for the good of the people’s welfare – poverty being one of the chief problems under this ideal of welfare. The ideal of honesty in the government is coupled by its implicit problem of corruption in many forms and the ideal of the good for the people’s welfare is coupled by its implicit problems like poverty as well. This is the repackaged, designed, and translated language of *Daang Matuwid*.

Rather, the language of *Daang Matuwid* is not over yet because “a life without speech and action...is literally a dead life...because it is no longer lived among men.” Meaning to say, while it is true that we are preoccupied with “making a living” otherwise we would not be able to survive our necessities in life, our sense of true people power which already runs through in our veins should still be persistently maintained and preserved by no one but us. I agree that our participation by actively speaking and acting within our language of *Daang Matuwid* is difficult because like what I have just said we are preoccupied with making a living but let us be aware that to labor or to work is not a human life. Being preoccupied with work is the life of a solitary and lonely man whose concern is only to satisfy his bodily necessities and this is of the kind that is pseudo or subhuman, and the worst this life lose its dignity and may no longer be distinguished from that of an animal. A human life is I repeat not a solitary and lonely life for “men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world.” The lives of speaking and acting men are not over yet and will never be until these men ceases to exist.

Practically, the PNoy and his administration have to more years to accomplish its platform - cum-policy of *Daang Matuwid*. So in order to preserve and maintain our freedom - our capacity to make new beginnings and power – our capacity to act in concert or our true sense of people power, in *Daang Matuwid's* test in time of being plagued with issues and challenges, we are duty-bound to act at least as concerned citizens to first, keep ourselves abreast of whether they have been resolved and second, should there be a need to deal with them individually to maintain and preserve, that is, to promote and strengthen in our own little ways our human capacities and faculties over and over again to resolve our problems so be it for what is at stake here is not only our lives in this generation but also the lives of those in the next.

The language of *Daang Matuwid* is not over yet because politically and legally speaking; of all its issues and challenges DAP remains to be the most challenging. After PNoy’s televised speech, many commented on his threatful defiance or arrogance but Malacañang through Sec. Herminio Coloma, head of the Presidential Communications Operations Office, “[PNoy] was just conveying the executive branch’s stance on the DAP after the SC struck it down as partially unconstitutional.”

Damage has been done, many would say. But the deeds that gave rise to the DAP issue are irreversible and that we are uncertain of those deeds” boundless unpredictability but in order to move and keep our lives going, I guess we just

have to learn to forgive but never forget and relive the promise of our language.



## REFERENCES

Abueva, J. (18 July 2014). People's Perception of People Power" in The EDSA I 1986 People Power Revolution. Retrieved from [http://www.seasite.niu.edu/tagalog/PhilippineCulture/remembering\\_the\\_1986\\_people\\_power\\_revolution.html](http://www.seasite.niu.edu/tagalog/PhilippineCulture/remembering_the_1986_people_power_revolution.html).

Ager, M. (20 July 2014). Aquino in state of war vs. Supreme Court. On-line news. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/620008/joker-arroyo-aquino-in-a-state-of-war-vs-sc>

Arendt, H. (1998). *The human condition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, H. (1979). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. USA: Harvest Book.

Casiple, R. (2012). Aquino's Daang Matuwid. Retrieved from <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/blogs/parallax/aquino-s--daang-matuwid-.html>.

Calonzo, A. (20 July 2014). Speech not meant to threaten Supreme Court. On-line News. Retrieved from <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/370722/news/nation/pnoy-just-explaining-dap-speech-not-meant-to-threaten-sc>

Dy, Jr., M. (2001). *Philosophy of Man Selected Readings* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Quezon City: Goodwill.

Delos Santos, Jr. F. (26 February 2011). Reminiscing EDSA: Tama na, sobra na, palitan na. Retrieved from <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/-depth/02/18/11/reminiscing-edsa-%E2%80%9986-tama-na-sobra-na-palitan-na>

d'Entreves, Maurizio Passerin. 2008. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. In E. Zalta eds. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Isaac, J. (1994). Oases in the Desert: Hannah Arendt on Democratic Politics. *American Political Science*, 88(1), 156-68.

Spirit of EDSA Foundation (18 February 2014). Retrieved from <http://www.spiritofedsa.com/index.html>.