

IN SEARCH OF FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY

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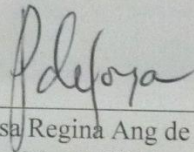
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety.

I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.



Preciosa Regina Ang de Joya
May 2, 2014

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Summary

This dissertation explores the intellectual landscape of academic philosophy in the Philippines, shaped and torn by diverse currents of desires for universal truths and an engagement in globally dominant philosophical traditions, as well as for the self, local relevance, and national identity. Language, translation and the localization of philosophical ideas and streams emerge as recurring key issues, as do politics and religion. Chapter One is a preparatory reflection on how the philosophical preoccupation in the Philippines has been, in the context of nationalism, one of a search for roots, revealing a feeling of exile, which is here not merely the unhappy consequence of colonial experience, but the existential human condition of always moving between the self and the foreign. In Chapter Two, the journey through the landscape of Filipino philosophy starts from—but never quite leaves behind—the author’s teacher, Father Ferriols, S.J. The chapter discusses his involvement in the 1960s Filipinization movement in the Ateneo de Manila University, situating the event in a broader historical context, but equally showing how his position, inspired by theological and philosophical precepts, was an attempt to challenge and overcome the limits of political thinking. In Chapter Three, the great journey of exploration takes us to a different world, all the way across the street to the University of Philippines, in order to glimpse the struggle, between liberalism and conservative forces of Catholic thinking. Here, the focus is on the outspoken logical positivist Ricardo Pascual, whose philosophy and politics contrast starkly with the theologically-inspired thinking of Ferriols. While Chapters Two and Three are focused explorations, primarily on events in the 1950s and 1960s, Chapter Four takes a broader view, expressing the desires and frustrations of philosophers in their search for Filipino philosophy, a long-standing preoccupation, which began in the 1970s and continues to persist until the present. My aim here is to unravel the hopes and fetishes that have led to the idealization of the Western philosophical, resulting to an undervaluation of the work and efforts of fellow philosophers. In further exploring philosophical discourse in the Philippines, Chapter

Five focuses on the work of philosophers who have sought to expose and go beyond the limits of the Western philosophical tradition. But despite their critical spirit, I argue that a certain form of humanism has continued to delimit their thinking. To bring out these antinomies, I juxtapose their ideas to those of social scientists who have equally concerned themselves with the fate of the philosophical discipline in the country, critiquing the essentializing and universalizing tendencies of philosophical concepts. In doing so, I present the contributions of the social sciences as an important critique of the philosophical discipline. Finally, the Epilogue ventures (further) beyond academic philosophy, its distinctions, assumptions, and desires, not only to suggest possibilities for further research into Filipino thought and ways of going beyond its limits and prejudices, but also to remind ourselves of a larger world of thought, within which (Filipino) philosophy is located.

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Chapter One

Learning to Speak

Exposition and Iconoclasm

When I was writing my master's thesis in philosophy, my supervisor, John Giordano, would always urge me to contextualize my ideas. Seeing that his advice was not getting through, he once chastised me for writing in a vacuum. Anyone would have been easily jolted by that comment, but I was too confident that I was only doing what was expected of a philosophy thesis. My intention was simple: to present a clear and comprehensive exposition of ideas. I could not see how a philosophy thesis could or why it should be more than that. After all, this was how scholarship was often practiced in the Ateneo Philosophy department.

It was only long after I passed my thesis that my supervisor's words began to haunt me. I began to doubt the relevance of my own writing, and what I regarded as the norm suddenly appeared strange. In a discipline that underscores the importance of thinking, how did exposition become, with no discussion or explanation, the "stuff" of philosophical research? And if philosophy were a reflection of one's context and lived experience, as my Ateneo philosophy teachers coming from an existential phenomenological tradition claim, then why has scholarship been more often than not a mere description of ideas and theory?

Dissatisfied with philosophy and the disconnectedness it fostered in my own thinking, I decided to seek out a kind of scholarship that would demand, beyond the reflection of dis-embodied ideas, a more palpable engagement with the world. It was then that, instead of taking a doctorate in Philosophy, in Europe, and on a Western philosopher as I had initially planned, I decided to pursue Southeast Asian Studies, *in* Southeast Asia, and under the supervision of a Filipino historian.

Eager to embark on a new field of studies and to get past the inadequacies of my philosophical training, I was disheartened when my supervisor, Professor Reynaldo Ileto suggested that, for my dissertation, I explore the intellectual landscape of academic philosophy, to understand its history and the way it is practiced at home. I was not happy about the prospect of having to go back to the discipline that I so anxiously wanted to leave, even if now it meant examining it from the outside. Besides, I had already fantasized myself in a remote, exotic village, immersed in “hard-core” anthropological work, and the idea of interviewing university professors and poring over academic texts did not exactly fit the “Indiana Jones” or “Lara Croft” image of academic research that I thought Southeast Asian Studies would be.

Despite my misgivings, I saw the wisdom in Prof Rey’s advice. If I wanted to produce scholarship that was relevant, it would not just be about how well I described and analyzed reality’s complexities. It was also about putting myself at stake (sometimes even, on the stake), to reflect not on some random, “curious” matter but on something I was concerned about and/or intimately part of who I was. And that was exactly what I was encouraged to do: to make use of my years as a student and teacher of Philosophy, not to shun or abandon my past but to embrace it. Not only because it provided me an “inside perspective,” but also because I embodied the antinomies of philosophical practice.

Ironically, while I was anxious for relevant scholarship, it took me a while to realize the importance of a study on local/localized philosophy. Two biases prevented me from seeing. As a philosophy student, I had always looked at (and up to) foreign sources, and therefore could never imagine that I would be perusing the works of my colleagues at the university, much less make them the focus of my study. Thus, I thought to myself: was I not better off trying to understand the convoluted theories of the “great” philosophers, who were reliably at the “cutting edge” of knowledge? I was also uncertain that such study could yield a significant or relevant contribution to Philippine Studies, since Philosophy in the Philippines has more popularly been a

preoccupation not so much with the Filipino specifically as with the humanist traditions of the West and the “great(er)” Eastern civilizations of India and China. Of course I came to understand later in my research that this preoccupation was only symptomatic and a fragment of a far richer and more complex reality. And it was rather simplistic to dismiss such preoccupation as less “Filipino,” especially when one considers how the encounter with foreign ideas is always and inevitably a moment of translation, a process of localization. But more importantly, my view revealed a certain blindness: that despite impassioned phenomenological discussions in my philosophy classes on facticity or one’s thrownness into the world, I perceived the “Filipino” not from where I stood but as a mere *object* of study, as something “out there.” The Filipino was, for all academic purposes, an exotic Other! In my search for relevant scholarship, I had overlooked my own earnest and sustained engagement, and later, my disgruntlements, with academic philosophy as a crucial part, if not a starting point, for a meaningful exploration.

My engagement with Southeast Asian studies, which I had initially intended as a way to break free from the limits of philosophy, had turned out to be a return—not only as a research topic, but to the roots of my phenomenological training. And yet, it was not simply a return to a phenomenology that I already knew, but what gave the latter a whole new meaning. The maxim “To the things themselves!”—which the German philosopher Martin Heidegger beautifully explains as “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself”¹—could no longer be simply uttered in disinterestedness. In the field, as I was interviewing people and sifting through what was said and implied, this phenomenological maxim was always being dragged into the mud—tested, translated, re-interpreted, even doubted for what it meant. Nevertheless, it was a simple belief which was impressed on me early in my philosophical studies as supposedly the bedrock of philosophical inquiry, and which,

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1996), 30.

owing to my teacher, the fiery Filipino Jesuit philosopher, Fr. Roque Ferriols, was translated into a powerful injunction. It was, however, not Heidegger's *legen ta phainomena*, which expresses a gentle laying, a “letting-lie-before,”² but the Greek dictum, *Sozein ta phainomena* which Ferriols invoked, and which meant, in all its vigor and passion, to SAVE the phenomenon at the fleeting moment of its appearance:

Sozein ta phainomena. It means “To save those that appear.” Or, because those that appear seek to be observed: “To redeem those that seek to be observed.” Do not form theories that are not based on all the appearances that have been observed. Furthermore, do not invent appearances that never occurred. But also, never suppose that appearances never assumed appearances.³ [1.1]

For me, these were sacred words that constituted the philosopher's code. And yet, in those years I was a student and an instructor at the university, philosophy was more commonly an exercise in exposition. And thus, if vigilance was observed, it was primarily with regard not to life itself but to the text, to obtain a meticulous understanding of a philosopher's writing.

Afraid that I was judging academic philosophy too harshly, I asked a former colleague, a veteran in his field, for his opinion. He confirmed that exposition generally constituted a crucial part in one's philosophical studies, even in writing a dissertation, which he warranted was a useful form of an “apprenticeship with the masters.” Classical texts are used as “training ground,” where one learns, by example, how to present sound ideas. But he assured me that it was something one just had to go through “in order to do real scholarship,” and that at the end of one's philosophical education,

² See Martin Heidegger, “Logos: Heraclitus, Fragment B 50,” in *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984).

³ Roque Ferriols, S.J. *Pambungad sa Metapisika* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), 16. For the original, Filipino text, quoted in this and in the succeeding footnotes, see Appendix 1.

one could hopefully offer new ways of seeing as one “engages the contemporary world.”⁴

The idea of “real scholarship” as what only comes at the end suggests a division of a “before and after.” “Real scholarship” implies a clear sight of a goal, and at the same time, renders everything before it as mere preparation. But if “real scholarship” constitutes a kind of thinking that “freely” engages the world (which is implied in one’s liberation from any obligations of homage to the “masters”), then an apprenticeship implies, demands even, a deference to the master, and would therefore have very little room for criticism or subversion, if at all. What puzzles me in all this is that, despite knowing what scholarship could and should be, why insist on a kind of apprenticeship that falls short of scholarly aspirations? Why can’t the preparation be as “real” as the goal?

Despite my willingness to hear a different opinion, I was not anywhere close to a sympathetic understanding, but this was because I was judging from a particular set of values. I, too, was playing the role of a good disciple, but my allegiance was to one of the well-known Masters of Suspicion, and to the legion of followers that came after him. For Karl Marx, the world was in a constant flux of power struggle, and history repeatedly played out the Hegelian dialectic. But his most important contribution was in showing that things were not what they seemed; that the danger lay not so much in the tireless attempts of hegemonies to justify and maintain their control as in the manner they hold sway in concealing their devious intentions through platitudes;⁵ and then, they convince us, as though through hypnosis, that the conditions of the present life are natural, objective, and inescapable, rubbing off from our memories that these realities, insofar as they are human inventions and interpretations, are always historical and transient. It is the existence of such hypocrisy that a return to

⁴ Dr. Rainier Ibana, personal correspondence, 2012

⁵ See Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx,” in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 273.

the phenomenon can no longer simply be a “letting-lie-before,” especially when the sign that lies before us malevolently conceals, not just by saying something different from what it actually means, but by appearing other than the interpretation that it always already is.⁶

Of course, Marxism has changed a lot since the time of Marx. The malevolent sign which spun a cocoon of false consciousness and thus needed to be exposed, turned out not as completely subservient to the hegemonic powers as it was thought to be. The sign also carried interpretations people had of the life they desired, so that if they were bewitched by the promises of capitalist society, it was not because they were dull-witted, but because they found in these phantasmagoria images of a dream that was otherwise forbidden in the waking life. But Marx's greatest influence remains in instructing us in a particular way of seeing, of interpreting, and in giving moral purpose to our intellectual tasks: that phenomenon, which is convoluted with contradictions and thus what could no longer be taken for what it shows, will always be in need of a careful examination through critique, and that the goal in all this (lest we forget and become like the philosophers who he reproached) is not to interpret the world but to change it.

It is, however, the fortune (and equally the ill-fortune) of the apprentice of the philosophies of suspicion to (eventually) know no master. Doubt slithers into the hollow spaces of our convictions, to a point that we question even our own teachers, especially ourselves. But this self-doubt, clearly goes back before Marx, back to where philosophy supposedly began. The philosopher Socrates, who himself doubted the words of the gods delivered by the oracle of Delphi, was prompted to embark on a journey, initially with the intention of proving the gods wrong. Only much later, as he approached the well-known “erudite” of society, did he realize that what was really in question was the correctness of his interpretation of the message. Nevertheless, Socrates makes it clear that it is only in knowing oneself, in realizing that it is

⁶ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx,” 277.

appropriate for every mortal to know that he knows nothing, that one is always in doubt of what one thinks he knows. In this case, the philosopher necessarily becomes an iconoclast, as his journey in the search for understanding becomes (and because it can only be) a constant attempt at disturbing the certainty and hubris of knowledge, either in the form of unexamined assumptions within oneself or in the form of knowledge “peddled” by the established authority of the “learned.”

If iconoclasm is the legacy of philosophy, and the birthright of the philosopher, why has our “apprenticeship with the masters” led us only to become the proud “experts” of a very limited and well-chosen turf? This “expertise” that we hold so dear, having been proclaimed and “titled” by our own academic community as the Heidegger expert or the authority on Marx – does this not haunt us, disturb us that our identity as a thinker could be nothing more than that of an epigone, one that leeches off the thoughts of a moustached or heavily bearded German? Or notice how we jealously guard the title of philosopher, carefully distinguishing the wise man from the non-philosophers and especially from his age-old adversary, the sophist; so cautious are we that we, apprentices of the master-philosophers, would deny it to ourselves, even proud to remain an apprentice forever. I wonder though if we have not simply muddled up the idea of philosophy with that of the philosopher. Heidegger does mention that, in rescuing Being from the sophists who always had a comprehensible and easily marketable answer to everything, the philosopher intentionally and perpetually deferred its attainment. By inculcating a disposition of yearning and a condition of perpetual astonishment, the quest for Being would always be on its way but never quite reaching its goal.⁷ Perhaps in our love for philosophy, we have idealized the lover, so that he, too, becomes the goal of an infinite task; idealized, so much so that we never tire of listening to his voice and, in the meantime, have lost our own ability to speak. And so maybe, without knowing it, Philosophy, which has never failed to inspire us to

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Jean Wilde and William Kluback (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 49-85.

think in the most radical ways, has itself paradoxically become that established authority of the “learned” which we must dare to defy.

Philosophy as “Enshrined Heritage”

In history, philosophy has exercised its most cruel authority in producing writings that have affirmed, if not provoked, racist and imperialist conceptions. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in *The Philosophy of History*, describes Africa as “the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night.” The African, unable to transcend his individuality and recognize the category of Universality, or a “substantial objective existence” (such as, according to Hegel, God or Law), remains unenlightened and, having no regard for a Higher Being, has consequently “no respect for himself.” This leads him to indulge, Hegel concludes, in “that perfect contempt for humanity, which in its bearing on Justice and Morality is the fundamental characteristic of the race.”⁸ Immanuel Kant, on the other hand, in his essay “Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime,” identifies the French and Italians as people with proclivities towards a feeling for the beautiful, while the Germans, English, and Spanish are distinguished by the feeling for the sublime. In contrast, the Indians “have a dominating taste of the grotesque, of the sort that falls into the adventurous.” And Kant sees this “hideous excess” not only in Indian “Idols of monstrous form,” or in “despotic sacrifices of wives” thrown into the funeral pyre that consume their husbands' corpse, but also in Chinese paintings, which portrayed “strange and unnatural figures such as are encountered nowhere in the world.” While he praises the European for alone having found the secret of making the relation of the sexes “decorous,” he notes that the people of the Orient have “no concept of the morally beautiful” and “thrives on all sorts of amorous grotesqueries.”⁹

⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 111-114.

⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. Johann Jakob Kanter, ed. Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge

In these examples, what is claimed to be absent in those “Others” is a disposition toward that “finer” existence—a sense of “humanity,” a taste for the “morally beautiful”—attributes that make the “civilized” recognizable. Civilization, that malevolent signifier, was none other than the reflection of the West gazing admiringly at itself, conjuring (eternal and universal) value in what it perceived to be the “civilized way.”¹⁰ And if it was convinced that it had a mission to civilize, it was because it “exemplified the desire not (simply) to conquer the Other, but to be desired by the Other.”¹¹

Part of this self-conscious self-admiration of the West, however, was also a critical self-reflection. The idea of *Kultur*, for example, arising from the ranks of the German bourgeoisie who were critical of the superficiality and hypocrisy of the courtly nobles, provided an antithesis to the *Zivilisation* of the “Frenchified” aristocrats, by espousing the “natural’ life—‘natural’ as opposed to the ‘unnatural’ life of court society.”¹² Later, *Kultur*, which initially was meant by the bourgeoisie merely as a social alternative, became a “national antithesis.” *Kultur* no longer merely referred to the artistic and intellectual accomplishments of certain great individuals, but to the “language, religion, law, custom, poetry, art” of a people, to the “natural products of collective human life,” which consequently distinguished a nation from the others.¹³

University Press, 2011), 58-60. Of course, the discourse about the “Other” was in no way unanimous. Western philosophers who had respect and even admiration for the “savage” should not be overlooked, regardless of the fact that their loving gaze perhaps only affirmed even more the chasm between the “modern civilized man” and his “primitive” counterpart. See, for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, trans. Donald Cress (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1992), 23.

¹⁰ Norbert Elias, “Sociogenesis of the Antithesis Between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* in German Usage,” in *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Eric Dunning, et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 5.

¹¹ Prasenjit Duara, “Discourse of Civilization and Pan Asianism,” 106.

¹² Elias, “Sociogenesis of the Antithesis Between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*,” 17-18. Elias’s explanation is insightful because it reminds us that civilization and *Kultur* are words that, despite having caused such great and far-reaching tremors in world history by transfiguring-transmogrifying into Imperialism and Nationalism, grew out of a “specific set of historical situations.”

¹³ See Royal J. Schmidt, “Cultural Nationalism in Herder,” *Journal of the History of*

Culture, understood as such clearly projected a people's specific thrownness in the world, bringing forth a particular conception of life that came to be known in Philosophy as *Weltanschauung*, or worldview.¹⁴ But if the idea of *Weltanschauung* represented the culture of a people, it captured the latter not in the emanations of itself into various forms, but at that point of “distillation,” as it were, which occurs at the moment when culture becomes conscious of itself. It is that moment when culture

Ideas 17, no. 3 (1956): 407-417. Among the German Romanticists who critiqued Enlightenment and the primacy of Reason over creativity, Johann Gottfried Herder is recognized as the “father of cultural nationalism.” He was a proponent of a united Germany which freely expressed its national character through its “vernacular writing and expressions.” It was, however, a freedom that was never meant to be exclusive to the Germans. See Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: From Wagner and the German Romantics to Hitler*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2004) on how Herder's idea of nationalism as the organic unfolding of “Volk-souls” was corrupted and made exclusive to the Germans in the form of Nazism.] Herder never advocated any form of European superiority. Rather, he encouraged the free expression of every national character, in order to bring out a variety of voices that would lead to a sympathetic union of humanity. See also Benedict Anderson, “Old Languages, New Models,” in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 67-68. Here, Anderson quotes Herder, emphasizing specifically on the special relationship between a nation and the language of its people. The vernacular, and the important role it plays in a philosophy that is entangled in nationalist discourse, will be a recurring theme in the coming chapters.

¹⁴ Philosophy and worldview have always been a topic of debate for their ambiguous relationship. See Albert Wolters's “On the Idea of Worldview and Its Relation to Philosophy,” in *Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, ed. P. Marshall, et al. (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989), 14-25. While some philosophers distinguish the two terms, others assert that the two “equal” each other. Wolters explains that the term *Weltanschauung* “was coined and popularized in the context of German Idealism and Romanticism.” What was important at that time was the “rise of historical consciousness”: “In reaction against the Enlightenment—indeed, against the whole millennial tradition of Greek intellectualism—a great reversal of values occurred wherein the universal was depreciated in favor of the particular, the abstract in favor of the concrete, the eternal in favor of the temporal, the identical in favor of the unique. Whereas previously the Western intellectual tradition had been oriented to the enduring essence (*ousia*) of things, it now became oriented to the historical development (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of things.” Thus, while “*Philosophia* and *Weltanschauung* both share a cognitive orientation to the whole, and both are associated with the optic metaphor of viewing,” *Weltanschauung*, either belonging to an individual or a collective, specifically “represents a point of view on the world... , a way of looking at the cosmos from a particular vantage point which cannot transcend its own historicity.” For that, it cannot transcend its particularity, and thus “forfeits all claim to universal validity, and becomes enmeshed in the problems of historical relativism.” See David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002) for an explanation not only of the term's philosophical history, but also its associations with Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

recognizes itself not merely as scattered and arbitrary expressions, but on the level of the philosophical, a particular way of organizing and understanding experiences, a distinct way of acting and being in the world.

On the Idea of *Weltanschauung*

These days, with globalization becoming the new buzzword in academic circles, the idea of *Weltanschauung* is not as audible as it used to be. Aside from its infamous entanglement and complicity with ethnocentricism during the Holocaust (the memory of which has always made people wary of nationalist sentiments going a bit too far), the concept of worldview has lost much of its popularity in the age of postnationalism, where national identities are perceived to be too viscous to retain their delimited and discernible form. Philosophically, the concept has sustained severe blows to its tenability, which Heidegger sums up in a compelling statement: that precisely in its “unphilosophical character,” the “worldview represents a phenomenon foreign to philosophy.”¹⁵ In a 1938 lecture, Heidegger explains how the worldview, though it may appear harmless as a “passive contemplation of the world” or a certain view of life, is in fact part of the aggressive technology of the modern age, which seeks to represent (*vorstellen*), thus, to objectify and reduce the world into a picture that can easily be mastered and manipulated.¹⁶ Philosophically, the idea of worldview, which is “freezing, finality, end, system,” and therefore what brings life to a standstill, is

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, “The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview,” in *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum, 2002), 14.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 134. Here, Heidegger also explains that the idea of worldview is the consequence of “the increasingly exclusive rooting of the interpretation of the world in anthropology,” since the end of the eighteenth century, where there is much emphasis on man as the *subiectum*, which places him at a position where everything is related, explained and evaluated from his standpoint. What this means practically is explained in Heidegger's idea of Enframing, which is an ordering of the world that makes everything a “standing reserve.”

precisely what philosophy must avoid.¹⁷ But if Heidegger has a bone to pick, it is not simply because the idea of *Weltanschauung* assaults life, but that it hijacks philosophy and makes it an accomplice to its projects. This was why Heidegger was keen to expose the progenitor, tracing the idea of worldview to an historical origin, to the “conceptual domination of the concept of culture at the end of the nineteenth century.”¹⁸ This was a time when culture was referred to as “achievement,” an idea which consequently encouraged a bias for evolutionary development. In relativizing its claims and identifying its progenitor, Heidegger reveals how the idea of *Weltanschauung* is no longer simply an ahistorical term, but rather a particular form of “philosophy,” a genre if you will, that made its grand appearance in history at a particular age. And only in showing how worldview philosophy consecrates itself not to thinking but to the subservient role of accumulating “cultural treasures” do we come to understand why it is, as Heidegger claims, both unphilosophical and anomalous.

Heidegger's critique of *Weltanschauung*, however, was not simply a theoretical observation; it was a critical response to the political crisis that the idea itself spawned. As early as 1919, the 29-year old *privatdocent* gave a course on the problem of worldview, in place of a two-hour lecture on Kant which he had initially announced as the topic for the war emergency semester taken by war veterans. Clearly, he recognized the problematic nature of this concept, which had become “a spiritual concern of everyone,” and the reason why “one hears nowadays the antagonism between the

¹⁷ Heidegger, “The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview (transcript from Brecht),” in *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum, 2002), 187-188. Here, Heidegger also says: “But philosophy can progress only through an absolute sinking into life as such, for phenomenology is never concluded, only preliminary, it always sinks itself into the preliminary.” Philosophy, which is this perpetual striving, is here shown as a clear contrast to the task of worldview.

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenology and Transcendental Philosophy of Value (transcript of Summer Semester course lecture, 1919),” in *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum, 2002), 111. Simply put, “all philosophy of culture is worldview philosophy.” Heidegger, “Transcript from Brecht,” 187.

Anglo-American and German worldviews.”¹⁹ Almost twenty years later, just before the beginning of the Second World War, he would return to this matter, reaffirming how the concept of worldview encourages and justifies the task of producing a picture of the world, prompting every man to contend “for the position in which he can be that particular being which gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is.”²⁰ With every man or nation channeling all his or its power to ordering and manipulating, and asserting a worldview, the stage had become increasingly prepared for an antagonistic confrontation.

Today, we see how governments, with their ideologies and propaganda for national unity, have silenced opposing voices, or how the “civilizing mission,” long after the imperialism of the nineteenth century, has continued to torment us with their liberal, democratic, and humanist platitudes. And from these we know that Heidegger's critique of worldview was not unfounded. But before we throw the baby out with the bathwater, perhaps we could realize that Heidegger, like any thinker engaged in the most speculative or theoretical reflection, was reacting to situations specific to a time and place. Despite all its conceptual flaws and its eventual complicity with imperialist and racist tendencies in the name of Civilization, the idea of *Weltanschauung* is paradoxically also the conceptual tool that bears the memory of *Kultur*, as that moment of radical self-critique in European history; more importantly, a conceptual tool that helped and continues to help restore the dignity and self-respect of colonized and formerly colonized nations, making possible a nationalist resistance against the aggressions of the Western “civilizing mission.”

If, then, I have taken this tedious task of retrieving an old concept, which for most people may be perceived as *passé* (despite it perhaps continuing to surreptitiously inhabit our discourse), it is because I see significant confluences in the historic journey of that idea we call *Weltanschauung*. This philosophical concept, borne from the bosom

¹⁹ Heidegger, “The Problem of Worldview,” 6.

²⁰ Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 134-135.

of “civilized” Europe and later sown in the rich soils of the colonial regions, has not only cleverly played out the philosophical antinomies that have made it at one moment the rebel that loves all forms of the human race, and at other times, what appears as the hegemonic villain who silences the weaker voices. More importantly, embedded in its memory are moments in history where Philosophy is and has been more than a diligent study of disembodied ideas, moments when it engaged the world and has had a particularly tumultuous effect on Southeast Asia. In this concept of worldview, Philosophy immerses itself in the world, appearing most visibly (which is not to say the only way) in its entanglement with nationalism.

Philosophy and Nationalism

Historically, the idea of worldview has always been crucial to how a nation could be imagined.²¹ In looking closely at how it is fashioned, we are reminded of how rocks are formed, and how this solid formation is continuously exposed of its rough edges, eroded, and polished by wind and the ebb and flow of the tide. A worldview can be as ossified, delimiting and discriminative as it can be volatile, vulnerable, and embracing. And as much as it tends to manipulate and dominate, it is equally a force that resists domination.

Former Indonesian president Soekarno could not have been more explicit when, in a speech delivered on June 1st, 1945 entitled *Lahirnja Pantja Sila* (The Birth of Pancasila), he proclaimed that the philosophical basis (summoning the Dutch, *Philosophische grondslag*) of a Free Indonesia was established on a *Weltanschauung* that had been “perfected in our hearts and in our minds,” long before *Indonésia Merdéka* itself could arrive.²² He was speaking to the Indonesian people, reminding

²¹ In fact, if we understand the nation as the self-consciousness of a people, then one can say that the process of unraveling the people's worldview is not merely a tool but precisely the way by which the nation is continually imagined. But here, I would like to argue that the worldview is not a fixed conception of life, as it is usually perceived, but what is historical through and through, what is always changing, shifting, adapting.

²² Soekarno, *Lahirnja Pantja Sila* (Panitia Nasional Peringatan Pancasila), 16. “Tuan-

them of their ancient heritage, evoking a proud civilization that bears what the nationalist Ki Hadjar Dewantara describes as the “the nobility and refinement of the human character” (*keluhuran dan kehalusan budi manusia*).²³ Delivered months before his declaration of Indonesian Independence on August 17, 1945, it was equally a rhetoric that addressed the outside world, especially those observers who had the fate of Indonesia's political independence in their hands.²⁴ His argument was simple: like Lenin who established his new “Soviet nation” in 1917 in a matter of ten days, which would not have been possible if the *Weltanschauung* on which it stood had not been long prepared since 1895, or like Hitler's Nazism which rose to power in 1933 but was made possible by an ideological foundation that had been set much earlier, Indonesia, with its own enduring worldview, has sufficient preparation and therefore every right and capability to assert its political independence. Clearly, Soekarno was aware that this claim to a heritage and a philosophical foundation was important enough to legitimize Indonesian independence in the eyes of the powers-that-be. But what is interesting is that in summoning these grandiose, albeit alien, words, he places Soviet Russia, Japan, Germany, England and America on equal footing, as exemplars of a free nation, completely ignoring the political and ideological divisions during and after the World War. On the one hand, one could argue that Soekarno saw the political advantage in not taking sides. After all, the Japanese administration, through the *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence) and to which Soekarno's *Lahirnja Pantja Sila* was addressed, was genuinely supportive; and yet, at the same time, in those fateful years, Soekarno was still desperately trying to gain British and Dutch approval of being worthy of independence.²⁵ Many years later, however, after the independence had long

tuan sekalian, 'Weltanschauung' ini sudah lama harus kita bulatkan didalam hati kita dan didalam pikiran kita, sebelum Indoneésia Merdéka datang.”

²³ Ki Hadjar Dewantara, *Pantjasila* (Jogjakarta: N.V. Usaha Penerbitan Indonesia, 1950), 10.

²⁴ Soekarno, *Lahirnja Pantja Sila*, 16-17.

²⁵ Despite having been stigmatized as a collaborator, and perhaps precisely because of

been won, Soekarno, who was fully informed of the atrocities of the Nazi regime, would again praise the infamous Adolf Hitler, for his cleverness and skillfulness (*pandai*) at “conjuring up a happy future for the German people.”²⁶ Because of this, we can be sure that his admiration for the Führer expressed in his 1945 oration was nothing but sincere. It was this enthusiasm, Benedict Anderson narrates, that had offended the sensibilities of an elderly European diplomat, who left agitated and convinced that Soekarno was a demented fool. Anderson himself confesses how he was shaken by the occasion, feeling as though he “had been invited to see [his] Europe as through an inverted telescope,” and how he would never be able to look at his Hitler in the same way.²⁷ Of course, one could just imagine the chagrin of the diplomat upon hearing how the legacy of his Europe was being remembered in what he obviously perceived as the most immoral and inhuman moment, the darkest hour of their civilization. But Soekarno was no fool. He genuinely respected Hitler for being a real nationalist, and correctly saw that such concepts as heritage and civilization (for the Führer himself spoke unreservedly of the German *Weltanschauung* in his *Mein Kampf*) were as essential to his discourse as it is part of any free nation's self-construction. And though strange and darkly comic it may have seemed, the irony in Soekarno's words, which came out more powerful precisely because it was not meant to be ironic at all, did not only strip Europe naked of its high moral garb, making all free nations somewhat equal (in their desires and in their barbarism), but today makes us ponder on how these

this, Soekarno sent out invitations on radio to Indian nationalist, Jawaharlal Nehru, Australian politician, Herbert Evatt, and Filipino Resident Commissioner to United States Congress, Carlos Romulo, to come and see for themselves Indonesia's Republic. He, along with Mohammad Hatta, also tried to keep under control the escalating *pemuda* (youth) violence by issuing a joint proclamation of warning against those who, having declared Holy War, have kidnapped and have set up their own courts to punish the Dutch or anyone they disliked. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 179-180.

²⁶ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, “Further Adventures of Charisma,” in *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 87.

²⁷ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), 2.

(borrowed) philosophical terms germinate quite differently when sown in foreign lands.

The Filipinos, too, found the construction of a worldview crucial to imagining the nation, but had a slightly different story to tell. In a similar yet different vein, the Filipino intelligentsia of the nineteenth century, the *Ilustrados*, were indefatigable in their own determination to show the world the greatness of the Philippine nation. But while Soekarno and his predecessors could speak confidently of a heritage that had long been “perfected,” the Filipino propagandists felt that what lay before them was the tedious task of recovering and constructing a “greatness” that had somehow been suppressed or lost. True to their reputation as the “enlightened ones,” they struggled to expose and rectify the unjust accusations brought against their people by casting light (the light of reason) on the obscurantism that depicted the Filipinos as intellectually inept, indolent, and the ungrateful children of Mother Spain, and at the same time, sought to rehabilitate the people's self-respect by illuminating the shadowy traces of a forgotten past.

Today, we are warned about the dangers of nationalist sentiments and constructions, which are now often perceived, before they even become excessive, as already “potentially ethnocentric.” And yet, when we look closely at how our early nationalists conceived the nation, one can see that they took interest in studying the psychology and practices of their people not simply to present a panegyric. One appreciates, for example, Jose Rizal’s honesty, when in good faith he disputes his fellow *Ilustrado* Doctor Sancianco who, in his *Progreso de Filipinas* argues categorically and defensively that indolence “does not exist,” and that the allegation “does not deserve reply or even passing notice.”²⁸ But being the excellent doctor that he was, Rizal knew that in order to cure a sick nation, a truthful diagnosis was necessary, one that willingly sacrificed everything for truth, “even [one’s] own self-

²⁸ Jose Rizal, *The Indolence of the Filipinos*, trans. Charles Derbyshire. (Manila: Publisher unknown, 1913), 2.

respect.” It was, therefore, only in opening one's eyes to the existing indolence that one could begin to study it, to understand how this behavior had been maliciously “fostered and magnified,” depicted as though the most natural and inherent of habits of an inferior race and the cause of the nation's misery and backwardness, while in fact, it had been the effect of a long history of lamentable abuse.

Secondly, in constructing the nation, the *Ilustrados* were far from merely looking inwards or fostering intolerance for the other. In fact, they found it almost impossible to look beyond themselves, curious about what lay beyond the borders that the imperial nations were trying so hard to enforce in their attempt to isolate the colonies from their neighboring countries. We are told, for example, that “the Borneans, Siamese, Cambodians, and the Japanese” were much feared for being “free and independent,” that communication and trade between them and the Filipinos were prematurely severed.²⁹ Aside from being anxious towards foreign-inspired ideas of rebellion, the colonial empires also coveted an economic monopoly on their “claimed lands,” thus imposing “blockade, fortified footholds and patrol fleets.”³⁰ But such attempts, of course, could never really prevail, especially when ideas were naturally as fluid as the ocean waters that perpetually spilled beyond and washed away those man-made, artificial borders, nurturing, perforce, “a tradition of hospitality” that stubbornly persists in maritime Asia.³¹

²⁹ Rizal, *Indolence*, 33. Rizal notes in particular how Borneans were suspected of planning an uprising, and that, though there was no proof of even an attempt, the suspicions resulted to numerous executions.

³⁰ Donald Lach and Edwin Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965-1993), 141. A good example were the Portuguese, who in the beginning of the sixteenth century fiercely imposed full control of the spice trade of eastern Indonesia. See O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2004), 39.

³¹ Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region*, 40. Wolters's description of Southeast Asia as a “single ocean,” as (what was once) “a vast zone of neutral water,” is ingenious. From a simple yet truthful statement about the geographical characteristic of the region, he draws an understanding of confluences based on a tradition of hospitality, a relation which he elaborately unpacks in his idea of localization. This hospitality, and its resilience against forces that threaten the “freedom of the seas” and its inherent openness to the foreign is demonstrated in the aberrant behavior we call piracy, which appeared

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, people and ideas flowed more fluidly between the Southeast Asian colonies and their metropolises. Traveling made easier by the latest accomplishments in transport technology suddenly made it impossible not to look at the affairs of others, especially those who shared the same colonial plight. And in that fateful age of print capitalism, where news always traveled faster and wider than what could be humanly achieved in distance and speed, the world began to grow infinitely smaller. “Is Cuba for Sale?” was the title of an article that appeared in *La Solidaridad*, the fortnightly paper of the Filipino “Propaganda Movement” in Spain. One could hear from this rhetorical question (asked “a thousand and one times”) not just a tone of indignation and disbelief over such news of a “sacrilegious sale,” but a resounding demand to the Peninsular government to clean up their act.³² But the *Ilustrados* were not just looking at their neighbors to expose the alarming conditions that were similarly happening in their native land or what they imagined could yet happen to their own people. Sometimes, gazing at the other was about seeking out older and deeper connections that could tell them who they were.

Gazing at Java

An interesting example of this curious gaze is seen in the *Ilustrados's* high regard for Java. While they professed their love for Spain, recognizing the virtue behind the “civilizing mission,”³³ the *Ilustrados* were not oblivious to the destruction that was

at the moment when “Europeans forced local rulers to conclude restrictive trading treaties” that once offered fair trading practices to all. I see here, though, that the “commercial exchanges” did not merely “[encourage] cultural communications,” but were metaphors or, better yet, the corporeal impressions of the encounters and confluences that were equally reproducing themselves on the level of culture and ideas.³² Juan, “Is Cuba for Sale? March 31, 1889, in *La Solidaridad*, Volume 1, trans. Guadalupe Forés-Ganzon (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1967), 115-117.

³³ Such sentiment was reflected in a claim by Bohemian Professor and Filipinist, Ferdinand Blumentritt saying that while the Dutch in the East Indies “occupied their ‘possessions’ not for religious or civilizing or humanitarian ends, but purely as objects of merchandise,” “the Spanish occupation in the Philippines [was] an act of Christianization, of civilization,” which for him was undoubtedly “for the noblest, most humanitarian and philanthropic ends.” Ferdinand Blumentritt, “A Letter from Austria-

unleashed in its name. As one reads, for example, in Pedro Paterno's *El Cristianismo en la Antigua Civilización Tagálog*, one could see profound expressions of grief over the loss of our indigenous culture, how one could never find statues and books in the Philippines “because of religious fervor, the irrepressible exuberance of absolutism, the closed-minded intolerance, engendering a kind of healthy bloodthirsty intellectual”;³⁴ so bloodthirsty, that “the missionary fathers themselves, with burning boastful pride and vanity, have recorded that they have tried to destroy all memories of the past.”³⁵

Precisely because of the same grievance, Pardo de Tavera embarked on a study of Sanskrit-derived words in the Tagalog language. The introduction to his *El Sanscrito en la lengua tagalog* is unabashedly an encomium of Hindu and Javanese civilizations. Unlike the Chinese who had sent adventurers from the lower class, with the sole purpose of making a fortune, the Hindu colonies came to Java, bringing their literature and legends, and effectively changing the habits and customs of the people. What was perhaps most admirable for de Tavera—though he quickly clarified this to be nothing more than conjecture—was that, judging from the legacy of material culture left in Java, the Hindus seemed to have ruled their subjects quite peacefully; and because the Hindus “found a race of a quiet and gentle character, had easily planted in a soil so well prepared the maxims of their religion that served for the time being, to increase that tinge of melancholic character of the Javanese.” And the “temples, images, inscriptions, [that] cover the soil of that fertile island,” serve as proof of the achievements of their civilization.³⁶ In saying all this, was Pardo perhaps making a silent comparison to the violence of Spanish rule? Furthermore, he praises the Javanese who, upon receiving the beliefs and literature of the Hindus, did not content themselves

Hungary: Quioquiap Judged by a Professor from Bohemia” (March 31, 1889), in *La Solidaridad*, Volume 1, 119-121.

³⁴ Pedro Paterno, *El Cristianismo en la Antigua Civilización Tagálog* (Madrid: Imprenta Moderna, 1892), 11.

³⁵ Paterno, *El Cristianismo*, 11.

³⁶ Pardo de Tavera, *El Sanscrito en la lengua tagalog* (Paris: Imprimerie de la Faculté de Médecine, 1887), 7.

with a slavish copy (*una copia servil*) or a mere pastiche of Hindu literature (*un plagio de la literatura*), but created for themselves a genre combining Hindu legends with their own, blending the latter with the poetry inspired by the beauty of their homeland and their own sentiments.³⁷ And finally, an ode to *Cawi*—“the religious language, the language of poetry, the language in which Java conserves the most beautiful monuments of [its] national literature.”³⁸ While the Javanese have all these that reveal the extent of Hindu influences in their land, in the Philippines, there are no monuments, statues, or literature that tell the story, except perhaps in the Tagalog language, where we find Sanskrit traces. Precisely for this reason, this study, according to de Tavera, becomes very important “not only as an interest for linguistics but also for the history of this beautiful archipelago.”³⁹

In this regard, I can only sympathize with the *Ilustrados*. If they gazed at others, and lamented the rubble of what was left of our culture, it was because they were yearning for home. And in exploring the intellectual landscape of academic philosophy in the Philippines, one realizes that it is the same yearning that lies at the core. The search for Filipino philosophy—which as we shall see is the recurring theme around which all frustrations, desires, and squabbles revolve—is a pining to return to one’s “self,” whether it be a willfulness that seeks out/constructs the “indigenous,” an attempt to localize the foreign, or a retrieval of the vernacular which is always at the brink (i.e., always “almost but not quite”) of disappearing.

Like the *Ilustrados*, I, too, sought to look beyond the nation, ironically in search for a way home. And as I gazed at Java, I, too, was drawn to the magnificence of its ancient culture. Thus, as part of my journey, I fumbled over old philosophical Javanese texts and acquainted myself with *aksara jawa*, the Javanese indigenous script—tasks that normally take years to prepare for and more years to accomplish. In trying to do

³⁷ De Tavera, *El Sanscrito*, 8.

³⁸ De Tavera, *El Sanscrito*, 8.

³⁹ De Tavera, *El Sanscrito*, 9.

all this in my eight-month excursion to Java, it was understandable that people thought I was crazy or wasting my time. But while the journey did not yield a full-fledged comparison as I had initially intended (due to practical limitations of time, effort, courage and words), I would be untruthful if I completely swept it under the rug. For the truth is that I had learned to see what I would not have been able to if I had not taken that journey: that more than similarities, one realizes the specificity of the confluences of religion, history, and culture that have shaped and influenced philosophical practices in the Philippines and in Indonesia. And apart from realizing the enormity of such a comparative study, it is also important to note that, given the scattered and minor efforts that have been made in broaching this particular topic, this research is, in a way, a beginning, an attempt to present a more comprehensive picture. In this case, it would be prudent to take not big leaps but small steps.

One of the major realizations came as I was sharing with a stranger my excitement over *aksara jawa*, while lamenting the near absence of indigenous writing in our country. I had just returned to Manila from my Java trip and was unusually chatty. Knowing that this stranger was studying old languages himself, I expected him to share my sentiment. Instead, he looked at me intently, and gave an unusually perceptive remark: *Tinitikbalang ka. Nakakutuban mo kung saan ka dapat tumungo, pero kahit anong pilit, hindi ka makarating sa gusto mong puntahan* (“A *tikbalang* is playing tricks on you. You intuit where you're supposed to be headed, but no matter how hard you try, you can't reach the destination you desire”). The *tikbalang* is a mischievous mythical creature that lives deep in the forests and plays tricks on travelers so that they lose their way and are unable to return home. With a torso and hands of a human and unusually elongated thighs and legs of a horse, the *tikbalang* is said to be the soul of an aborted fetus, who due to his misfortune hates children the most, deprived and envious of their happy innocence.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Isabelo de los Reyes, *El Folklore Filipino* (Manila: Imprenta de Santa Cruz, 1890), 66-67. It is said that the *tikbalang* (or *tigbalang*), as the soul of an aborted child, is

It was then that I realized that I was, more than I was conscious, part of an intellectual tradition where scholarship has often been a reflection or expression of exile. Being *tikbalang*-ed is our curse, the sorrowful consequence of a “collective lobotomy” that two great Empires (Spain and America) have performed on us, and which has caused the malediction of forgetfulness, of not knowing who we are or even where to find this place we call home. Furthermore, I realized that instead of understanding the specific character or problem of philosophical practice in Indonesia, I had unwittingly appropriated the latter in the search for Filipino philosophy. In retrospect, this was probably the reason why, as soon as I heard the German Jesuit philosopher, Franz Magnis-Suseno say that philosophy students at the Driyarkara Institute were keener to learn about Western philosophy than indigenous thought, I decided to immediately leave Jakarta to return to my exotic Java.

Exile: Remembering Filipino *Filibusteros*

One of the ironies in life is that the more one dwells on the thought of home, the more one feels a melancholic sense of exile; but there is also that nagging thought that perhaps being in exile is the closest we can ever get to home. Pondering the character of Jose Rizal, Filipino historian Vicente Rafael depicts the Filipino national hero in an intriguing and unusual light: contrary to what may be expected from a nationalist, he is imbued by the foreign, someone who is, in a sense, not one of “us,” and therefore one who is “exiled” to the realm of the unfamiliar.

Curiously, it is Rizal's foreignness that is remembered and committed to a monument, where he is poised wearing a winter coat, and holding a copy of his *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, the two novels he had written in Castilian, ironically a language “that less than 1% of the [Filipino] population can read much less write

banished from limbo and sent to earth to live a life in the worst imaginable way. He feels hunger and thirst, but can neither eat nor drink.

in.”⁴¹ The novels were, however, not just speaking in a foreign tongue; written and published in Europe, they had sprung from “foreign origins.” And as if being born into exile were not painful enough, they were alleged by the Spanish authorities to be subversive and criminal, and were consequently banished from returning home. It is in relation to the connection between foreignness and criminality that Rafael reflects on the *filibustero*, that shameful title and allegation inflicted by Spanish authorities on Filipino nationalists who sought liberal reforms, including Rizal who was banished into exile and eventually executed. What is emphasized here is the crucial role of language: how the nationalists passionately urged for the compulsory teaching of Castilian, which they saw, despite and because of its foreignness, not merely as the medium by which their appeals for economic and social reforms could be heard, but a (new) way of being, or at least the promise of a way of being that would make them equals of the Spaniards.⁴² But it was precisely the (mis)appropriation of this language (as a way of being), which the Spanish friars believed was never the native's right to own, that the nationalists were misrecognized by authority as *filibusteros*, subversives who were “speaking out of place.”⁴³

Curiously, in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel, *Child of All Nations*, we learn that the natives of the East Indies were mutually gazing at their Filipino neighbors.

⁴¹ Vicente L. Rafael, “Foreignness and Vengeance: On Rizal's El Filibusterismo,” UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4j11p6c1>. This monument, which is located in Manila, was erected in 1912 during the American colonial regime. Emphasizing its foreignness, Rafael reports that the monument was not just built by the Swiss sculptor Richard Kissling, but that its pieces were formed abroad and only later shipped and assembled in the Philippines.

⁴² See Vicente Rafael, *The Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁴³ The *filibustero*, according to Rafael, was either defined as a pirate or thief, or one “who interrupts parliamentary proceedings, smuggling his or her own discourse into those of others.” In both cases, the *filibustero* is a “disruptive presence,” “breaking and entering into where s/he does not properly belong.” But aside from being a troublemaker, one who disrupts the social order, the *filibustero* has the malevolent power to surreptitiously “infect” others, by being able to persuade people to think and act in ways contrary to one's intentions. For this reason, the *filibustero* “is a kind of foreign presence who exercises an alienating effect on all those it comes in contact with.” Rafael, “Foreignness and Vengeance,” 7-8.

While onboard the ship *Oosthoek* (Eastern Corner), sailing “calmly to the west” from Tanjung Perak to Batavia, the well-educated Javanese journalist, Minke, has a fortuitous encounter with the European extreme liberalist and former sub-editor of *Soerabaiaasch Nieuws*, Ter Haar. In the course of their conversation, Ter Haar asks Minke if he knows anything about the Philippines. Despite the news blackout, Minke had heard about the rebellion of the Filipino natives against their Spanish and American colonizers, from the young Chinese activist Khouw Ah Soe who, in an earlier part of the story, had shared with him his admiration for the Filipinos:

“They [Filipinos] studied well from the Spanish, from Europe, even before the Japanese. Even before the Chinese. It is a pity they were a colonized people, unlike Japan. The Filipinos could not develop because they were colonized. The Japanese have developed—developed too well. The Filipinos were good pupils of the Spanish. And the Spanish were bad teachers, rotten and corrupting. But the Filipinos didn't just accept their teachings uncritically. The Filipinos are also great teachers for the other conquered peoples of Asia. They were the founders of the first Asian republic. And it collapsed. A great historical experiment.”⁴⁴

Ter Haar would later speak of the Filipinos with similar regard:

“Such progress. The Filipino natives were closer to European science and learning, closer to understanding the power that rested with the European peoples, to knowing how to use that power, and so they rebelled. They had changed as human beings because of European education. They could never return to being the Natives of earlier times.”⁴⁵

Here, Pramoedya gives a different meaning to the experience of exile. It is no longer merely a “curse” imposed on us as the historical outcome of the “civilizing

⁴⁴ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Child of All Nations*, trans. Max Lane (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 88.

⁴⁵ Pramoedya, *Child of All Nations*, 263.

mission” that has effectively banished us from who we are, or even the punishment for speaking out of place; more profoundly, exile *is* our human condition, as our existential quandary of never staying where we are, of always traveling in time, across metropole and colonies, and to other foreign lands.

At one point, Ter Haar acknowledges that the rebellion of the Filipinos “rocked all of Europe, including Holland,” but he seems unaware that it also inspired Khouw Ah Soe and his friends. For Ter Haar, these Chinese “trouble-makers” “were only trying to copy” America and France. While the Dutch were trying so hard to prevent news of the rebellion from spreading in their colony, the Filipino *filibustero* had already successfully found a way into the Indies, through the guise of Chinese *filibusteros* who, as it appeared in a newspaper report, were equally misrecognized as a “group of illegal immigrants,” “anarchists, nihilists, good-for-nothing agitators,” whose “intention was to create trouble in the Netherlands Indies by inciting the young people to defy their ancestors and their own parents.”⁴⁶ Ironically, in the last words that transpired between Minke and Khouw Ah Soe, the latter makes it clear that his commitment to the struggle is one of remembering, but curiously, one that remembers a foreign “ancestry.”

Before the guava-faced youth left our house, I felt I had to ask one more question: Was Nijman's report true, that he had been beaten up in the Kong Koan building? He confirmed it.

“Dangerous work,” I commented.

“There may be worse yet to come.”

“You are not afraid?”

“The Philippines cannot be forgotten, can they? Even if they were deceived by Spain and America? It is inevitable that other conquered peoples will follow in their footsteps. Yes, even in the Indies. If not now, then later, when people know how to handle their teachers.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Pramoedya, *Child of All Nations*, 90-91.

⁴⁷ Pramoedya, *Child of All Nations*, 89.

Of Teachers and Students

In exploring academic philosophy in the Philippines, one realizes that one crucial theme throughout its history is, contrary to what Heidegger would have liked, the need and search for a *Weltanschauung*. But in the same spirit that animated the work of *Ilustrados* and Filipino *filibusteros*, this desire for a worldview has not necessarily been a form of ethnocentrism that merely accumulates cultural treasures and is closed into itself. Instead, the search for Filipino philosophy, as we shall see in the coming chapters, can be understood as a profound expression of exile, and a longing for home, but that which concomitantly opens itself to the foreign. Here, exile is not just the negative consequence of one's banishment from home, as we often understand it, but a vital part of the human existential condition, as Pramoedya implies in his encomium to the Filipinos. Thus, exile is not merely the loss of self resulting to a yearning for home, but the journey of one who is constantly imbued by the foreign, and consequently becomes foreign to himself. And it is this foreignness, as we shall also see, that sometimes has led to speaking out of place. From this place of exile, Filipino philosophy becomes a venue of the encounter between master and apprentice, not one of subservience but of critique and iconoclasm.

It was some time after taking a module called SE5151 (Approaches to the Study of Southeast Asia) with Professor Iletto that I began to ponder on the encounter between the teacher and the student as what lay at the core of our philosophical endeavors. The module, which I had assumed was a theoretical course, surprisingly turned out to be a biographical introduction of the people behind the creation and historical transformation of Southeast Asian Studies. And because Iletto presented himself not merely as the narrator but a character in his story, his approach to teaching was autobiographical as well.

Part of what Iletto had taught in that class can be gleaned from an autobiographical essay he had written about his formative experiences as a doctoral student at Cornell University, reminiscing his memorable encounter with two

supervisors, D.G.E. Hall and Oliver Wolters. While grateful to his teachers for initiating him into the discipline and rigor of scholarship and to the critical importance of languages, Iletto was equally aware that, being one of Wolters's first three Southeast Asian doctoral students, he was part of an agenda to “sow the seeds” of “autonomous history” in the region, a scholarship that provided a “third way” aimed at dispelling both Euro-centric and anticolonial or nationalist historiography.

To appreciate these biographical notes, it was necessary to understand them in conjunction with the works authored by Hall and Wolters themselves, excerpts of which were assigned readings for the SE 5151 module. And it was precisely in the “dialogue” between these texts that one discovers the antinomies that constituted the lives and ideas of these pioneering thinkers. As Iletto points out, both Hall and Wolters started out as colonial scholars-officials for the British Empire, careers that would clearly shape and influence their thinking. While Hall was assigned to Rangoon in 1921 to teach history to a newly-formed Burmese elite groomed to be the country's future leaders, Wolters served the Malayan Civil Service in 1955 as the director of Psychological Warfare, pacifying and campaigning against “what he himself termed the Communist terrorists.”⁴⁸ With a clear political affiliation to the Empire, it was therefore no surprise that they would warn Iletto not to write like the Filipino nationalist historian, Teodoro Agoncillo, whose work was blatantly anticolonial, and instead, urge him to do research which was more in line with an autonomous history that looked beyond the colonial tensions.

Despite their conservative position, there were, however, discernible traces of self-criticism and progressive thinking that earned Hall and Wolters the reputation they have today as the pioneers of Southeast Asian studies. As the putative father of

⁴⁸ Reynaldo C. Iletto, “On the Historiography of Southeast Asia and the Philippines: The 'Golden Age' of Southeast Asian Studies—Experiences and Reflections” (paper presented at the Workshop for the Academic Frontier Project: “Social Change in Asia and the Pacific,” Meiji Gakuin University, March 2002), 18, <http://www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~iism/frontier/Proceedings/08%20Iletto%20Speech.pdf>.

Southeast Asian history, Hall was not just fiercely critical of Eurocentric historiography; rather, in asserting the need “to present South-East Asia historically as an area worthy of consideration in its own right, and not merely when brought into contact with China, India or the West,”⁴⁹ he actively sought elements that would provide the integrity or a certain wholeness unique to the region. Furthermore, his advocacy for regional awareness as a potential “machinery for common action,” was clearly a subversive act toward the imperial powers who had been known to employ isolationism, i.e., keeping their colony practically incommunicado, as one of the political tactics to perpetuate their rule.⁵⁰ As for Wolters, one can glean from his ideas of “local genius” and “localization” a strong belief in the resilience and uniqueness of a region where people have both enjoyed and suffered the influx of foreign elements. It was precisely this way of thinking that Hall himself, Wolters's own mentor, would take up as an alternative model to Brian Harrison's understanding of a Southeast Asia that merely served as “a passive arena for alien influences to work their way.”⁵¹ This idea of acculturation is also, in fact, one of the major arguments behind John Smail's idea of autonomous history, which he elaborates through the particular example of Indonesia; that in emphasizing “on the great bulk of [Indonesian] society, absolutely and relatively to the minute Dutch elite,” “we must reject the notion that [colonial] control as such logically implies the insignificance or feebleness of the controlled except in a purely political military sense,” but instead find in the “social structure and culture,” again, not the powerlessness of a subjugated people and the “collapse of [their] cultural values,” but the strength and persistence of their identity transformed through “creative adaptation.” In highlighting this aspect, Smail aims “to awaken the thought that there is an authentic Indonesian body beneath the clothes we call the

⁴⁹ D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (London: Macmillan Limited, 1955), vii. Quoted in John Smail, “On the Possibility of an Autonomous History of Modern Southeast Asia,” in *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, no. 2 (1961): 7.

⁵⁰ D.G.E. Hall, “The Integrity of Southeast Asian History,” in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 4, no.2 (1973): 167-168.

⁵¹ Iletto, “The 'Golden Age' of Southeast Asian Studies,” 12.

Netherlands Indies, that this body has its own history, autonomous in the fundamental sense.”⁵²

From the danger that forces intellectual life into complicity with the imperialist project, a saving power arises: that because of the knowledge, sympathy, and idealistic commitment of some of these colonial scholars, they became “too relevant,” “too involved in the questions of the day,” so much so that they began to deviate from the objectives that their imperial sponsors had set;⁵³ so much so that Southeast Asian studies began recruiting Southeast Asian scholars, clearly a commitment not only in acknowledging the importance of vernaculars and an analysis that came from within, but in allowing Southeast Asians to be actively involved in the production of knowledge about themselves. It was then that Southeast Asian studies, at the height of the Vietnam war in the late 1960s, ironically became the fiercest critique of American foreign policy.

It is, however, in the context of this “golden age” of Southeast Asian studies that Ito situates his autobiographical essay, (re)inserting the memory of a lingering colonial perception, which for the sake of keeping a self-image of valiant and radical scholarship, could have easily been erased. Here, he inserts his own voice, as a refusal to follow his teacher, as a disturbance in the calm confidence of the Cornell mandala. If he stubbornly refused the idea of autonomous history that his mentors were espousing, it was not so much because he did not believe in the resilience of his own people.⁵⁴ Rather, his contention lies in the urge of its proponents to “look beyond the

⁵² Smail, “Autonomous History,” 89 – 92.

⁵³ Ruth McVey, “Globalization, Marginalization and the Study of Southeast Asia,” in *Southeast Asian Studies: Reorientations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1998), 39.

⁵⁴ In fact, Ito’s dissertation, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003) was in many ways aligned to the values that autonomous historiography was advocating. In studying the millenarian peasant movements, he was not just exposing an instance of cultural adaptation, where the Church-approved Pasyon during the Spanish colonial regime provided the inspiration for a collective struggle; in redeeming popular Tagalog texts from obscurity, he also uncovered “a profound ethical and cultural abyss between the peasantry and the mestizo national elite” (Benedict Anderson, “Politics and Their

colonial relationship,” to see the latter as a barrier to historical understanding and to perceive it as “only part of an even larger one, the theme of the meeting of West and East, the spreading of Western culture to every part of the world and its incipient metamorphosis into a single world culture or civilization.”⁵⁵ It is with the same unperturbed tone that Wolters, thirty years later, would urge a reflection of globalization not in terms of a threat but as the process by which we find the resilience of local cultures in concepts like hybridity or local adaptability.⁵⁶ Iletto, on his part, asks: can we really dismiss the colonial relationship in the case of the Philippines, “with its 350 years of direct Spanish rule and 50 years (some say ongoing) of American colonialism?”⁵⁷ Clearly, in the light of the anticolonial sentiments and the Filipinization movement in the late 60's, Iletto could not deny the lingering presence of the colonial encounter, much less be oblivious to its existence as a persistent danger. Hearing the echoes of an “unfinished revolution,” he denies time of its untroubled flow.

It is quite understandable how this perceived “thoughtless hatred” in anticolonial writings, which is seen to persist in postcolonial discourse, has caused anxiety among scholars who have been the target of such critique. A clear example is Iletto's controversial essay on the “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” which has been perceived as an “attack,” causing much resentment among American scholars and their followers.⁵⁸ Although this is not the place to get entangled in the details of the debate, suffice it to say that the essay tried to expose a lurking danger that threatens every scholar—the danger of essentializing the “object” of one’s study. But

Study in Southeast Asia,” in Ronald A. Morse, ed. *Southeast Asian Studies: Options for the Future* [Washington, D.C.: The Wilson Center, 1984], 48), which was clearly the kind of “internal history” that Smail advocated in the hope “to fit the great bulk of the people into the historical picture.” Smail, “Autonomous History,” 99.

⁵⁵ Smail, “Autonomous History,” 94.

⁵⁶ O.W. Wolters, “History, Culture, and Region,” 207.

⁵⁷ Iletto, “The ‘Golden Age’ of Southeast Asian Studies,” 8.

⁵⁸ See Reynaldo C. Iletto, “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” in *Knowing America's Colony: A Hundred Years From the Philippine War*, Philippine Studies Occasional Paper Series No. 13 (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1999), 41-65. See also the essays on the “Forum on Orientalism and Philippine Politics,” *Philippine Political Science Journal* 23, no. 46 (2002): 119-174.

for Iletto, the problem lies not just in describing the Filipinos as the “negative others” of the Americans, of how their nature of being “ruled by their passions, kinship ties, debts of gratitude and personal loyalties”⁵⁹ has inevitably led to what is viewed as the “tradition” of clientelist politics, pitting the Filipino as “Factional man” against the “Enlightenment man” of Western democracies, and thus seeing the former as “the negative opposite of, or at least the precursor to” the latter.⁶⁰ Rather, what seems to be for him more alarming is how a group of texts have produced “discursive formations,” that by character are performative, circulating certain words, images and ideas (such as the “peculiarities” or “quirks, oddities, and . . . abnormalities” and the “fluidity” of moody and “unpredictable” Philippine politics) that assert an authority over minds, a power immeasurable in depth and reach, and what only keeps emerging in the generations of texts it breeds. This is why Iletto begins his essay by identifying the danger as nothing more than a book (Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*), but what asserts its authority, its entitlement as a “must-read,” and even a Pulitzer Prize winner (!).⁶¹ And as the essay unfolds, we learn that this book is none other than the offspring of an earlier discourse, with every page bearing the haunting of an older authority, of “those 'five young scholars from the University of Michigan,⁶² who sought to strike out a new course in 1971”; and who in turn were themselves haunted by the question of America's self-definition, and which itself haunted representations of the Philippines as “its colonial ‘other.’”⁶³

If, then, we are to identify the power of discursive formations, it is their capacity to surreptitiously inhabit our thinking, furtively reproducing themselves in our

⁵⁹ Iletto, “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” 44.

⁶⁰ Iletto, “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” 50.

⁶¹ Iletto, “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” 42.

⁶² This refers to the book Norman Owen, ed., *Compadre Colonialism: Philippine-American Relations: 1898-1946* (Ann Arbor, Mich: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan, 1971), whose authors were all students of David J. Steinberg. Furthermore, it was this collected work, according to Iletto, that “enabled” Karnow's book.”

⁶³ Iletto, “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” 64-65.

discourse. These are the ghosts that haunt us, the *filibusteros* that hijack our mind. But it is perhaps not so much about chasing them away as identifying who they are, and being alert to their coming and going. In the course of the essay, Ileo expresses his own dismay, of how the discursive formations of the 1960s persist in the 1990s, continuing to haunt present-day scholarship, and what therefore have yet to be surmounted. It is this calm and self-confident passage of essentialized and essentializing “tradition,” passing from generation to generation, that Ileo seeks to interrupt and disturb.

In the same spirit, Ileo tries to free himself from the ghosts of his own mentors. In receiving a warning not to write like Agoncillo, he recognizes yet another instance of how authority exercises itself in full force, through a discursive formation that identifies and condemns nationalist historiography as “bad scholarship.” This is, indeed, another feature of hegemonic discourse, that is, the tendency to banish all opposing views. In some ways, this is what happens when some scholars insist on moving “forward” and letting go of colonialism as a thing of the past. And it seems, in relation to the colonial problem, there are at least two ways by which it is “spirited away.” There are those who believe, that while it is an important part of history, the danger it poses today is largely unreal.⁶⁴ And there is the other idea, as we have seen in Smail, that the attacks against colonialism have only spawned “a thoughtless hatred” which is mainly divisive and therefore what we must try to avoid. But is it not possible

⁶⁴ This argument, which is found in Smail's essay in the 1960s, continues on with scholars such as Craig Reynolds. He believes that postcolonial theory, which “arises from an abiding concern for the residual effects of colonization caused by economic dependency and globalization,” is based on the idea of a “crippled self,” an idea that perhaps is not as relevant as we make it to be, as “there is something about Southeast Asia itself that resists such a notion,” and that colonialism did not destroy identities but rather “generated new kinds of subjects, selves, and agents.” Furthermore, he claims that, in fact, the popularity of the postcolonial argument is greatly dependent on the English proficiency of certain Southeast Asian countries, so that “a Malay, Burmese, or Filipino would have no difficulty in understanding the postcolonial critique.” Craig Reynolds, “Self-Cultivation and Self-Determination in Postcolonial Southeast Asia,” in *Southeast Asian Studies: Reorientations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1998), 16-18.

that a critique against the “residual effects” of colonization could be thoughtful and well intended?

Clearly, when Ileo critiqued his mentors and exposed the ghosts of their colonial past, there was not even the slightest tone of resentment. In fact, with his biographical notes, he portrays them as persons with their own passions and disappointments (Hall singing merrily in class the songs of the Empire, and his difficult relations with some rivals and students in Burma), as well as in their complexities (Wolters, the disciplinarian, who in the end did not resist when Ileo included ideas from scholars of the opposing camp). Indeed, what can be gleaned from this autobiographical essay, which presents an encounter with the master that goes beyond the usual dynamics between mentor and mentee, is perhaps also a way to understand our postcolonial condition: not an abandonment of our colonial past and a denial of how it lingers in our present, nor a criticism that generates hatred; rather, in pondering the inescapable inheritance that we are, to situate ourselves between two extremes: on the one hand, the panegyric of a blind follower, and on the other, an iconoclastic and oedipal relation to the teacher.

If I sympathize with those who refuse to let go of colonialism as a thing of the past, it is because I, myself, identify the colonial encounter as my point of departure. In the beginning of this chapter, I spoke of my own orientalism, of how I sought to exorcise and push away from my own biases. But the problem was not so much that I had never thought of looking into local scholarship nor felt the same excitement as when I read the works of Western philosophers, as I had assumptions that prevented me from asking certain basic questions.

There is, according to Derrida, a French idiom: “*il y a lieu de poser cette question*.”⁶⁵ There is a place where one poses this question. To say this, however, does not only mean that one is given a proper venue to ask, but rather, it is to consecrate a

⁶⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique* (UNESCO, 1997), 10.

particular place that would allow such question to arise and be raised. This is why when Iletto critiqued the idea of autonomous history, it was not merely casting doubt to the discourse of a “golden age” that had happened in the 1960s, but it was equally putting to question the place from where its splendor arose. By inserting the voices of opposition, which came from “elsewhere,” it is not only time that is disjointed (that from within this “golden age,” we discover the decaying remnants of a colonial perspective) but the place is also dis-located (that another “golden age” of Southeast Asian studies had occurred in the peripheries of the Cornell mandala).⁶⁶ This is also why, in pondering the importance of place and how it gives rise to specific concerns, Iletto had in 1994 organized a colloquium on “indigenous historiography.” Here, he gathered historians from all over the region in an attempt not to systematically map out advances in Southeast Asian historiography, but simply to provide a place where they could share their experiences as scholars “who write for a domestic audience, [and] who are enmeshed in local debates and institutional struggles.”⁶⁷ Anticipating criticism, Iletto reassures that this reflection on indigenous historiography is not an assertion of neo-nativism, nor is it even “a question of East versus West.” It does not seek to preclude a non-native to engage and contribute to the discourse, but it will not deny the unique position that local scholars hold: that precisely in being located, specific questions emerge. Indeed, if we are to take seriously the idea that area studies is and was “never a 'neutral' expression of knowledge about Southeast Asia,”⁶⁸ it is to realize

⁶⁶ See Iletto “The 'Golden Age' of Southeast Asian Studies,” where he mentions the Burmese scholar, Maung Htin Aung, and the Armenian-Jewish, Russian- and German-speaking scholar” Emmanuel Sarkisyanz, as both staunch critics of Hall. He also mentions the Harvard-trained Filipino historian, Horacio de la Costa, who became the model for “good scholarship” espoused by his mentors, as a contrast to Agoncillo, the scholar from the University of the Philippines. So, while we are familiar with the “golden age” of Southeast Asian studies securely located in Cornell, Iletto introduces the voices of opposition (from Burma and the Philippines, and from other “mandalas” of Southeast Asian studies) that were, in their own right, and despite being labeled as “bad scholarship,” both radical and cutting edge.

⁶⁷ C. Iletto, “Reflections on the Study of Southeast Asian History,” (paper presented at the International Conference on “Southeast Asia in the 20th Century,” University of the Philippines, Diliman, January 30, 1998), 9.

⁶⁸ Carlo Bonura and Laurie J. Sears, “Introduction: Knowledge That Travels in

that, for better or for worse, the production of knowledge of any shape or form is inescapably imbued by our fears and predilections, by our hopes and burning questions. Unfortunately, there is the danger that one forgets her inescapable groundedness to a location, becoming dangerously hypocritical while professing disembodied ideas as universal “truths,” while discrediting others as inconsequential or the product of “bad scholarship.”

As someone reflecting on the problem of philosophy in the context of Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian studies, it becomes inevitable to ponder on the importance of place, or the lack of importance given to it. On the one hand, philosophy's preoccupation with concepts, that is, the entitlement it is given to devote itself to “truths” that cut across the entire spectrum of humanity, has been well simulated and replicated by local philosophers, so much so that the problem of indigenization is rendered irrelevant. And yet, at the same time, in precisely making themselves relevant, philosophers have involved themselves in the debates of their day, as we shall see unfolding in the next chapters.

In the same spirit that Ito had brought fellow historians at a colloquium, so is my writing an attempt at gathering the voices that have pondered on the problem of philosophy and have given its character and role. But while I consecrate my understanding largely to the past of questions that arose, my reflection also hopes to be a point of departure, of further raising questions (and hopefully new questions) that can lead to a reflexive turn.

It is indeed a curious thing that the problem of philosophy in the region has been raised only now. Countless efforts have clearly been made within Southeast Asian studies not only in deploying philosophical concepts for analysis and critique but more importantly, in using the “peculiarities” of the region to disrupt and throw doubt to the

Southeast Asian Studies,” in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*, ed. Laurie J. Sears (Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with NUS Press Singapore, 2007), 19.

calm confidence of “truths” that insist on their universal relevance.⁶⁹ Furthermore, with its obviously “Greek name and European memory,” one would think that philosophy and its practice would have been much earlier discovered as an exciting object of inquiry for Southeast Asianists who are specially involved in reflections on the postcolonial condition. On the other hand, it is not surprising that this matter has been neglected all these years. A lack in interest in knowing what preoccupies our local philosophers may be a combination of two things: on the one hand, a lack of interest in and resignation toward academic philosophy itself, as one finds more exciting ways of dealing with philosophical problems in other fields of study, and on the other, Southeast Asian studies' perception of its goals as perhaps different from those proper to a philosophical inquiry. It is interesting, for example, how Ruth McVey urges to make Southeast Asian studies “more user-friendly to outsiders,” particularly in providing the “background relevant to their own fields of interest, whether that is philosophy or urban planning.”⁷⁰ But Southeast Asian studies can do much more. Its immersion in the field and its demand for proficiency in vernaculars, as well as its emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach, make it a space for a phenomenological study that, I dare say despite the risk of Husserl and the great masters turning in their graves, has never itself been realized in the field of philosophy. The Southeast Asianist's love for the minutest detail may very well be the pebble in philosophy's shoes, or the Socratic pesky fly that constantly buzzes in philosophy's ear when it starts preaching, feeling high and mighty, about the “Great Family of Man.”⁷¹

In daring to raise or be touched by the philosophical questions, and claiming its “right to philosophy” (that is, as Derrida says, to give legitimacy to the unlegitimated, to

⁶⁹ To name some of the most obvious examples, we find in Benedict Anderson a critique of Max Weber's idea of charisma, or Iletto's use of Foucault's poststructuralist concept of discursive formations to critique Modern ideas of time and history, and James Siegel's indebtedness to the philosophy of Freud and Derrida.

⁷⁰ McVey, “Globalization, Marginalization, and The Study of Southeast Asia,” 57.

⁷¹ See Roland Barthes, “The Great Family of Man,” in *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 100-102.

give right to those peripheral voices that philosophy as an institution and academic field of study has banished to the realm of the non-philosophical),⁷² Southeast Asian Studies could easily be a place where Southeast Asian voices could gather to dialogue with voices from other foreign lands. And such work can be important for a philosophizing that on the one hand, refuses to essentialize, but on the other, shows how we are, beyond the walls of our contained spaces, all caught in the same web of time.

In this context, my writing is as much a gathering of the voices of local philosophers as it is a personal attempt at learning to finally speak. To this day, I remember how my former colleague and mentor John Giordano, at a conference in Bandung in 2006, urged his fellow philosophers to have the courage to make space for their own thinking, to examine “the place where their thinking emerges, their own assumptions and mythologies.” The well-known literary critic and theorist Gayatri Spivak was there too, and having sensed the same problem of meekness and muteness, could only reiterate what John had already asserted. It is indeed ironic that within philosophy, whose main legacy is the critical and iconoclastic power of thinking, one finds a serious difficulty in speaking. It is, for me, clearly, none other than the problem that commonly arises among students in relation to their teachers. On the one hand, the student is beholden to the master, and for that, is at the same time always at the risk of never finding his own voice and becoming nothing more than an epigone. The danger exists with regard to every teacher, but more so, with philosophers, who we have come to recognize as the masters par excellence. To this day, when we speak of philosophy in the Philippines, what clearly stands out is the study of ethnophilosophy, of *Weltanschauung*, which on the one hand was important for nation building, but on the other, has severely restricted the limits of our dialogue with the masters. Is it possible to finally get beyond this, and raise the question of how a true dialogue among philosophers (not with philosophers) can occur?

There is a tradition in Thailand called the Wai Khru ritual, where the student pays

⁷² Jacques Derrida, *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I*, trans Jan Plug (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 11.

heed to the “need to repay and acknowledge.” “Designed to honor the spirits invoked in performance or art, the chain of teachers who have passed on this knowledge, and finally the gods who created these artistic forms,”⁷³ the ritual is a constant effacement of the student's ego, a remembering of the lineage of authority while at the same time reaffirming the student's status as a receptacle of the wisdom that flows from his teachers. Often, this is seen as the perfect explanation for why Southeast Asians “tend to be passive and reluctant to challenge their teachers.”⁷⁴ Such explanation, however, runs the risk of being too simplistic. On the one hand, we easily assume that thinkers in the West have an easier time at challenging their teachers, given their tradition of critique. And yet, we find that Derrida himself was tormented by the need to speak, in relation to his mentor Michel Foucault, with whom he “retains the consciousness of an admiring and grateful disciple:”

Starting to enter into dialogue in the world, that is, starting to answer back, [the disciple] always feels 'caught in the act,' like the 'infant' who, by definition and as his name indicates, cannot speak and above all must not answer back. And when, as in the case here, the dialogue is in danger of being taken—incorrectly—as a challenge, the disciple knows that he alone finds himself already challenged by the master's voice within him that precedes his own. He feels himself indefinitely challenged, or rejected or accused; as a disciple, he is challenged by the master who speaks within him and before him, to reproach him for making this challenge and to reject it in advance, having elaborated it before him; and having interiorized the master, he is also challenged by the disciple that he himself is. This interminable unhappiness of the disciple perhaps stems from the fact that he does not yet know—or is still concealing from himself—that the master, like real life, may always be absent. The

⁷³ John T. Giordano, “Teacher’s Heads,” in *Prajna Vihara* 12, no. 2 (2011): 127.

⁷⁴ Giordano, “Teacher’s Heads,” 126.

disciple must break the glass, or better the mirror, the reflection, his infinite speculation on the master. And start to speak.⁷⁵

It is the same psychological struggle, the attempt to break one's silence in order to discover one's own voice that we have seen in the relation between Ilustrados and their Mother Spain. “*Il n'y a pas plus d'enfants,*” as Blumentritt would say of “the native who had been asleep, [but] stunned by the distance to which he was relegated by the paternal government, abandons his sleep and rises to salute his Mother Spain....” Indeed, it is precisely this courage to speak that Pramoedya admires, and for this reason, regards the Filipinos as themselves great teachers who can instruct Indonesians how to handle their own masters.

In listening to the voices of Filipino philosophers (both legitimate and unlegitimated ones), this study hopes to ponder on the antinomies that arise in this place we call philosophy—the tensions between heritage and critique, between the nation and the foreign, between teacher and student.

In exploring the intellectual landscape of academic philosophy in the Philippines, I examine the tensions between the desire for universal truths and the engagement in globally dominant philosophical traditions and the search for self, local relevance, and national identity. Entangled in issues of politics and religion are recurring themes of language, translation, and the localization of philosophical ideas. Chapter One, as we have seen, is a preparatory reflection on how the philosophical preoccupation in the Philippines has been, in the context of nationalism, one of a search for roots, revealing a feeling of exile, which is here not merely the unhappy consequence of colonial experience, but the existential human condition of always having to move between the self and the foreign. As I have argued, only from this understanding can we fully appreciate the complexities of our philosophers' nationalist

⁷⁵ Jacques Derrida, “Cogito and the History of Madness,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36-37.

fervor: that along with their love for their people and their language is a generosity and openness to the other, to the foreign, a relationship which is best elucidated by the bond and tensions between the teacher and the student.

In Chapter Two, the journey through the landscape of Filipino philosophy begins with my own teacher, Father Ferriols, S.J. The chapter discusses his involvement in the 1960s Filipinization movement in the Ateneo de Manila University, situating the event in a broader historical context. While many have interpreted his pioneering effort to write and teach philosophy in Filipino as no more than a radical opposition against American cultural imperialism, Ferriols calls for a more nuanced understanding: that while he asserts a return to one's language and culture, it is also a rejection of an ethnocentric position that forgets the goodness of the other.

As an interesting contrast to Ferriols, Chapter Three introduces the work and thought of the logical positivist Ricardo Pascual, whose atheism had stirred a controversy that escalated to a charge of national treason. Unlike Ferriols who found inspiration in Catholic ideas, Pascual, as both his life and work would prove, would clearly demonstrate the difficult relationship between religion and intellectual autonomy, underlining the tensions between liberalism and the conservative forces of Catholicism. But despite their differences in passions and style of thinking, Ferriols and Pascual, inspired by their teachers, painstakingly sought to give their people a voice, even if it meant speaking out of place and defying the people from whom they had learned.

While Chapters Two and Three are focused explorations, primarily on events that took place in the 1950s and 1960s, Chapter Four takes a broader view, exploring the desires and frustrations of philosophers in their search for Filipino philosophy, a long-standing preoccupation which began in the 1970s and has persisted to the present. In analyzing their philosophical discourse, I unravel the hopes and fetishes that have led many of these scholars to embrace the Western philosophical tradition, projecting an ideal that has caused an undervaluation of the work and efforts of fellow

philosophers. Here, I interject my voice, in the hope of rehabilitating our understanding of their work, and contextualizing their efforts as responses to socio-political issues of their time.

Chapter Five continues along this exploration and analysis of philosophical discourse, but now focusing on the work of philosophers who have sought to challenge and overcome the limits of the Western philosophical tradition. Here, I return to the works of Ferriols, exploring his idea of *meron* and his ingenious practice of translation, and discuss the significant philosophical contributions of Albert Alejo S.J.'s analysis of *loob*. Despite their wisdom and openness, however, I also argue how a certain idea of humanism (*pagpapakatao*) has caused in them an intolerance for anything that transgresses what they believe is properly philosophical. Here, I bring in the voices of social scientists who have equally concerned themselves with the fate of the philosophical discipline in the country, and, in their emphasis on the importance of history and context, have critiqued the essentializing and universalizing tendencies of philosophical concepts. In exploring the ideas behind Vicente Rafael's semiotic analysis of *loob*, Virgilio Enriquez's critique of the token of use of language, and Zeus Salazar's practice of translation and *pantayong pananaw*, I hope to show how the contributions of the social sciences can offer a veritable critique of the philosophical discipline.

Finally, the Epilogue ventures (further) beyond academic philosophy, its distinctions, assumptions, and desires, not only to suggest possibilities for further research into Filipino thought and ways of going beyond its limits and prejudices, but also to remind ourselves of a larger world of thought, within which (Filipino) philosophy is located.

Chapter Two

Father Ferriols and the Filipinization Movement in the Ateneo

In exploring the intellectual landscape of academic philosophy in the Philippines, within the context of nationalism, I begin by telling the story of the struggle of a philosopher who became one of the most influential and inspiring teachers I had ever known. Father Roque Jamias Ferriols, S.J., born August 16, 1924, became a pioneering force in the Filipinization movement that radically transformed the Jesuit University, Ateneo de Manila in the 1960s. In his struggles we find an expression not only of the nationalist fervor of a people seeking self-knowledge and self-governance but also a philosophical yearning for the universal, and an embracing openness towards the other. It is from the tension between these two desires that the postcolonial encounter becomes not so much an outright rejection of the foreign as the painful and awkward process when the disciple, learning well from his master, awakens from his intellectual slumber and begins to find his own voice. It is the same awakening that stirred in the heart of this Filipino Jesuit philosopher, who in his teachings provided the space that urged students to have the courage to think for themselves.

A Personal Encounter with Father Ferriols

The first time I met Father Ferriols, or Padre Roque (or simply “Padre,” as his students like to call him), I was a sophomore majoring in Political Science, and had gone to the Philosophy department to submit my shifting application. As I handed my form to the secretary, Padre was standing nearby, and being a curious fellow, asked me who I was. At that time, I had not known that this unassuming professor in folded jeans and slippers was an “institution,” one of the pillars of Ateneo education, and therefore, though he himself would never admit, was one of those so-called “big shots” (which Padre, giggling naughtily in class, literally translated in Filipino as “*malaking*

putok”).⁷⁶ Giving my name, he asked if I was related to the late Antonio de Joya who had made a name in the advertising business. My father had once mentioned him, but other than sharing the same *apelyido* or surname, there was no relation whatsoever. Until perhaps that moment when Padre told me that my command of Filipino was much better than my late grand uncle’s. At the end of that brief, albeit auspicious, conversation, the course of which was spoken entirely in Filipino, this eccentric guru reassured me with words so calm and certain that they weighed prophetic, saying, *bagay ka rito* (“you fit in here”).

In retrospect, that first encounter had already been an initiation. In the Jesuit university called Ateneo, Ferriols was our Socrates and much more; and he was completely in character when he gave me, in his usual prophetic tone, a glimpse of my past and future. But in that brief episode, he was also teaching me the importance of language, an exercise in assuming the quiet and unpretentious disposition of speaking in one’s mother tongue—bringing the conversation beyond titles and status, to its barest essence: a meeting of persons, of *tao sa tao*.

If Ferriols remains indefatigable in his commitment to philosophize in Filipino, it is precisely to help his students become open to the gift of encounter that only until recently, at the age of eighty-nine and struggling with Parkinson’s disease, he continued to inch his way to the classroom, resolved in his commitment to teach. In all the six modules I had taken with him, I came to observe how he persevered in nurturing the vernacular, harnessing its philosophical potential, and demanded from his students no less.

In Junior year, philosophy majors are often asked to choose to take their first course subjects either in Filipino or in English. While it was not made explicit, it was not just a choice of subject or teacher, but *a choice of a path* altogether. Not that it meant that one was forever fixed to a particular language of philosophizing; most of us

⁷⁶ “Malaking putok” is a literal translation of “big shot,” but “putok” is also a colloquial expression for an “explosion” of bad smell, of body odor.

would remain bilingual. But it was most often the case that the readings would be different for the English and Filipino classes, that the latter would often use translations of Western philosophical texts or use Ferriols's work as textbooks. Philosophizing in Filipino meant deliberately acquainting and immersing oneself in a heritage that was not just Greek but characteristically Filipino. Unfortunately, though Ferriols's legacy continues to be undeniably vital to Ateneo's philosophical culture, it is rarely seen as philosophy's place to probe or inquire into the social and historical context in which his ideas arose.

Filipinization Movement in the Ateneo

To better understand Ferriols's desire to filipinize philosophy, it is necessary to step out of the parameters that are deemed proper to the philosophical. His struggle was very much a part of a larger socio-political discourse. The 1960s and '70s were a time in the history of Philippine politics when a number of student movements had erupted. Although inspired by the international student activism against America's war in Vietnam, there were also "homegrown causes" behind the student unrest, such as the tuition increases that were felt to be unwarranted, as well as the pervading presence of American influence in political affairs. The first student movements were clearly communist in their ideological leanings, and their demonstrations were mainly an attempt to preserve the national identity against what was perceived to be the "powerful onslaughts of American cultural imperialism," which exercised a significant influence on the education system.⁷⁷

In response to the growing political awareness, five Ateneans published an article on November 27, 1968, in the university newspaper, *The Guidon*.⁷⁸ Entitled

⁷⁷ Stephen Henry S. Totanes, "Student Activism in the Pre-Martial Law Era: A Historical Overview," in *Down From The Hill: Ateneo de Manila in the First Ten Years Under Martial Law, 1972-1982*, eds. Cristina Jayme Montiel and Susan Evangelista (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2005).

⁷⁸ The authors of this article, dubbed as "The Big Five," were composed of Jose Luis

“Down from the Hill,” the paper cleverly invoked a line from the school hymn, which sang into the heart and mind of every Atenean the noble task that comes with the privilege of receiving a Jesuit education. “Down from the hill, down to the world I go”—rung those solemn words that reminded every Atenean of the altruistic descent from his lofty abode. And to seal his fate, while beating his fist in the air to the cadence of words, he declares emphatically that “this is the A-teneo way.”

The five young provocateurs, dubbed “The Big Five,” were, however, far from convinced that the song was more than just a catchy tune. To them, the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus, as well as the Ateneo de Manila University, the bastion of Jesuit education, were as complicit as the Philippine Church they served, in allowing “American political patterns. . .to reinforce and legitimize in a modern democratic framework the hierarchical power structure created under the aegis of Spain.” There was that proud claim that Ateneo was a “training ground for true Filipino leaders,” but for this five young men, this statement was nothing but a “preposterous myth.” For what Ateneo was in fact producing were graduates who, having been indoctrinated in a Western type of education and a “luxury-kind of living found in Makati or Forbes Park,” were only keen to perpetuate the status quo and safeguard the interests of the “moneyed elite class.”⁷⁹ Jesuits were thus deemed to exacerbate, instead of giving resolution to, the socio-economic injustices that have escalated to a “revolutionary situation.”

It was, however, precisely because these Ateneans recognized the importance of the Jesuits’ “educational apostolate,” and the latter’s potential to steer the course of the university towards revolutionary change, that they strongly felt that a critique was in order.

Alcuaz, Gerardo Esguerra, Emmanuel Lacaba, Alfredo Salanga, and Leonardo Montemayor.

⁷⁹ Leonardo Q. Montemayor, “Essence of Filipinization--Respond to People’s Needs,” *The Guidon*, January 24, 1975, 2.

We find the Philippine province of the Society of Jesus existing under privileged conditions in our society. The Jesuits' way of life, organizational structure, and the institutions that they maintain are totally dependent on the power elite, so much so that their orientation and services appear to be directed mainly toward the power elite. The Society of Jesus, then, must, like the Philippine Church, identify herself with the oppressed masses. The Society cannot maintain its privileged position in society if it must be truly Filipino, and Christian, and therefore relevant to the Philippine situation. And its institution can only be as relevant as the Society is relevant.⁸⁰

But how was this relevance going to be achieved? For these five young men, Filipinization was the key, the banner under which everything would be made relevant to the Philippine situation. Clearly, it was an assertion that unabashedly pointed the blame of self-alienation to a pervasive intrusion of foreign elements; for in promoting an education with a Western orientation, and maintaining a university guided by standards of Western universities, the Ateneo was deemed isolated in its ivory tower, irrelevant to the needs of the people, unable to even awaken in its own students the desire to nurture a shared identity with their fellow Filipinos. And so, while cautiously still "acknowledging the unimpeachable character of [the American Jesuits'] good intentions," the manifesto pointed out unequivocally that the root cause of the problem lay in "the preponderant American presence in the Society and in the University."⁸¹

The revolutionary situation thus called for a "spirit of renewal," a return to things "Filipino," which meant weaning the Society and the university off "their overdependence on the neo-colonial elite and from the irrelevant heritage of colonial, Western education." To ensure this, structural changes needed to be put in place. The Atenean had to be more in tune with the Philippine situation by ensuring the relevance of academic subjects to the "revolutionary situation." Consequently, students began to

⁸⁰ Jose Luis Alcuaz et al., "Down from the Hill," *The Guidon*, November 27, 1968, 3.

⁸¹ Alcuaz et al., "Down From the Hill, 3.

question why eighteen units of English were required in the core curriculum while a single unit in Filipino was not even being offered; or why the Ateneans were taking a six-unit course in Western history but only one Philippine history course (“Rizal and the Emergence of the Filipino Nation”) which was a meager three units.⁸² In light of such queries, a “drastic reorientation of the present curriculum” was recommended: not only that Theology be taught in the light of Vatican II⁸³ teachings and its emphasis on addressing the Philippine situation, but that courses such as the Introduction to the Social Sciences be changed into a module on Philippine Social Problems, and English Literature be replaced by a course on Philippine Literature in English and Tagalog.⁸⁴ Also, with regard to teaching crucial subjects such as economics, history, and political science, it was suggested that these courses be taught “entirely by Filipinos.”⁸⁵ Leonardo Montemayor, one of the authors of “Down From the Hill,” expresses his uneasiness with regard to a Rizal course taught by American professors. He explains that while his objection does not imply “that foreign historians cannot be fair and objective in their treatment of Philippine history,” one cannot deny that “the teaching of Philippine history, and the histories of all nations for that matter, is not a mere judgment of the past from a detached, high-altitude seat.” This is why “we Filipinos must learn to view our history from our own point of view.”⁸⁶

⁸² Leonardo Q. Montemayor, “Incidentally: A Filipino View,” *The Guidon*, September 4, 1968, 7.

⁸³ In the attempt to make the Church more relevant to the times, Pope John XXIII called for the Second Vatican Council to convene in 1962. One of the results is the idea of inculturation. This will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

⁸⁴ Alcuaz, et al. “Down From The Hill,” 3.

⁸⁵ “As it is committed to the teaching of theology because it is Catholic, the Ateneo should also teach Filipiniana or Philippine Ways because it is Filipino. Filipiniana should become as much a part of the core curriculum and may include such subjects as Philippine Language, Philippine Literature, Philippine History. As theology can show the implications of Faith and the subsequent need for the formation of [a]postles, Filipiniana can show the implications of nationalism and the subsequent need for dedicated Filipino citizens.” “Council Position Paper: The University Should Cultivate an Appreciation of Things Filipino,” *The Guidon*, May 24, 1969, 3.

⁸⁶ Montemayor, “A Filipino View,” 7.

Recommendations stated in the manifesto also included 1) that the American Jesuits currently occupying administrative positions be replaced by Filipino counterparts; while there were claims that a “shortage of manpower resources” existed within the Society, the authors of the manifesto insisted on the presence of qualified Filipino Jesuits, and regarded it as a necessary “symbolical gesture of the university’s commitment to Filipinization”; and 2) that physical infrastructures be reevaluated, to keep them modest, arguing that the point is not further expansion but “to use existing facilities available to redirect the student to a proper social orientation.”⁸⁷

Interestingly, towards the end of the manifesto, the authors appealed to the “right to make [one’s] own mistakes.” It was a statement that clearly betrayed a sense of awareness that the process of Filipinization, although necessary, was not without serious risks. Under the auspices of the American Jesuits, the Atenean had always been privileged with an education that secured him a comfortable position in the economic ladder. But in a revolutionary situation, was this what mattered? Committed as they were to bring the Atenean from his ivory tower to the masses, they wrote with poignant, youthful idealism:

It may be good to restate that we are not seeking to develop the Ateneo on a level with Western universities. Nor are we primarily seeking graduates capable of being accepted in the best graduate schools abroad but instead graduates who are capable of solving Philippine problems based on Philippine standards and conditions.⁸⁸

Skeptical Voices

Not everyone was sympathetic to the cause of Filipinization. Although the “Down From the Hill” article was applauded for its excellent analysis of the Philippine situation, some felt that in presenting concrete acts, “it fell flat,” and worse, devolved

⁸⁷ Alcuaz, et al. “Down From the Hill,” 3.

⁸⁸ Alcuaz, et al. “Down From The Hill,” 3.

into a “‘Yankee Go Home’ movement”⁸⁹ despite the authors’ avowal that their recommendations were “not evocative of a racist mentality.” The proposals that were laid out in the article were described as “extreme suggestions,” expressions of an “extreme position,” that a certain editor made clear were of course ideas that the majority of students did not subscribe to; for this great majority knew only “too well that such a cure can well turn out to be worse than the disease.” Others, still, were shocked, even appalled, by the lack of gratitude (*utang na loob*) to “the immeasurable good that American educators have done” for the country.⁹⁰

There were professors who freely expressed their skepticism, suggesting that such recommendations were naive (for indeed, how can we be sure that the Filipinos who would serve as replacements are not “foreigners in *kayumangging kaligatan* clothing?”),⁹¹ and that at best, Filipinization would lead to a provincial way of thinking. Not just because it fails to realize that “some of the best nationalists...are foreign-educated and are foreigners,” but because this nationalist fervor has made us blind to the need for internationalism, that is, a vision of greatness that envisages the country’s future “from the perspective of the international world.”⁹² For Political Scientist, Maria Montelibano, the real issue was that “Ateneans [felt] guilty over their inability to communicate with the ‘madlang people [masses],’” and foolishly believed that their image problem could be solved by simply replacing the American head with a Filipino.

Another concern was raised by the American Jesuit philosophy professor, Father Joseph O’Hare, S.J., who argued that the demand that only Filipinos “be allowed to teach value subjects” had led to a policy based on racial criterion instead of professional competence. He cites the unfortunate example of Father Nicholas Cushner

⁸⁹ Ramon V. Puno, “How ‘Down from the Hill’ Launched a Fruitful Dialogue on Filipinization,” *The Guidon*, December 11, 1968, 3.

⁹⁰ Rodolfo V. Puno, “The Universalists,” *The Guidon*, December 11, 1968, 3.

⁹¹ Literally, *kayumanggi* means brown and refers to the color of the skin, while *kaligatan* refers to rice that is deemed perfectly cooked for having a rather sticky consistency.

⁹² Maria Teresa Montelibano, “Lady Professor Wary of Filipinization; Claims the Ateneo is Too Provincial,” *The Guidon*, January 16, 1969, 2.

and Father John Schumacher, two excellent American Jesuit History professors, who would no longer be teaching as the result of complaints that began some years ago. It appeared that some were displeased about Americans teaching Philippine history, deeming it “a violation to the spirit of Filipinization.” Although O’Hare makes it clear that he “appreciates the objective” behind Filipinization, recognizing that the “large number of foreign faculty members does represent the colonial and missionary past of the Ateneo,” and that Filipinization is an indispensable task that only Filipinos can accomplish, he is wary of how this racially exclusive policy poses a serious threat to academic freedom. On the one hand, he acknowledges that foreigners, no matter how much they are endeared to the Philippines, will always and must remain outsiders; but on the other, he is critical of a Filipinization that impatiently expedites instead of allowing a “natural process” to take course. For O’Hare, what was perhaps most disappointing was that among the people who were so keen on purging the Americans, were academics who seem to have lost sight of an important aspect of the University; who, in their impatience—which O’Hare critically observes as characteristic of the “lifestyle of student activists,” have forgotten that the University should be “a place where ideas can be exchanged freely, where different viewpoints can clash.” And it is in this regard that the foreigner becomes vital in providing a different perspective.⁹³

In response to this statement, however, English Professor Emmanuel Torres argues that given the long-standing “colonial hang-up” that has forged the Ateneo curriculum into “concepts and realities of the West [rather] than to those of Asia and the Philippines,” and the irrelevant education that has ensued, there is among students, quite understandably, an impatience, a feeling that “Filipinization is not happening fast enough.” Thus, the real issue becomes one of time: that is, “how soon can the Ateneo act in accordance with its express[ed] belief in the need to filipinize itself as completely as possible?” And while it is true that a foreigner, with “a certain detachment and

⁹³ Joseph O’Hare, S.J., “A Racially Exclusive Policy Threat to Academic Freedom, *The Guidon*, August 4, 1970, 5.

wonder,” can provide “value courses” with perspectives that could well complement the Filipino view, what in this particular case presents a real hindrance to the cosmopolitanism that is much desired as the goal and *raison d’être* of the university is a “predominantly, if not exclusively, American” point of view. So ingrained in students are certain Western habits of thinking that the first step to Filipinization is to unlearn them, that is, to de-colonize, and specifically, to de-Americanize. What O’Hare, therefore, does not understand is that, in a situation where the “American presence” itself poses a hindrance to Filipinization, his proposal for a “softer” approach that allows transformation to take a natural, albeit longer, course, would simply not do. What seemed to be the spirit of those times, what students clamored for, was an unequivocal and militant approach towards this foreign power. Naturally, as Torres adds, such urgent need to de-colonize would perhaps be “less clear to an American than a Filipino teacher or even administrator,” and if he does comprehend, it would only be “with great difficulty”; for “he cannot certainly understand the need with the same existential degree of percipience and passion that a Filipino would be able to bring to it.”⁹⁴

Different Sensibilities

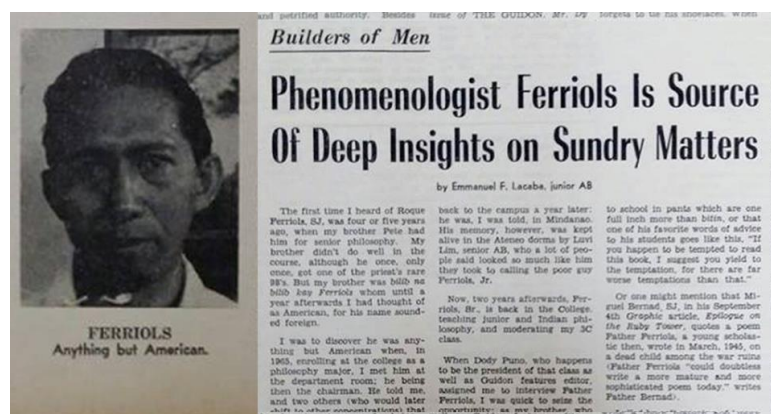


Illustration 1: Emmanuel Lacaba’s article on Ferriols, published in *The Guidon*, on October 16 1968.

⁹⁴ Emmanuel Torres, “The American Presence--Hindrance to Filipinization,” *The Guidon*, August 4, 1970, 6.

Ferriols shared the same sentiment exactly. And as one of the more vocal professors who emphatically advocated the Filipinization movement, he became a controversial figure. Not so much because his ideas were unique to him; rather, it was because he dared to speak from the position of a Filipino Jesuit. Like Torres, though long before the dispute with O'Hare, Ferriols had already expressed his reservations regarding the foreigner's ability to understand the inner workings of the Filipino soul.

One who was born in a foreign land and grew up among foreigners cannot be sensitive to the nuances of our present cultural crisis. He cannot appreciate our rich heritage from within. This is not a stigma on the foreigner: merely a fact about him. He is, as a matter of fact, incapable of developing a Filipino culture. The Ateneo has neither faced nor acted on this fact.⁹⁵

In another article, Ferriols explains further the incomparability between Filipinos and Americans, and how "American Jesuits, though no fault of their own, have developed a set of sensitivities which are very different from that of Filipinos." Living for many years in America for his graduate studies and tertianship, Ferriols draws from his own experience living in Harlem, observing how the black man was often baffled by the ways of his white brother. Or how his own Jesuit teacher, Father Mulry, despite his good intentions, was really never understood by his Filipino students when he talked about "social justice" in English. At the bottom of it all was an essential difference determined by the language with which one is born, a difference that comes out in the way that "some insights... are expressible only in a certain language."⁹⁶

But how would these insights emerge if the Atenean were being taught to unlearn his own mother tongue? For Ferriols, what was most alarming was that "the average Atenean could speak the most fluent English; but when it came to speaking his

⁹⁵ Ramon V. Puno and Vicente A. Cabanero, "A Call for Cultural Realism," *The Guidon*, December 11, 1968, 3. Quoted in Leonardo Q. Montemayor, "Our Westernized View of Filipino Nationalism," *The Guidon*, January 30, 1969.

⁹⁶ Puno, "Fruitful Dialogue on Filipinization," 3.

native tongue, he was greatly wanting.” And it was precisely this (mis)education that trained Ateneans for a very specific sector in society, while being unattentive to less prestigious sectors that equally needed attention and development. Because of this elitist mentality, Ferriols felt that the administrative structure of the University was in dire need of a reorientation.

I think [the structure] should be reoriented in the direction of more cultural realism because the present set-up is being used to perpetuate a cultural island on Philippine soil. By this I mean that the frames of reference within which the Ateneo operates are to a great extent bodily transplants from the United States. Even the way English is used is full of American meanings. It is very hard to express what one really wants to express. And in a discussion with American Jesuits, they have the advantage because they are using their own language, *and they can always in all kinds of subtle ways misunderstand--whether deliberately or indeliberately I do not know--what a Filipino using English really wants to say.*⁹⁷

And indeed, it seemed that Ferriols himself was a victim of such misunderstanding. In an interview, he recounts how troubled those times were, how there existed a rift even between the Americans and the Filipinos in the Society. The American Jesuits had blamed him, along with Father Jose Cruz, who became the chair of the Philosophy department, for inciting the students to challenge the Americans. With regard to these accusations, Ferriols first of all denies, contrary to misconceptions, that Filipinization began with him. What he had then, he admits, was merely the intention to filipinize, “but the students, I did not need to tell them....” The desire, after all, was already “in the air” (*nasa hangin ang pagnanais*). Furthermore, it seemed that some of his fellow American Jesuits simply could not or did not want to understand

⁹⁷ Puno and Cabanero, “Call for Cultural Realism,” 3. My italics.

what he was trying to do, and immediately assumed that his attempts to filipinize was an assault against them.

But I was not fighting the Americans. I encouraged [students] to be Filipino. And if you are to be Filipino, there are American ways to which you cannot agree. Not because you don't want the American, but because you want the Filipino.⁹⁸ [2.1]

Regardless of Ferriols's non-aggressive intentions, his actions and suggestions inevitably did cause ripples that disturbed the calm. On December 11th, 1968, two weeks after the controversial manifesto had appeared, *The Guidon* published an interview with Ferriols, which, judging from the editors elated tone, was a momentous victory for the school paper. For some time, *The Guidon* had been trying to establish itself as "an effective forum for the much-desired dialogue among students, professors, and administrators" regarding the matter on Filipinization. Much to their disappointment, however, "certain usually vocal American Jesuits" refused to be engaged, i.e. to be interviewed and to clarify their views in *The Guidon*. One Jesuit professor even bluntly remarked that faculty members had no business to contribute to the school paper.⁹⁹ Ferriols's consent to have his own words appear in print, therefore, provided a precedent that gave *The Guidon* the legitimation it needed to establish its

⁹⁸ Roque Ferriols, S.J., interview, 2009. *Magpaka-* is an affix that creates a verb that expresses a goal, making great efforts to actualize what is conveyed by the root word. See Virgilio S. Almario, ed. *UP Diksiyonaryong Filipino: Binagong Edisyon* (Pasig: Sentro ng Wikang Filipino-Diliman and Anvil Publishing Inc., 2010), 737. It can be argued that *magpaka-Filipino* could very well be translated "to become Filipino," and this would capture the processual character of the term. But "to become Filipino" also implies that a person is not yet Filipino, which is where the translation becomes gravely inadequate. Thus, I have chosen to translate the phrase "to be Filipino," italicizing the word "be" as a way to express intensification. In his book, *Pambungad sa Metapisika* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), Ferriols calls to our attention an adage which uses the same affix: *Madali maging tao, ika nga, mahirap magpakatao*. ("It is easy to be human, they say, (but) difficult to *be* human.") Ferriols then further explains that while we are already human, we are also, at the same time, not yet human. Thus the need to strive to strengthen and deepen our humanity. With a similar explanation, one can understand what Ferriols meant by *magpaka-Filipino*.

⁹⁹ Antonio T. Carpio, "The Guidon: For Students Alone?" *The Guidon*, November 27, 1968, 6.

pivotal role in campus politics, and the reputation of being more than a student tabloid. Consequently, beaming with pride, *The Guidon* announced that henceforth, it would “welcome future contributions from the faculty on Filipinization,” emphasizing “that it should serve as a forum for students, as well as faculty members.” Furthermore, while others were quick to judge “Down From the Hill” as extreme and naive, and criticize it for not providing viable solutions, Ferriols was unabashedly supportive. Recognizing the manifesto as the “reasoned expression of a point of view,” Ferriols argued that although it did not give clear answers (perhaps it was never meant to do so), it did present an “exciting prospect.” He reminded people that while “we cannot expect every study to cover every single thing,” “what it has is worth trying to learn from [and] what it has left out is for us to explore into.”¹⁰⁰

And indeed, Ferriols himself plunged into this “unknown” called Filipinization. His idea of a “massive operation” of the movement was, first and foremost, linguistic. He urged the use of Filipino languages as the medium for research on Filipino culture, and himself initiated the first attempts in the university to teach a course in the vernacular, clearly a departure from the proud American legacy of English instruction. Unfortunately, the Americans, at least some of them, could not grasp the reason behind such efforts, and as Ferriols himself would later explain, were greatly displeased, only seeing in his actions a rejection of what they perceived as their great contribution to the Ateneo, which was to painstakingly mold the latter in the image and likeness of an American college.

Americanisms

In the interest of fashioning the Ateneo into an “American-style college,” the American Jesuits decided to make the use of the English language an imperative. *The Guidon*, which, as Ferriols kept reiterating, constantly won the best journalist

¹⁰⁰ Puno and Cabanero, “Cultural Realism,” 3.

production among all the American colleges, was proof that the Americans were quite effective in their scheme. But this success came with a price.

As a young scholastic in the 1950s, Ferriols recalls how the language rule did not only impose the use of English but also harshly forbade the use of other vernaculars. In an open letter to the first Filipino rector and president of Ateneo, Fr. Pacifico Ortiz, an alumnus by the name of Antonio C. Abaya reveals to us exactly how this rule was enforced. In the letter, Abaya describes the Ateneo of his day (1947-1956), remembering how this “American university” was “bent on fostering and perpetuating a colonial and feudal mentality among its students.” Language was clearly at the core of this “process of miseducation,” alienating generations of Ateneans in being taught to reject their own language and being kept ignorant of Philippine literature and propagandist writings, while made to embrace with passion “the poetry of Horace and Virgil, the tragedies of Shakespeare and the epistles of St. Paul.” Abaya particularly remembers how during the deanship of Father Delaney, students

were forbidden to speak any language except English. Each time anyone was caught uttering a word of Tagalog or Visayan or Ilocano, he was punished by being made to stand in the midday sun for one hour.¹⁰¹

When Ferriols came back from America in the ‘60s, the rule had already been abolished. But Western habits of thinking lingered and Ferriols found himself wrestling with Americans and fellow Filipinos alike.

Certainly, Ferriols was not the only professor who was wary of the pervading Americanism in the Ateneo. In fact, a few months before the interview with Ferriols was published, and even before the “Down from the Hill” controversy had erupted, English professor Rolando S. Tinio wrote a satire chastising his Filipino colleagues for favoring English over the Filipino language. Whether they were aware of it or not, their bias was dangerously nurturing a cultural elitism that discriminated against those who

¹⁰¹ Antonio C. Abaya, “Open Letter to Father Ortiz,” *The Guidon*, October 28, 1969.

spoke or sounded a bit different. Tinio narrates how Father Donelan, at a symposium, appealed to writers, publishers and English teachers to evaluate the fate of English as a medium of instruction: given the perturbing decline of English proficiency among Ateneans, would Ateneo not be better off using Filipino instead, and that way, even boast at pioneering in such an effort? Writing in perfectly broken English, Tinio taunts the seriousness by which American Jesuits have fought the battle against “poor writing,” making deductions and failing students for grammatical mistakes, as well as their consternation for the bad grammar that afflicts even Theology, Economics, Biology and Math teachers. Tinio writes

Once upon a time *siguro* [perhaps], when almost all teachers are Americans and almost all are from Ateneo grade school and high school and come from English-speaking families, Ateneans was really tops in English. Later on, when only few are non-Ateneans and have different backgrounds, its possible still to flunk students in any course just because of crooked English. But now, impossible already. Even many faculty members do not speak very correct. Many students from provinces even if they have high IQ have poor backgrounds in writing and literature and have difficult problems in class. How is it possible to flunk them just for their mistake in verb agreements and wrong tense. *Tutál* [In any case], you can surely understand them *naman* [anyway] when they write exams even if many errors. When they talk in recitation, and even in public speaking, you also can understand them perfectly no matter how many wrong pronunciations they make. Sometimes *pa nga* [even], they have more better ideas than students who speak English like Americans. Of course they feel *diyaha* [embarrassed] because their classmates laugh at their mistakes so many do not want to raise their hand any more. And those who mastered English get to be considered more brighter students.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Rolando S. Tinio, “Kuro-kurong Ligaw: Ang ‘Di Mahal ang Wika Pag Matinik ay Malalim,” *The Guidon*, October 2, 1968, 6.

From Tinio's comic elocution emerges the truth about a certain discrimination, one that ingrains the idea that if one wishes to appear educated, "it cannot be denied," one would have to "know English very much...to speak English like Americans." And as English teachers themselves kept repeating, "to be good in English, you also have to have the English culture, which is the purpose of our education." And not to worry, "we can still have Filipino soul even in English." The local writers, too, proposed to continue the use of English, not just because they express themselves more in this language but, for practical reasons, in order to publish abroad and have an international readership. And so, as Tinio narrates, the English teachers promised to "try every thing to improve the English of students," clearly offended by Donelan's suggestion which was quite conveniently forgotten: "Imagine, suggesting we give up English which is second nature to us already."

This elitist sensibility or "cultural island" that the American Jesuits were nurturing was, however, not merely linguistic. A phrase that was commonly heard from critics of the Atenean's elitist ways was "maka-Forbes" ("Forbes-like"), referring to the very posh gated community at the heart of the business district of Makati. Aside from Forbes being literally the lavish venue of the junior-senior prom, it signified the kind of mentality that alienated the Atenean from the people.

Ferriols was very good at exposing this elitism in its many forms. In class, lecturing on primitive religions, he would refer to phallic symbols and fertility rites, which all sounded in Filipino a lot more vulgar than their English names, and which, of course, always made students shriek and blush with embarrassment. Ferriols never tired of uttering these "obscurities" (T..., t...!), and it seemed like he enjoyed it too!¹⁰³

See, it's your Forbes-Parkish mentality. To people in Tundo and in other corners, that's nothing. That's the problem with Ateneo education. You have

¹⁰³ Roberto Javier, "Alaws Stir: Ututang-Dila, Nagmamantika," *The Guidon*, August 21, 1969, 4. "T..., t...!" refers to "titi," which is the word for "penis" in Filipino.

become puritanical. You have lost the down-to-earth character of your true language.¹⁰⁴ [2.2]

It is also told that once, Ferriols was asked why he chose to teach Philosophy in Filipino. To his interlocutor's dismay, Ferriols angrily blurted out: *PUTANG INA MO!* ("Your mother's a bitch!") Then suddenly, regaining calm and composure, he asks: *Mas effective, hindi ba?* ("That was more effective, was it not?")

But this elitism was not merely shaping puritanical sensibilities;¹⁰⁵ it was also deemed to have an influence in the way Ateneans were perceiving people outside their "social club." One of the infrastructures that became the object of scrutiny in the '60s was the university's Physical Plant. On January 12th, 1970, *The Guidon* published an open letter addressed to the Physical Plant Administrator, Father William Hayes, S.J. It objected to the "strict policing" that required taxi drivers to surrender their identification cards at the gates upon entering the Ateneo. The policy, according to administration officials, was meant to reduce the number of theft cases in campus. The writer quickly points out that such regulation, which clearly discriminates against taxi drivers and profiles them as potential thieves, only amplifies the image of the Ateneo as an "elitist country club." But then again, the Ateneo could be worse, the writer quips, since "not even Forbes does our thing."¹⁰⁶

A month later, another article was published with regard to the same issue, but now with a less phlegmatic tone. "Discrimination Again!" the title squealed, protesting the memorandum sent out by Fr. Hayes to "limit the entrance of cars without stickers and taxis to 7:30 [a.m.?] - 8:30 p.m. at gate 2 daily." This time, the reason given was

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ But was it? It was well known that the "deplorable fact of Ateneo education" was that one's skill in English writing and speaking "especially if it approaches American *linggo*, [was] equated to intelligence, sociability, and worth as a person." Thus, it was not so much that in saying *putang-ina* or *buwisit*, one was offending moral sensibilities, but that saying "bitch" and "God damn it" was more fashionable. See Rigoberto D. Tiglao, "The *Guidon* Should Use Pilipino," *The Guidon*, January 26, 1970, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Jose Antonio Santos, Jr. "Incidentally: Not Even Forbes Does Our Thing," *The Guidon*, January 12, 1970, 3. Forbes Park is one of the most exclusive gated communities in Makati, the business district of Manila.

to “ease the congestion at gate 3 in the morning,” which was considered nothing but a lame excuse and a discrimination against those who did not own a car. Not only would it cause inconvenience to students who had to get off at gate 3 and walk to the college building in rainy weather, it was a policy that was “a step further away” from “bring[ing] the university down to the masses.”

The PP [Physical Plant] administration has been handing down directive after directive in an effort to close the Ateneo to the less efficient. In effect, the less wealthy ones feel a sort of inferiority complex because each new directive makes them a foot smaller in the eyes of the administration.

Therefore, we, the students of the Ateneo, protest the action of the PP [Physical Plant] Administration and demand his resignation. A Filipino should be installed in his post, a Filipino who knows and feels what the Filipino students feel. We don't want those “big white gods who destroy the little grumble” in our ranks.

An Ateneo for the Filipinos!¹⁰⁷

The writer adds an interesting and humorous postscript, complaining about a helicopter that landed a couple of weeks earlier, “with no visible Ateneo sticker in its windshield.” Why weren't its plate numbers taken off, he queried: aha, “discrimination again!”

Another facility that was subjected to critical evaluation during the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo was the Rizal University Library. At that time, the library, which was under the auspices of the American Jesuit, Father Robert J. Suchan, S.J. and being funded largely by American aid such as the Ford Foundation and the United States Information Agency (USIA), was criticized for being the “Kuta [Fortress or Stronghold] of ‘Cultural Aggression.’” It was observed that at every corner of the library were books about American literature, politics, economics and science,

¹⁰⁷ “Letter to the Editor: Discrimination Again!” *The Guidon*, February 17, 1970, 6.

promoting a kind of intellectual elitism, where theories and “universal truths” were fine and dandy but completely irrelevant to what was happening outside the Ateneo.¹⁰⁸

The Rizal library was under scrutiny also partly because at that time, a controversy erupted with regard to a book entitled *Invention*, authored by the American Jesuit English professor, Father Joseph Landy, S.J., and used as a textbook in the Freshmen and Sophomore classes taught by the American Jesuits, Father James Donelan, Father Joseph Galdon, and Father Patrick Lynch. On December 1st, 1970, nine professors of the English department¹⁰⁹ wrote a manifesto expressing their indignation against Landy’s book, condemning it as “anti-nationalistic” and “colonially-oriented.” The manifesto, however, was merely the result of a series of frustrated attempts, requesting Father Galdon, then the chair of the English department, for a meeting to discuss the contents as well as the fate of Landy’s book. A letter was sent to Galdon on October 30th, and another on November 11th, but both requests were ignored and left unanswered. It was then on November 18th, after failed attempts of a respectful petition (*magalang na paghihiling*) that the disgruntled professors demanded Galdon’s resignation. Once again, Galdon turned a deaf ear, the last straw that compelled the professors to draft a manifesto. Father Joaquin Bernas, S.J., dean of the college, suspended the sales of the book, but a few days later, the president of the university, Father Francisco Araneta, S.J. authorized its re-selling and use in class.¹¹⁰ As a means of protest, a “book burning” was staged in the college quadrangle on December 14th, as a way to “dramatize the protest of colonial miseducation in the college.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ernesto Fullon, “Rizal Library: Kuta ng ‘Cultural Aggression?’” *The Guidon*, December 16, 1970, 2.

¹⁰⁹ This included Rolando Tinio, Emmanuel Torres, Rolando Perez, Perla Sanes, Bienvenido Lumbea, Nenita Escasa, Nicanor Tiongson, Evelyn Nunes, and Soledad Reyes.

¹¹⁰ Manuel M. Dayrit, “Pulos ‘Inventions,’” *The Guidon*, December 16, 1970, 12.

¹¹¹ Editorial: Landy Issue, *The Guidon*, December 16, 1970, 12.

It was, indeed, as Ferriols accurately perceived it, a clash of different values and sensitivities. Incidents, one after another, would arise, convincing the student activists that priests like Galdon and Landy could no longer remain in Ateneo, as they were clearly “obstacles to Filipinization and to the nationalism of the university.”¹¹² It was, for instance, not just Landy’s book that was in question, but his perceived lack of sympathy for the Filipinization movement. On one occasion, Landy had accused the Ateneo History Club for being run by communists for organizing a Lenin exhibit on the 100th anniversary of the Russian leader; and on another, reprimanded a student for asking permission to invite his students to join a rally, lecturing the poor lad on the meaning of “academic freedom” and recommending that he be sanctioned by the Committee on Discipline.

Galdon himself was also implicated in another incident. A year before the Landy controversy, in October 1969, a report written by Jesuit scholastic Arsenio C. Jesena exposing the inhumane conditions of the *sacadas* in the sugar plantations in Negros Occidental appeared in the newspapers *The Manila Times* and *The Manila Chronicle*. A few days later, Galdon, then the acting academic vice-president, and Mrs. Mary Hollsteiner, director of the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), issued a “Statement of Clarification” explaining “that the Jesena report [was] not an Ateneo report nor [was] it connected with the IPC socio-economic research currently underway on 63 Negros Occidental farms.” Apparently, the statement was intended to “placate disturbed financial supporters,” that is, sugar planters who, in light of the Jesena report, had threatened to cancel their grant to the IPC Negros Occidental study. Aside from causing serious damage to the integrity of the IPC, the statement it had issued had been exploited by the sugar group “to discredit the clearly valid findings of *sacada* exploitation in Negros.”¹¹³

¹¹² Dayrit, “Pulos ‘Inventions,’” 12.

¹¹³ Leonardo Q. Montemayor, “‘Sugar Coated’ Survey?” *The Guidon*, November 24, 1969, 9.

These were only some of the instances that made apparent a conflict in values. But the students somehow knew that beneath the sensational politics, what was really at the heart of the dispute was something more “human,” more fragile than the overbearing concepts of Filipinization and academic freedom. In an article, Montemayor expresses his disbelief upon hearing an American Jesuit say that in his ten years in the Philippines, he had only learned three words in Pilipino: *Psst, Pheew, Para!* “Was he not kidding?” But how come in China, foreign missionaries made the effort to learn Mandarin? “Here in the Ateneo and in the Philippines, in general, it is the host who does the switching to the guest’s language.” For Montemayor, the foreigner’s attitude towards a country’s language was an important gauge of his profound respect for its people and their culture, or lack thereof. But he equally asserts that the foreigner, “by reason of his historicity,” will always be a stranger to the ways of the people, and that though he may try to understand, he will never “know our problems as we know them and feel the urgency of resolving them as we do. It is not his which is, as the Americans put it, on the chopping block; he is not the person who is *nakataya* [at stake].”¹¹⁴ And because of this, as it has been pointed out “ages ago,” the American Jesuits “are apt to misunderstand the spirit behind the Filipinization movement and brand it as chauvinistic and regressive.”¹¹⁵ And they can try, as Landy did, to stifle protests, in the same manner that one “[locks] up a child inside his room because he may say ‘embarrassing’ things before the guests.” But such efforts prove to be futile, because “these ‘children’ have things to say and they will not be stopped from being seen or heard.” Precisely for these reasons, “those American administrators at the Ateneo who have not even bothered to learn Pilipino (or one of our more common dialects) cannot really presume to direct or teach us in the related tasks of running this school and developing our country.” And the same goes, unfortunately, for “those

¹¹⁴ Leonardo Q. Montemayor, “Psst, Pheew, Para!” *The Guidon*, January 20, 1970, 6.

¹¹⁵ Landy Issue, 12.

Filipino teachers who still have not shaken off the shackles of a colonial education which has taught them to be shadows and apers of their colonial masters.”¹¹⁶

It was, therefore, no surprise that the disgruntlements led to a demand for a change in leadership.¹¹⁷ And it appears that Ferriols himself recommended that “the Ateneo run on a skeletal staff of Filipino Jesuits,” a suggestion which, in effect, endorsed the replacement of American Jesuits in administration.

Like any historical-political movement, it is difficult to determine the “success” of the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo. If one were to simply list its achievements, one could say that the results were indeed commendable. It was the time when the Ateneo’s first Filipino rector and first Filipino dean were appointed, and when both the Pilipino Department and the Philippine Studies program were established. It was also during these radical years that courses in Philosophy, Theology, History, and even Economics were first taught in Pilipino. In 1975, the Ateneo Scholarship Foundation enrolled its first scholars, which was deemed as “the first solid step toward the democratization of Ateneo education.”¹¹⁸ Finally, *Alay Kapwa* was established, an orientation work that provided the venue for implementing and realizing the values of Filipinization as well as the revisions in the curriculum, integrating and directing these efforts towards a concrete “service to the other.”¹¹⁹

Despite these accomplishments, however, there was always that lingering doubt that Filipinization was just a fad, or mere rhetoric, and that it would be forgotten by the next generation of Ateneans. Filipinization was very much an “unfinished task,”

¹¹⁶ Montemayor, “Psst, Pheew, Para!” 6.

¹¹⁷ Aside from the occasional demands for resignation of certain American Jesuits, what seemed to be the main issue then was a clamor for a Filipino Dean. And at this point, the students argued that placing a Filipino at the helm was no longer merely a “symbolic necessity.” For all practical purposes, a Filipino dean would not only be sympathetic to the cause of Filipinization but would have the right, by virtue of being Filipino, to express and represent the Ateneo’s views on national issues. Incidentally, Fr. Galdon was the College Dean at that time. “Editorial: Why We Need A Filipino Dean,” *The Guidon*, November 24, 1969, 1.

¹¹⁸ Tony M. Ollero, “Toward a Filipinized Education,” *The Guidon*, June 16 1975, 2.

¹¹⁹ Tony Ollero, “Notes on Curriculum Revision, Filipinization and Alay Kapwa,” *The Guidon*, March 4, 1975, 2.

and therefore, it was crucial to sustain the nationalist fervor that would ensure further implementations to come to pass. Thus, in 1975, as part of celebrating Filipinization Week, *The Guidon* featured two articles written by two of the authors of the “Down From the Hill” manifesto: a reprint of Montemayor’s article on the “essence of Filipinization,” and Alcuaz’s critical examination of the movement’s historical roots and its relevance to the present day. While providing an excellent historical account, Alcuaz laments the way the controversies overshadowed the “real meaning” of Filipinization. Quoting Paul Dumol’s *Ang Kilusang Pilipinisasyon sa Kolehiyo ng Ateneo, Isang Dulang Dokumentaryo*, Alcuaz points out how the dispute with the American Jesuits, being understandably the more sensational issue, attracted more attention than the real, pressing issues such as the irrelevance and impotence of Ateneo education to provide the Atenean the awareness and skill to respond to the revolutionary situation.¹²⁰ In light of Alcuaz’s critique, one immediately realizes the significance of Montemayor’s words:

More than just being anti-American or hyper-patriotic, Filipinization is essentially pro-Filipino, that is, its chief interest lies in being responsive to the problems and needs of the broad masses of the Filipino people. Accordingly, the success of Filipinization is to be measured not as much by the number of buildings we name after Filipino heroes as to the extent we identify ourselves with and involve ourselves in the lives and aspirations of our people. Filipinization will be successful if we are able to inculcate in ourselves the desire and willingness to learn from our people. This means going directly to them and addressing ourselves to their questions and their problems in a spirit of humility and public service.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Linggoy Alcuaz, “Filipinization Move Critically Examined,” *The Guidon*, January 24, 1975, 2.

¹²¹ Montemayor, “Essence of Filipinization,” 2.

A week later, in the unprecedented Guidon interview, Ferriols emphasizes this very task for which Ateneans must strive, clarifying more concretely, more philosophically, what it entails:

The Atenean has to begin from the bottom. When [Luis]Taruc¹²² came to speak here, one of the students asked him what the Atenean could do for the peasants and workmen. Taruc did not answer by suggesting projects but by beginning at the rock bottom. Go to the barrios and the poor sections of the city and make friends with the people. We like to make plans for the poor. We forget that to make an effective plan we should be only one of the makers of the plan. We should cooperate with other people. This means to know them as human beings, appreciate them as human beings, to such an extent that we learn from them, and together with them we plan and execute.¹²³

Padre Ferriols

Ferriols was, indeed, a pivotal force in the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo. Not only did he pave the way towards concretizing its vision, but was also instrumental in disclosing its philosophical *raison d'être*. But while he was recognized and celebrated for his contributions, his views have also been oversimplified, as people have failed to see how he differed with the movement's politicized agenda.

To understand better the nuances of his position, Ferriols revealed that his Filipinization, contrary to what people might have assumed, did not begin with "Down From the Hill." He recalls expressing this quite emphatically during the *The Guidon* interview in 1968, but this view was never included in the article. One could only surmise that this minor case on censorship was committed, unwittingly or not, in order

¹²² On September 20, 1968, months before the explosive "Down From the Hill," former Hukbalahap leader Luis Taruc was invited to deliver a speech at the Ateneo. This was his first public appearance after his release from prison. The *Guidon* published his speech in its October 2, 1968th issue.

¹²³ Ferriols, "Cultural Realism," 3.

to present a consolidated movement. That is how it often is in the world of politics. Perhaps the editors felt that there was not much point in showing the subtle differences in opinion and ideas, that what mattered in presenting a political movement such as Filipinization was showing a clear demarcation between for and against. But as one listens to Ferriols, one realizes the existence of multiple origins, of possibly an entire spectrum that reveals the many different hues of Filipinization as an idea. In returning to the beginnings of Ferriols's conception of Filipinization, one realizes that his initiative to teach Philosophy in Filipino was not merely a response in support of student movements, but borne out of a personal and persistent desire for and vision of something he had long felt wanting.

I've been thinking about it [Filipinization] for a long time, ever since I had been reading. Because when I was in High School, I was always reading, the novels of Dickens, for example, and I thought, why is it that there are no Filipino novels as great as Dickens? Because the Filipino life is as rich as the English life, but there were no novels that expressed the richness of Filipino life. And I thought that it was an imperative to have, to create in the language used in the Philippines. Because if...for example you wrote about the Filipino life in the English language, it would come out differently, it would have a different flavor.¹²⁴ [2.3]

His experience studying and living in America was another milestone that urged him further towards the path to language. He admits that, at the beginning, he felt the victim of discrimination for being sent to America for his graduate studies. For he had observed that only his fellow American scholastics were sent to Europe, while it was somehow believed that for Filipinos like him, studying in Fordham University was more than enough. But Ferriols explains that he was never embittered by such discrimination, for what “really happened” (*ang talagang nangyari*) was that it was all

¹²⁴ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

good (*maganda*, which literally means “beautiful”). Aside from having met great teachers, studying in Fordham gave him an opportunity to live in New York which in itself offered him an invaluable education. In meeting all kinds of people, from many different countries, Ferriols learned the meaning of diversity. And it was this experience that made him swear that, as soon as he came back to his country, he would learn the languages of his people. Of course it would be impossible to learn all the Philippine languages, but at least he could strive to speak the vernacular spoken in every place to which he would be assigned.

While in America, he met people who shared with him their realities back home, giving Ferriols a picture of how things could be different. He remembers particularly the Brazilian Jesuits from whom he learned that, in their country, it was common for one to learn German in order to study Biology. Or the Belgian Jesuit from Belgian Congo, who once asked him in what language he would teach Philosophy when he returned back home. Latin, of course, Ferriols readily replied, if he were to teach at the Scholasticate, and English, if he were to be assigned in the Ateneo. But Ferriols admits that he was already secretly planning to change things, even if he did not know exactly how, and the question that the Belgian Jesuit posed seemed to have only resonated with the desire that was already in his heart.

Ferriols tells us how he is often told that, in searching for truth, the language that one uses is no longer consequential. But this, he cautions, is a dangerous assertion (*isang delikadong puna*), for “if one were to philosophize in English—and Philosophy is a reflection of the self of the person, and if he were to reflect from the self in a foreign language, he divorces reflection from the ordinary person.”¹²⁵ [2.4] Explaining his point further, Ferriols argues

If a person whose knowledge comes largely from books, and attempts to philosophize in the language that is different from that spoken by jeepney

¹²⁵ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

drivers, street-sweepers, or street food vendors—can it still be said that that person is moving within the ambit of truth? Because it cannot be denied that, whether it is claimed by man or deliberately forgotten, it would always remain true that all people, including those who philosophize, are surrounded by fellow men who speak and use language. And if one who philosophizes chooses the language he uses, his choice is the outcome of his attitude towards the words/language of those around him. And his attitude can either be truth[ful], or a lie.¹²⁶ [2.5]

Ferriols's point is deceptively simple: in the search for truth, the choice of language is inevitably a choice of a particular disposition towards the people around him. In assuming a particular attitude, one chooses to dwell either in truth or in a lie. But this begs the question: in what way is philosophizing in the language used by ordinary people more truthful? Inversely, how is a person philosophizing from the knowledge of books, using a language so foreign to people around him, a lie?"

Behind Ferriols's cryptic statement was the belief that every language has the potential to enable us to see. And to immerse ourselves in its richness and be part of its usage and growth would be a way of interacting, of "being together with" (*pakikisalamuha*) those who use this language, with "the crowds of anonymous people" who have shared an abundance of experiences and insights encoded in the words that they have left for us. It is through this fellowship that one dwells in truth, insofar as one recognizes and helps reveal the wisdom and the way of seeing inherent in a particular language. On the contrary, one who insists on speaking a language foreign to the people around him, risks living a lie, because he refuses to see the truth emergent in a living language, and denies the possibility of engaging with and learning from the people he encounters.

¹²⁶ Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 236.

To illustrate his point further, Ferriols tells the story of how he was once assigned for three weeks to a parish church in a village far in the mountains. People were coaxing him to speak to them in English—to “practice” for Manila (*magpraktis para sa Maynila*), they said, and because they found his Cebuano not good enough. But Ferriols stubbornly refused, insisting that in three weeks, he would be fluent in the language. One day, he recounts, they organized a program, and while someone was singing in English, he noticed faults in her pronunciation.

And it struck me. If in those three weeks we were conversing in English or Tagalog, I would have been correcting their speaking and pronunciation. I would have been so haughty. I would probably be thinking by now: Only I am educated, all of them are from the boondocks.¹²⁷ [2.6]

Furthermore, Ferriols writes:

What happened was exceptional. Three weeks they were correcting my speaking and pronunciation, but they did not become arrogant. They were very patient. Three weeks they shared their language with me: a special kind of seeing, of feeling, of wisdom. They were sharing their whole civilization. In the voice, in the movement of hands, of the body, they taught me how to speak. Because one who is learning a new language is like a child who is speaking for the first time. . . . The time of farewell came and I felt that I was saying goodbye to my teachers. And when I gazed at the surrounding mountains, I was overjoyed by the richness of the mountains.¹²⁸ [2.7]

The Struggle to Teach Philosophy in Filipino

It was only upon coming back from his graduate studies that Ferriols finally knew what he would and could do to filipinize. In 1969, in his commitment to establish solidarity with the ordinary folk, Ferriols decided to teach philosophy in Filipino. His

¹²⁷ Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 238.

¹²⁸ Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 239.

aim was to encourage students not only to harness the wisdom latent in their vernacular but to establish a philosophical tradition and dialogue among Filipinos, regardless of education or social status. Like all things groundbreaking, however, there were difficulties at the beginning. In his memoir, he recounts:

After the lord highs had allowed the experimental [sic] classes (I tried to explain: my classes are not experiments, they are for real, my students are usually human beings, never laboratory rats; but the classes were still called experimental) the scheduler failed to schedule them. “To give you a chance to pick the best times,” with a sinister twitch of the eyelids. As a result we had classes during meal times: 7:00 to 8:00 a.m., 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. We were tolerated in private, boasted of in public, while we made such rules as: one may eat and drink during class, just so he does it quietly—no chicharon or popcorn, no breaking of bottles—for as the soul regales itself it is not just that the body be left out in the cold.¹²⁹

The administrators were clearly not too keen on allowing him to teach in Filipino, but as Ferriols would later explain, they also could not deny him, for fear of provoking the students’ disapproval and the activists’ ire.

There were also certain colleagues at the Philosophy department who were not as supportive as he had hoped, who opposed through their silence, believing that it was unnecessary to teach Philosophy in Filipino, and skeptical that his efforts would succeed. And as Americanism continued to linger, even after the lessons of Filipinization in the ‘70s, Ferriols would here and there find traces of quiet assaults to things “Filipino.”

Because even during the 1990s...it was stated [on the list] the courses and the teachers, and if [the class] was in Filipino, it was in parenthesis: “Filipino.”

But I said, first of all, if it is in English, then it should be in parenthesis:

¹²⁹ Roque J. Ferriols, S.J., “A Memoir of Six Years,” *Philippine Studies* 22, 3rd/4th Quarters (1974): 339.

“English,” but if it’s in Filipino, why must we put “Filipino,” we’re in the Philippines anyway. But no, they didn’t like [the idea]. And even my books, my books in Filipino, in my opinion they should be placed under Philosophy in the library, shouldn’t they? But in the library, they are under Filipiniana. So it seemed as though they were saying, this is not Philosophy, we are just indulging him, if he wants to write in Filipino, yes sure, but we will not call it Philosophy, we will call it Filipiniana.¹³⁰ [2.8]

A Vision’s Limited Success

Ferriols remembers a time when Americans (and perhaps foreigners in general) teaching in the Philippines were required to study Filipino. For him, this indicated that Filipinization achieved some success. But he qualifies that the success was rather “limited,” since today, that rule seems to be no longer even imposed, and even at that time, one only had to take and complete a required Filipino course for a year or two. It did not matter if one forgot what he had learned. As a result, the effort to use and immerse oneself in Filipino was hardly sustained.

Furthermore, Ferriols reveals that his decision to teach Philosophy in Filipino, to offer one section for each of the four courses in the core curriculum (Philosophy of Human Person 101 and 102, Philosophy of Religion, and Ethics), was the result of a conscious decision to assume a “realistic position.” But he had initially envisioned something larger—an Ateneo that would become a Filipino university. It was a vision of a university that would be open to learning foreign languages; if one were studying French literature, for example, one would learn French, or in studying Biology, one would learn German, since there would certainly be German experiments (like in Brazil). But in presenting one’s findings, and in all the meetings and discussions, everyone, including foreigners, would use Filipino, and everyone would therefore be

¹³⁰ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

forced to learn the language. Filipino would therefore be the “language of meeting,” the language of encounter (*wikang pagsasalubungan*). And it would be Filipino used in Manila, in the same way that Shakespearean English was—a mixture of many other languages, but creatively brought together and not merely the product of a kind of laziness, where one chose and used words haphazardly and unreflectively. Alas, Ferriols saw that his vision would never prevail. If perhaps, he says, people understood that he wanted this for cultural reasons, they would initially complain how difficult it was but would eventually work with him towards realizing it; but they thought his intentions were political, and this, Ferriols believed, was the reason why he was strongly opposed.

A Theological Standpoint

To understand the true beginnings of his Filipinization, Ferriols urged me to read an essay he wrote in 1955, entitled “Theological Aspects of Cultural Adaptation.” This essay, he says, which was written when he was studying Theology as a seminarian, contains the theological background, the real force behind his vision of Filipinization. Like any priest who was devoted to the Catholic doctrine and his vocation, his main concern was to spread the Gospel of Christ, and to evangelize in a way that adapts to the culture of the people. Ferriols saw this encounter between the Gospel and a culture as the necessary process by which both reveal their richness: for precisely because of that fortuitous encounter, certain aspects of the Gospel and the culture are allowed to emerge.¹³¹

In this essay, Ferriols defines cultural adaptation as a missionary approach guided by the belief that every culture, prior to Catholic conversion, contains a certain goodness and truth, which naturally makes it predisposed to being transfigured by supernatural values. All non-Christian cultures, though they may be “imperfect images

¹³¹ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

of the eternal Word,” are to be respected and corrected, but never destroyed. The premise behind this idea lies in the belief in the “exigency for cultural pluralism” as the only possible expression and realization of the perfection of Christ. Using the example of the human genius whose potentials can never be exhausted by a single culture, Ferriols argues:

If, then, the full expression of the human genius already requires cultural pluralism, a much greater exigency for cultural pluralism must exist where there is question of expressing the perfection of Christ. For Christ is the concrete embodiment of the human genius hypostatically united with the Word. A single culture can express Him only in a limited and fragmentary way, but various cultures together will image Him much more perfectly because what one culture lacks will be made up by another.¹³²

It seemed that, for Ferriols, the Americans could not see that, while they were teaching Catholic values, they were also inculcating American habits and ways of thinking. In doing so, they had forgotten that one could be Catholic and need not be American.

There were Americans who understood his real intention: *kaya tingnan mo yung mga hindi umalis, naintindihan nila ako* (“look at those who did not leave [the Philippines], they understood me.”) O’Hare, for instance, expressed his appreciation for a Filipinization that was driven by this evangelical intention, mentioning how one of his colleagues described the cause as “the long, painful and fumbling struggle to uncover and release the potential riches of the Filipino consciousness, to disclose that special genius that will in theological terms define the features of the Filipino face of Christ.”¹³³ And then, there were some who did not understand, but seemed to Ferriols

¹³² Roque J. Ferriols, S.J. “Theological Aspects of Cultural Adaptation,” in *Pagdiriwang sa Meron: A Festival of Thought Celebrating Roque J. Ferriols, S.J.*, eds. Nemesio S. Que, S.J. and Agustin Martin G. Rodriguez. (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), 227-228.

¹³³ O’Hare, “Threat to Academic Freedom,” 5.

to have had at least an “inkling” [kutob] that his position was more profound than what they could grasp. But there were also those who perhaps understood but simply disagreed. And again, the main reason for the disagreement, Ferriols believes, was the misconception that his position was political, embittering American Jesuits who felt that all their sacrifices for the country were unappreciated.

But my attitude was that I had an appreciation for what they’ve done, but what they’ve done would be complete, would be more complete, as what I have said in one of our meetings. I said, the Americans have done a great deal for the Philippines, but they have to do something harder. To let the Filipinos become really Filipinos. To do that, the Americans have to give up some of their American ways. The Americans can do it because... see, the Americans had a slogan during the war: the difficult we do at once, the impossible takes a little longer. That was one of the slogans of the Americans. SEACBEES—an engineering department of the US Navy, I think it was.¹³⁴[2.9]

Unfortunately, the students were equally insensitive to the theological and philosophical underpinnings of Ferriols’s intentions, which he emphasizes were very different from the political attitude that seemed to have been more prevalent at that time. And so when he refused to join or endorse their communist positions, he was readily seen as a traitor.

What did Ferriols mean when he said that his Filipinization was not political? For surely, his actions and words were so influential that they helped give life and direction to the movement as a whole. To this query, however, he leaves us no answer, and we are left to our conjectures. But this philosopher was never too keen on giving exhaustive explanations, which was in a way reflective of his particular attitude towards words. In class, he taught us the value of words, while reminding us of their limits; that while words help us express and share our thoughts, understanding comes

¹³⁴ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

not through the force of the clearest and most logical explanation but through our own effort and willingness to see. He would always say: after one has expressed everything that can be said, what remains is that which cannot be said. From this, one can easily understand why Ferriols was never primarily concerned about explaining things away. And his words were indeed most effective in their enigmatic style, which were meant not so much to dazzle with an eloquent exposition of truth as to allow his listeners to grapple with the obscure, forcing their minds to wander in search for their own answers.

***Tingnan ang Talagang Nangyari* (“Look at What is Really Happening”)**

As I myself try to understand why Ferriols claimed that his filipinization was not political, I grapple with clues that more or less point to certain directions and sentiments. One of the most important observations Ferriols had during the time of Filipinization in the Ateneo was that, while the movement ushered a period of great change, it was also a time of confusion, wrought with misunderstandings and feelings of resentment. And it was not merely a case of Americans misrepresenting Filipino intentions. Those troubled times were equally marked by contradicting views among Filipinos themselves who were genuinely trying to define what nationalism meant.

For former Hukbalahap leader Luis Taruc, for instance, nationalism had to be, quite understandably, an anti-Americanism (“or anti-Chinese for that matter”), the latter merely being the expression that ensures keeping foreign domination in check.¹³⁵ Without doubt, Taruc was an influential figure in the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo, as he was regarded as a kind of hero.¹³⁶ Months before “Down From the Hill”

¹³⁵ Rodolfo Puno, “Taruc Dissects Nationalism, Discusses Pertinent Issues,” *The Guidon*, February 7, 1968, 3.

¹³⁶ “There was something about the man that moved us. For here he was, the man who, some two decades back, was considered to be a presidential timber by virtue of his rapport with the masses and his position in the government as congressman from the first district of the province of Pampanga. But he fled to the hills of Arayat and led the bloody armed revolt that was to shake the very foundations of the infant republic. Here was the man who had previously led the sporadic peasant strikes that would paralyze industry; the same man who had fearlessly slept on the railroad tracks of the Pampanga Sugar Development Company (PASUDECO) in a dramatic attempt to secure the

was published, Taruc had been invited to deliver a speech to the Ateneo student body, his “first public appearance” since his release from prison. It was on this occasion that he revealed that workers and peasants perceived Ateneo, and colleges and universities alike, as schools of the future generation of elites, educating for the sole purpose of perpetuating the systems and habits of accumulating wealth and oppressing the poor. It was an image that Ateneans found troubling, and Taruc’s words, which hurled a challenge to prove this reputation wrong, prompted a critical self-reflection.

While many shared Taruc’s desire for social justice, there were quite a few who were equally wary of anti-American sentiments, warning people that such “excesses of this type of nationalism” could lead the Filipinos to commit “the same mistakes that Europe had made.” Thus, there was, amidst the anti-American expressions, a call to reflect on the meaning of “authentic nationalism.” Philosophy professor Jose Cruz, S.J. was outspokenly critical of the “demagoguery against the ‘Western Imperialism,’” describing it as nothing but “venomous hatred of America, of anything which is foreign.” He argued that such demonstrations of nationalism were “blatantly inauthentic,” and that genuine nationalism, if it were truly grounded on the love of one’s nation, would strive to grasp the good and value not only within one’s self, country, and people, but in all. Drawing inspiration from the philosopher Max Scheler, Cruz quotes: “I love all men because they are bearers of value, and I have more loving concern for the wicked because it is in them that that value, goodness, is under the constant threat of degeneration.” Thus, within this wide scope of love that characterizes authentic nationalism, “hatred for another nation finds no place.”¹³⁷

There was, however, not merely an animosity towards Western imperialism; divisiveness grew within the very ranks of student activists, and it seemed that

demands of his peasant followers.... Here before us now was the charismatic Luis Taruc, former Huk supremo, urging strict adherence to Christian principles and mouthing the teaching of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI.” See Puno, “Taruc Dissects Nationalism,” 3.

¹³⁷ Rev. Jose Cruz, S.J., “Reflections on Meaning of Authentic Nationalism,” *The Guidon*, February 7, 1968, 9.

nationalism was not going to be more authentic than this. On January 26th, 1970, and then again, on January 30th, days that would be remembered as the beginning of the First Quarter Storm, the students staged mass rallies that both ended in a brutal dispersal and the death of several young protestors. These events, however, did not only reveal the youth's profound disenchantment with the state of things; for the student activists who had, until then, presented a united front, these fateful days had revealed an unsurmountable rift: on the one hand, there were the moderates, who were composed of the "exclusive school kids of the NUSP (National Union of Students of the Philippines), bred in comfort, decent, respectable and timorous," working for a peaceful change through a non-partisan Constitutional Convention, and on the other, "the public school firebrands of groups like KM (*Kabataang Makabayan*) and the SDK (*Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan*) familiar with privation, rowdy, irreverent, troublesome," seeking "the violent overthrow of the existing political order."¹³⁸ The faction was clearly, as Free Press journalist Jose Lacaba described it, one of "class distinction." While the moderates regarded the radicals, in derogatory fashion, as "unreasonable elements," the radicals criticized the moderates for being a bunch of "clerico-fascists," lackeys of the Catholic Church.

Amidst the squabbles, however, some critically minded Ateneans and Jesuits were perceptive enough to draw lessons from the unfortunate fall out. It had long been felt that the Atenean, though he was increasingly becoming politically and socially conscious was, unfortunately, given his "elite position," still largely unable "to grasp the reality of the situation."¹³⁹ While the NUSP appealed earnestly for non-

¹³⁸ Manuel M. Dayrit, "Violence and Student Activism," *The Guidon*, February 17, 1970, 12. The rift between the "radical" and moderate youth activists was not primarily ideological. After the January riots, the congressional investigators had blamed the *Kabataang Makabayan* as the "provocateur." NUSP president Edgar Jopson, who was questioned by the congressional committee, attested that the KM had not been formally invited to the rally. It was this statement that the KM claimed to be false, and as such, a clear act of betrayal that has made it impossible to continue an alliance with NUSP. See Rigoberto D. Tiglao, "Radical Youth Split with Moderates on Charter, 'Dishonest' Leadership," *The Guidon*, February 17, 1970.

¹³⁹ Dr. Dante C. Simbulan, quoted in Rigoberto D. Tiglao, "A United Front for National

partisanship, believing it to be the path towards a real and effective representation of the needs of the people, the radicals were profoundly skeptical, contending that the constitutional convention would again only be ruled by ““delegates of hacenderos and the power class which have alliances with US economic interests.””¹⁴⁰ It was, however, only upon witnessing the bloody aftermath of the January riots that people began to reflect what these ideological differences really meant.

Fr. Edmundo Garcia, S.J., who himself witnessed the “Battle of Mendiola,” and testified in Congress concerning the January demonstrations, wrote an open letter addressed “To [the] Militant Young Christians” of the Ateneo, in an attempt to awaken the Ateneans to “the real state of the nation.” In this letter, he recounts the story of meeting Bulakeño Gerry Encarnacion, “a member of the nationalist core from Araneta University” and a “demonstration drop-out” who was badly bludgeoned by the police and was then being treated at PGH (Philippine General Hospital), along with over thirty other students and policemen. Garcia writes,

For Gerry Encarnacion and his bloodied companions, there will be a next time around. Probably, more violent and more disastrous; but “things are just so bad, we have nothing to lose anyway.”¹⁴¹

It was precisely this sense of desperation that struck Garcia, urging him to reevaluate his perception of the radical activists; that perhaps they were not simply “unreasonable elements,” but young people who, feeling in their wretched state they have nothing more to lose, were quite reasonable in their determination to survive. And it seemed that the moderates were unable to intuit the desperation that was in the hearts of their fellow-students, causing both camps to lead divergent paths. For Garcia, this failure to empathize and grasp the real condition of things only revealed that the estrangement of the Atenean ran deeper than what one had imagined:

Democracy,” *The Guidon*, February 17, 1970, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Tiglao, “Radical Youth Split,” 3.

¹⁴¹ Fr. Edmundo Garcia, S.J. “To Militant Young Christians,” *The Guidon*, February 17, 1970, 8.

Too often, we have found ourselves abnormally ill at ease with our very own people, either because of our misconceptions of them or of their misconceptions of us. We cannot feel with our people, we cannot think with them because we have separated ourselves from them for so long.¹⁴²

The rift between moderates and radicals also revealed the tension between the activists and certain constituents of the Catholic Church. An interesting study of the term “clerico-fascist,” which the radicals used to call the moderates, divulges certain prejudices that helped deepen political divisions. While the term clearly disregards the existence of open-minded clerics and “rebel priests,” the concept does accurately reveal a particular experience of a reactionary Church.

It seems that whereas before, the Church persecuted alleged witches, in the modern era when witches are not so believable anymore, the Church has substituted Satan for Marx and channeled its persecuting tendencies on people who show the slightest sign of anti-Americanism or socialist tendencies.¹⁴³

Interestingly, one of the moments the force of Catholic reactionary strongly asserted itself was at the beginning of the nationalist movement in the University of the Philippines (U.P.) The article particularly mentions a certain chaplain of the U.P. Student Catholic Action (UPSCA) who, “after a futile attempt to abolish the Greek-letter societies in the campus, turned his energies into waging a one-man crusade in flushing out the vocal nationalists in the campus as ‘communists.’”¹⁴⁴

It was amidst this messy affair of ideological disputes and political alignments, which sometimes plummeted into petty name-calling and at times caught glimpses of compassion and genuine understanding, that Ferriols decided to remain calmly “non-aligned.” Not that he was neutral; he certainly had a clear vision and a strong position with regard to certain things. But he saw the narrow-mindedness encouraged by

¹⁴² Garcia, ““To Militant Young Christians,”” 8.

¹⁴³ Rigoberto Tiglao, “Clerico-Fascist: What Does It Mean,” *The Guidon*, March 12, 1970, 3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

politics, which inevitably forced everyone to take sides. Despite the social pressure and criticism from activists and American sympathizers alike, Ferriols remained steadfast in his own beliefs, that is, to the truth he saw—which, before its reduction and simplification to suit a specific political agenda, was far more complex and beautiful. Thus, even when he was fervently supportive of the Filipinization movement and allowing his students to attend demonstrations, he was also silently opposing it by religiously taking attendance in class and noting down all the cuts;¹⁴⁵ and more importantly, even when he became extremely critical of the Americans, he never forgot that one of the teachers who taught him to be Filipino, to be open to all the many ways of being Filipino, to whom he says he still owes so much (*malaki ang utang ko sa kanya*), was, rather ironically, an American Jesuit named Father Joseph Mulry.

Malagipko

Only a few months ago, in March, 2012, Ferriols started his own blog, in response to the Provincial Superior's request to write about his experiences as a Jesuit during the Second World War. The title of the blog is *Malagipko* (Ilokano, for “I remember”), under the user name *Lilipad* (Tagalog, for “will fly”). Who or what “will fly,” one wonders. *Malagipko*, on the other hand, is also an intriguing choice of word. Any native Ilokano will tell you that used in its proper context, it does not simply mean that one remembers; for the word itself reveals that particular moment while one talks to a friend, when something suddenly comes to mind, and immediately must be said before it takes wing and vanishes to never be seen again. *Malagipko*, more accurately, “before I forget,” means to save what unexpectedly “appears” (*iligtas ang mga [biglang] nagpapamasiid*) from the threat of one's own forgetfulness.

At times, however, one forgets deliberately. To save oneself, either from the pain of a memory or from the pressures of being excluded or ostracized by the general

¹⁴⁵ In the Ateneo, every student is given a number of allowable “cuts,” or absences. To go beyond this number would automatically merit a failing grade in the course.

crowd. In the essay he wrote as an introduction to Philosophy, he tells a story about a friend. Once, they were swimming in the river, and Ferriols was carried away by the strong current. His friend swam after him, and brought him to shore, saving his life. In the years that passed, “X” did some distasteful things, and people gossiped about him. Ferriols knew that the rumors were true, but he kept silent, deciding to remain faithful to the memory, recounting the story, whenever there was a chance, of how this friend had saved his life. For indeed, part of “what really happened” was the kindness that his friend had shown him once upon a time.¹⁴⁶

Similarly, despite his criticisms, what really happened was that Ferriols learned so much from the Americans. And he tries to preserve this memory in a blog entry about his beloved Literature teacher, Father Mulry. It was Mulry, Ferriols says, who made him realize that he could think, and that he, too, could help others see their own potential for thinking. He also found in Mulry a kind of persistence that never gave up when faced with something baffling, and when the old priest shared his thoughts, one had the feeling that he was always divulging exactly what he had seen and everything that he was continuing to discover. It was from him that Ferriols understood that the world where thinking properly dwells is not the world of competition (*daigdig ng paligsahan*), where one seeks the person with the sharpest mind. Rather,

What true thinking searches for is truth. The world of thinking is a vast and unfathomable field through which people who seek travel. These people seek because they have already found; and they know that they have already found because they continue to seek.¹⁴⁷ [2.10]

In politics, one is often forced to take sides. And it becomes extremely difficult to look at what’s around when one’s aim is limited to proving a point. That was why to advance the cause of Filipinization, it was important to show as many examples as one could of how the American Jesuits were bungling along the way. And on the other

¹⁴⁶ Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 237-238.

¹⁴⁷ See <http://lilipad-malagipko.blogspot.sg>.

side, it was necessary to ward off the menacing threat of anti-Americanism by dismissing all nationalists as godless communists. It was the kind of limitation to thinking that Ferriols was always trying to avoid. But in politics, it becomes almost unavoidable to argue and see one's adversary in a limited and specific way.

Thus, despite the fact that Ferriols was caught in the intrigue and ideological battle of his time, he maintains that the aim of his Filipinization was never political. And if one listens carefully to the words he often repeats, one realizes that what really concerned him was to be constantly faithful to what was really happening.

And that's why my class always begins, you begin with the thought of a pure concept, and then you will ask, *Meron ba?*¹⁴⁸ And then, you will be surprised that what really exists can never be made into a concept.¹⁴⁹ [2.11]

And indeed, if one were to look closely at what was happening, one would realize, as Political Science Professor, Dante Simbulan had once argued, that student activism was not merely "illogical" or communist-inspired, and that to dismiss it as such would be "a grave insult to the intelligence and patriotism of our students;" or that in saying that the radical activists, having read the writings of revolutionaries such as Mao Tse Tung and Che Guevarra, were merely brainwashed is to suggest that they have no capacity of their own to be "impressed by the work and successes of people who fought against oppression and social injustices and did achieve results."¹⁵⁰ And indeed, in carefully examining what was really taking place during those confusing times, one must never forget that there were American Jesuits like the Physics professor Father Francisco Glover, whose memory had been "trampled on by the tempest of Filipinization," and who, in a dramatic, "final act of lamentation," writes an entire letter in Filipino. It is through him that we learn more about Father Campbell, the priest who

¹⁴⁸ The word *meron* is crucial to understanding the philosophy of Ferriols. The idea will be further discussed in later chapters, but suffice to say, Ferriols used the word to indicate what exists, what is "there."

¹⁴⁹ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

¹⁵⁰ Tiglao, "A United Front," 5.

in his twelve years, had only learned three words, “and everything starting with the letter P.” *Talagang bobo siya....* (“He’s really stupid”); incidentally, it was also Campbell who established the Math department and the entire Management Engineering program, and became the first Prefect of Boarders in Bellarmine Hall who defended the rights of boarders against the administration.¹⁵¹

And if you happen to get stuck in a concept, use *Meron* to get out of that concept. The concept is still necessary to point to meron, but meron itself, that can never be a concept.... That is where you must always act.¹⁵² [2.12]

To move within the ambit of truth is to be constantly vigilant to what is really happening: that sometimes, what happens is what we had least expected (*pero ang talagang nangyari ay...*); or that the unexpected turns out to be a beautiful and extraordinary event (*ang nangyari ay kakaiba*). And there are times, too, when one comes to the darkest moments of his life, which unfortunately, is also part of one’s truth.

Truth at High Noon

A few years ago, when I came to interview Ferriols, I asked him to share with me his experiences of the Japanese occupation. At that time, he refused, saying that he did not want to remember, that the memories were too painful for him to bear. And so when I unexpectedly found the blog he started many months ago, I was overjoyed; it felt as if Padre finally granted my request. But upon reading his entries, slowly I understood what he was trying to tell me then, why some people never want to talk about their experiences of the war.

In his stories, one realizes that Ferriols was constantly surrounded by the sight and smell of death. In one of his entries, he narrates that morning when he and a fellow

¹⁵¹ Padre Francisco Glover, S.J., “Liham ng Isang Banyaga: Huling Hikbi,” *The Guidon*, February 17, 1970, 9.

¹⁵² Ferriols, interview, 2009.

Jesuit, Bro. Araneta, came to the street of San Marcelino where a fierce battle had just transpired, leaving everything in ruins. When they arrived, they saw some people who were doing a “clean-up” of a building full of dead Japanese soldiers, and these people were throwing the corpses one after another out the window, all mangled and disfigured as the bodies fell smack on the pavement. People around stood watching, and there were American soldiers who ordered them to stand back, warning them that some of these corpses might have grenades in their pockets which could go off anytime. They continued to walk through San Marcelino, and stopped in front of a canal. Ferriols remembers how he could smell the pungent odor of death; and how he saw something at the canal, but couldn’t tell what it was that lay there. Soon enough, Bro. Araneta told him that it was a priest. And then, there was another corpse, and then another, until Ferriols realized that there were ten of them, all Vincentian brothers, who were made to stand, massacred with a machine gun. Their lifeless bodies then had fallen into the canal. One by one, they carried the corpses on a wheelbarrow and buried them behind a church in San Marcelino.

Ferriols writes in graphic detail what happened during those horrifying times, and one realizes that remembering is not always an easy task. But there is something in his accounts, that one can clearly discern, a strong will to survive; as though he was saying that even in the darkest and saddest moments of death, life, somehow, pierces through.

When they had finished burying the bodies, it was already high noon. Ferriols recounts how they had to walk back to La Ignaciana under the blistering sun. Along the way, they saw an American soldier with a big canteen, and because they were so thirsty, they boldly approached him, asking if they could each have one gulp of water from his flask. The American agreed; and because it was scorching that day, the water, too, was hot inside the canteen. *Pero sa aming matinding uhaw ang tubig na galing sa mainit na canteen ay kay sarap!* (“But in our extreme thirst, the water that came from

the hot canteen was so good!”) Finally, they arrived in La Ignancia, and had gone to the river, and after they had prayed, jumped right into the water.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ See <http://lilipad-malagipko.blogspot.sg>

Chapter Three

Ricardo Pascual and the Struggle for Academic Freedom

Whereas the American Jesuits were mourning the loss of “academic freedom” due to the onslaught of the Filipinization movement in the late 1960s, less than a decade earlier, professors from the University of the Philippines (U.P.), inspired by a libertarian and secular tradition, had a similar grievance—only this time, the threat to intellectual autonomy was seen, rather ironically, as the result of “clerical aggressions.” One of the main targets of the assaults was the U.P. philosopher Ricardo Roque Pascual, who, along with his colleagues from the Philosophy department, found himself caught in academic politics, which would later escalate into a charge of national treason. These events afford us another glimpse into the ways in which philosophy in the Philippines has been interwoven with religion and politics, and how such personal struggles are inspired by local and foreign heroes and teachers. However, unlike the Jesuit philosopher Ferriols, who drew inspiration from Christian values to elicit change, Pascual, a self-proclaimed agnostic, brought into sharp view the difficult and antagonistic relationship between religion and intellectual freedom.

The Witchhunts of 1961

The year nineteen sixty-one was, as Professor Leopoldo Yabes described it, a time when the University of the Philippines was rocked to its foundation. Inspired by the “witch hunts” led by American Senator Joseph McCarthy during the Red Scare in the U.S. in the early 1950s, Congressman Leonardo Perez, chairman of The House Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities (CAFA), decided to stage his own “Loyalty” checks on professors and students allegedly charged for harboring pinkish leanings.

What prompted the inquiry was a complaint filed by Quezon City councilor and former intelligence officer Carlos Albert, accusing certain published articles for inciting sedition. One of these articles, entitled “The Peasant War in the Philippines,”

appeared in the 1958 Golden Jubilee issue of the *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, which according to Albert's "expert testimony," was highly critical of U.S. foreign policy and "therefore communistic." Consequently, these allegations led to the subpoena of the nine professors in the journal's editorial board.¹⁵⁴

With its critical portrayal of a reactionary government that serves the "landed and moneyed aristocracy," and its exaltation of the National Peasants' Union, the monograph was easily accused of provoking peasants against the Government, and inciting them to join the movement. Of course no one really bothered to explain how a sixty-four-page document, filled with academic jargon and written in English, could produce such an effect on a group of people that were mostly illiterate. Furthermore, the prosecutors seemed to have overlooked the fact that the article, rather than provoking conflict, was trying to rectify a gross misunderstanding: that the aim of the peasant movement was never to overthrow the government but to demand civil liberties, as part of the people's struggle to survive.

In their defense, Editor Tomas Fonacier and Assistant Managing Editor Leopoldo Yabes would raise this crucial point.¹⁵⁵ But the issue was never really up for

¹⁵⁴ This included Onofre D. Corpuz, Cesar Majul, Ricardo Pascual, and Leopoldo Yabes, to name a few. Other articles accused of sedition were the following: a feature article entitled "Requiem for Lumumba," written by Jose Maria Sison under the pseudonym Andres Gregorio, published in the *Philippine Collegian*, in March 1, 1961, and the editorial "The Tower of Babel and the Tower of Ivory," written by Petronilo Daroy, and which appeared in the 1959 *Phiippinensian*, the yearbook of the U.P. graduating students.

¹⁵⁵ In arguing their case, Fonacier and Yabes cites a passage from the article, which clearly expresses a sincere plea that it be understood not simplistically as an apology for Communism but in its own terms: "Many of us Filipinos reject Communism as a way of life. But many will be driven to it by the failure of our government to take cognizance of the plight of our people. The Filipino is now awakened; we reject lip service to democracy, and while we may not be communists, we reject red scaring tactics and the force of arms as solution to our ills. The whole world is between Communism and Capitalism, and it is likely that we may be attracted more to the former if our Government does not revise its policies. John Dulles may tell us that the Communist tactic is to make freedom and liberty their political fronts. It may be true. But it is a fact too, that the fighter for freedom is not necessarily a Communist." Quoted from "The Peasant War in the Philippine—A Study of the Causes of Social Unrest in the Philippines," *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, XXIII, No.2-4 (June-December, 1958), 432.

debate, as the prosecutors were convinced beyond doubt that the text was nothing more than an apology for Communism. There was, however, nothing unusual about this. In fact, the article itself asserts that the reactionary class has always used this “red scaring tactic” to conveniently dismiss democratic elements as “bandits and communists.” In this light, the article’s epigraph, which bore the words of the Irish socialist George Bernard Shaw was a clear foreshadowing of its persecution: that like “the instruments of progress... who are usually put to death by the rational people who want law and order,” the monograph, was equally fated to be condemned for instigating “rebellious conspiracies and riots,” and therefore posing a threat to “the peace of the community, and safety and order of the government.”¹⁵⁶

As the CAFA trial unfolded, more anomalies emerged, gradually revealing the farcical nature of the entire inquiry. It was reported, for instance, that during the opening session, members of the CAFA themselves were somewhat confused, admitting that they had “not yet agreed on a clear-cut definition of what communism [was].” This prompted the committee to ask the “feature witness,” former U.P. English Professor Josefina Constantino, to define the term.¹⁵⁷ But what perhaps made people seriously doubt the basis and exigency of the CAFA hearings was when Constantino failed to substantiate her allegations that the Professor of Philosophy and Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Ricardo Pascual, was a ‘commie’. In fact, she admitted that her only basis was a claim made by a former student and former employee of the President’s office, Amelita Reysio-Cruz, who said that Pascual had led her, along with other students, to *buklod* meetings where communist doctrines were discussed. In his defense, Pascual explained that the term *buklod*, which the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) claimed as a communist front, was merely a “figment

¹⁵⁶ People v Yabes, Fonacier, and John Doe, Q-4624 Phil (1962), in *The Ordeal of A Man of Academe*, Special issue of the *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* XXIX (1964), ed. Leopoldo Y. Yabes (Quezon City: n.p., 1967), 248-249.

¹⁵⁷ “UP Professors Testify Today; Pascual Berates Constantino,” *The Philippine Collegian*, March 14, 1961, 1.

of the imagination' of those who were maliciously imputing to him and the philosophical group a communist leaning." This group, for which he was an adviser and lecturer, could be no other than the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP),¹⁵⁸ an organization registered with an address in Tondo, where meetings were open to public "and were closed to no one because he was experimenting, he explained, on the use of the national language in philosophical discussions."¹⁵⁹

Amidst the circus and labyrinthine exchange of arguments and rebuttals, Professor O.D. Corpuz brings the real issue into focus: that in light of the allegedly seditious publications, and rumors of secret gatherings of a subversive nature, the state university was being accused of "preparing the minds of its students" to make them "receptive to the Communist ideology." However, when time came to closely examine "the sweeping character of the charge," Corpuz observes that only the Philosophy department was suggested to be involved in this "ideological preparation"—a department which he points out, in satiric tone, "has about five to seven major students in the year on the average, and whose courses are required only for a relatively few students in the University." And what indeed made it more ridiculous was that no other instructor in the Philosophy department's academic staff was being accused other than Pascual.¹⁶⁰

Stranger still, in the course of his testimony, Pascual was asked whether he believed in God. For the inquisitors, it seemed that the professor's teaching methods were not as important as his religious beliefs. Suddenly, the investigation turned into a theological discussion, which people believed could have only been prompted by Constantino's testimony. Failing to provide proof of Pascual's communist leanings,

¹⁵⁸ In Constantino's testimony, however, Pascual's group was called the Philippine Philosophical Society. See Josefina Constantino, "Reply to the U.P. Alumni," *Philippine Collegian*, July 28, 1955, 13.

¹⁵⁹ "UP Professors Testify," 3. According to O.D. Corpuz, however, this group called PAP was discussing the matter on Jose Rizal's retraction, "based primarily on [Pascual's] book *Rizal Beyond the Grave*. O.D. Corpuz, "The University and Congress," *Philippine Collegian*, Commencement Issue, April 16, 1961, 14.

¹⁶⁰ O.D. Corpuz, "The University and Congress," 14.

Constantino spoke instead of the latter's alleged "godlessness," claiming that his philosophy of Logical Positivism was "creating an atmosphere of 'receptivity' to communist indoctrination." It remained unclear, however, how communism was related to or born out of atheism or agnosticism.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, it was believed that they were all synonymous, in the same way that anti-Americanism in those days (and perhaps even now), or any critical attack on America for that matter, was always assumed to be "communist-inspired." And so, when during the course of the investigation a legislator was reported to have posed the possibility of introducing a bill that would penalize professors who did not believe in the existence of God, it became clear that the trial was not so much about the alleged communism of the accused, but about certain beliefs to which professors adhered that were not in conformity with the majority.¹⁶²

The real issue, therefore, as some observers believed, was not at all the problem of communist infiltration but the alarming threat to academic freedom, which, for those who were around long before the CAFA "witch hunts," began not in 1961 but in the 1950s. Strangely enough, at both times, the main target had been the Department of Philosophy, with an unusual, obsessive interest in Pascual.

¹⁶¹ At the height of the controversy, a leaflet was circulated in the university campus, containing an essay written by a certain Conrado Pascual, Jr. of the Democratic Youth Forum. Here, he attempts to explain how atheism, "abetted by positivism," could lead to the spread of communism. Quoting the American philosopher, Mortimer Adler, he explains how the positivist, for whom only those that remain within science can be demonstrated, poses a grave threat to democracy. For if democracy lies outside the realm of science, as well as the moral principles on which it stands, then democracy for the positivist could never be a self-evident truth, which universally applies to the entire humanity. The positivists "can be for democracy only because they like it, not because they know it is right." From this line of argument, one can understand why the positivist was feared; for in lacking an ideological commitment to democracy, he was someone who could easily turn against it. It was therefore concluded that the more serious threat to democracy were not dictators but professors who indoctrinate their students in Positivism. Conrado Pascual, Jr. "Sense and Sensibility," in *The Ordeal of A Man of Academe*, 169-170.

¹⁶² Cesar Adib Majul, "The Assault on the Academic Freedom of the University of the Philippines," in *The Ordeal of A Man of Academe*, 194.

In the course of the CAFA investigation, not only was the Philosophy department singled out; through Pascual's own testimony, we learn that Constantino's allegations against him were in fact old charges, which she, then as the secretary of the former U.P. President, Vidal Tan, had raised years ago but which the Board of Regents had found too flimsy to honor.

The Religious Wars

According to the reports, Constantino in 1955 was, in fact, the one facing charges of intrigue, particularly for the "unscrupulous practice" of submitting to the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) names of professors whom she suspected of harboring subversive ideas.¹⁶³ These charges were filed by none other than Reysio-Cruz herself, whom Constantino had invited to a meeting with an MIS officer to submit Pascual's name. When interrogated by the Regents, however, Constantino admitted that she herself was not sure of Pascual's communist leanings, but that she was convinced that the Philosophy professor was exerting a kind of "tyranny over the mind of his students," perhaps not in content but definitely through his methodology.¹⁶⁴ With such conviction, Constantino felt justified in her actions, arguing that her goal was merely to "awaken in university professors a certain sense of moral responsibility to their students."

However, in a letter to the chairman of the Board of Regents, dated February 21, 1955, Reysio-Cruz accused not just Constantino but U.P. President Vidal Tan as well, particularly of favoritism and of using his position to promote sectarian interests. Reysio-Cruz claimed that Tan was intentionally replacing Philosophy faculty members, sending Santos Cuyugan and Cesar Majul to American universities in 1953,

¹⁶³ The other names submitted to the MIS were Agustino Rodolfo of Zoology, SV Epistola and Elmer Ordoñez of English. See Elmer A. Ordoñez, "Memoirs of Diliman Country: On the Occasion of the Centenary of the U.P. English Department," Manila Times, August 29, 2010. From <http://www.josemariasison.org/?p=3970>.

¹⁶⁴ Regents Carmen Dinglan-Consing and Vicente Lontok, "Minority Report of the Five-Man Board of Regents Special Committee to Investigate The Charges Against President Vidal A. Tan," *The Philippine Collegian*, July 28, 1955, 15.

as fellows in Sociology and Political Science respectively, in order to ensure the appointment of his own recruit, Dr. Jose Ma. Eleazar, a graduate of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas and the American Jesuit University of Fordham.¹⁶⁵ Reports revealed that Tan had gone straight to the Dean, asking that Eleazar be assured a teaching appointment, despite the University Code rule that “recommendations for appointment in the academic staff shall ordinarily originate with the Department.” In his defense, Tan argues that Eleazar’s appointment, as well as Cuyugan and Majul’s scholarship, were not without the Philosophy chair’s, i.e., Pascual’s, endorsement. He further argued that his effort to hire someone who belonged to “a different persuasion” was merely intended to enrich the Philosophy department.

Another controversial issue that was raised was the module Mathematics O, which Tan was offering to students as a substitute to Logic (Philosophy 1) that Pascual and his staff were teaching. To justify his actions, Tan explained that, while having always been supportive of the teaching of Logic to all students, he was also critical of the way it was being taught. He claimed that students were complaining that Pascual’s Symbolic Logic, which was a deviation from the “old classical presentation,” was too difficult, and this urged Tan to provide students the choice of Math O, “which is really applied logic as designed.”¹⁶⁶

Indeed, it appears that Pascual endorsed Eleazar’s application, upon receiving it from the Dean, who made it clear that the President was “very much interested in Dr.

¹⁶⁵ According to U.P. Professor of Psychology and founder of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Virgilio Enriquez, sending the philosophy faculty members on Ford and Rockefeller scholarships to study social sciences instead of philosophy was a deliberate attempt to “weaken” and “neutralize” the department. He mentions not only Majul and Cuyugan, but also Alfredo Lagmay, his own mentor, who studied psychology, and Jose Encarnacion, Jr., who studied economics. In the Board of Regents reports, however, Lagmay’s scholarship was argued to have been granted in 1950, during the time of U.P. President Gonzalez, who, unlike President Tan, was more sympathetic to the philosophy department. Also, in the reports, there is no mention of Encarnacion. See Virgilio Enriquez, preface to *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1992).

¹⁶⁶ Vidal A. Tan, “Memorandum of Pres. Tan to the Board of Regents,” *The Philippine Collegian*, July 28, 1955, 18.

Eleazar joining the Department of Philosophy.”¹⁶⁷ It is also true that Pascual had given his consent to Majul and Cuyugan to pursue their studies in the social sciences, and was even reportedly heard to have said that he was “enlarging [his] department if [his] men go out.”¹⁶⁸ But if one were to look closely at the endorsement letter Pascual wrote to the Dean on February 28, 1955, one would see in his subtle remarks a more complex picture behind the half-truths. Pascual writes:

In subsequent years you have often repeated that President Tan was not contemplating to send abroad for study in the field of Philosophy anyone from the Department of Philosophy, for whatever reason he has, which I did not personally inquire into. Subsequently, Mr. Majul and Mr. Cuyugan were made to understand that they could go to the United States if they could major in any field but philosophy. Later on they specified the field in which Mr. Majul was to study abroad. The field chosen was Political Science. Mr. Cuyugan was sent to study in the field of Sociology. Both of these parties left in 1953. Wishing to be no obstacle to the personal growth and development of the members of my department, I did not interpose any objection to the sending of these persons abroad, even if they were to take courses outside their own line of specialty up till then.

In consequence..., the Dept. of Philosophy had to struggle within its limited means which was reduced to a full professor assigned administrative work as secretary of the College and head of the Department of two instructors.

When the above situation became an accomplished fact through the policy of sending instructions from the Dept. of Philosophy to study abroad in any field but philosophy, and now comes an attempt to put in a new applicant from Fordham University, I am afraid that people who would know the facts will

¹⁶⁷ Hermogenes Concepcion, Jovito Salonga, and Jose Africa, “Report of the U.P. Alumni Association Committee Assigned to Investigate the Charges Against President Vidal A. Tan,” *The Philippine Collegian*, July 28, 1955, 8.

¹⁶⁸ Regents Carmen Dinglan-Consing and Vicente Lontok, “Minority Report,” 12.

make unfavorable comment against those who are responsible for bringing about such a situation—in other words the university administration would be exposed to unfavorable criticism and comments on account of the above situation.

Recently, your faculty approved the institution of Math. O which under the situation now obtaining where this Department voluntarily announced that it will not interpose any objection if Math. O is offered in substitution for Philosophy I, there will be a decrease in the enrollment of Philosophy I. Therefore, the need if any for an additional man to handle sections in Philosophy I will no longer exist.

In view of the above statement of facts and their implications, it would be noted that there is no need for an additional man as a regular member of the Department of Philosophy but in a view of a course in Scholasticism, a lecturer might be needed.

Consequently, if it is to be desired to have Dr. Eleazar serve the Department of Philosophy, I would recommend the position of lecturer in Scholasticism for him.”¹⁶⁹

Curiously, while Pascual and the Dean had endorsed Eleazar specifically for the position of a Lecturer in Scholasticism, Tan had announced to the Board of Regents that the latter had been assigned Professorial Lecturer of Philosophy and Logic, granting him the right to teach any philosophy subject. Despite the consistent and blatant irregularity of Eleazar’s appointment, Tan would insist that the “mistake” was merely the result of “a little confusion.”

In the end, Tan was exonerated. But relieved of their respective positions were Constantino, as well as the Dean of Men and Head of the Student Personnel Service, Andres Abejo, a former Jesuit employed by Tan and charged by Reysio-Cruz with

¹⁶⁹ Ricardo Pascual, quoted in “Report of the U.P. Alumni,” 8.

incompetence. It was Abejo who later threatened to sue members of the Board of Regents's investigating committee, accusing them of harboring anti-Catholic prejudices. In support of the aggrieved, a group of Catholic students and faculty rallied to Malacañang to appeal Abejo's case to President Magsaysay. Then followed a protest organized by the fraternities and sororities in support of the persecuted regents against what they termed as "cassocked authoritarianism," demanding the deportation of the university chaplain who they considered responsible for the sectarian aggressions in campus. The sectarians, in turn, again held their own demonstration, seeking the retention of the chaplain.¹⁷⁰ It was this series of rallies and counter-rallies that ushered the beginning of U.P.'s "religious war."

The Struggle for Academic Freedom in U.P.

While the Catholic advocates felt discriminated and justified in defending themselves against what they called a "war against religion," their libertarian adversaries could only see their increasing presence as a dangerous obsession of one group to gain full control of the university. The vehement attacks on Pascual and the deliberate measures to "emasculate" the much-feared, "godless" Philosophy department were clear signs of this, and were in fact perceived as part of a long standing assault on academic freedom.

Inspired by the American public school system, U.P. was founded in 1908 on the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. Under Spain, the country's education had been severely controlled by the Catholic Church, which led not only to the denigration of the Filipino mind but also to a censorship that suppressed and punished subversive thinking. The establishment of the state university, being secular, non-sectarian, and non-political by character, was therefore a decisive break from this three hundred year old tradition. With "no prior commitment to doctrine, no

¹⁷⁰ Leopoldo Yabes, "Academic Freedom in the University," in *The Filipino Struggle for Intellectual Freedom, and other Essays on Philippine Life and Thought* (Quezon City: n.p., 1959), 36.

surrender to established or vested ideas,”¹⁷¹ U.P., in principle, stands as the bulwark of free inquiry and free orientation, an institution committed to “the freedom of the mind.”

No one knew the fragility of academic freedom better than U.P. President Rafael Palma, who was himself a leading member in the Philippine Assembly that created the state university.¹⁷² His disagreement with Philippine President, Manuel Quezon, regarding the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act led to his forced resignation. In early 1933, the Osmeña-Roxas (OsRox) Independence Mission was finally able to secure the passing of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act in American Congress. Everyone was happy and excited, that Wenceslao Vinzon, then president of the Student Council, called for a University convocation to discuss the independence law. Quezon, fearing that the convocation was an endorsement of the bill which he knew could lead to his political death, complained to Palma saying that such discussion was a “partisan political activity,” and that it was highly improper for the University to be engaged in political matters. Palma, disagreeing with Quezon, explained that the discussion was “purely academic” and that he was prompted to comment on the bill because of “the unusual activity of one of the Deans of the University who had come out openly for the rejection of the bill before and after its approval by Congress.”¹⁷³ To get even, Quezon dramatically reduced the university’s budget, and encouraged Legislature to conduct a probe into its finances. This did not only have adverse effects on U.P.’s reputation before the public, but it also subjected Palma to very humiliating situations. His salary was reduced and was forced by the Committee on Appropriations “to describe in detail

¹⁷¹ Alfredo V. Lagmay, “The Attack on the State University,” in *Academic Freedom, A Special Issue of The Philippine Collegian*, ed. Jose Masakayan, et al. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1957), 24.

¹⁷² Leopoldo Yabes, “The University and the Fear of Ideas,” in *The University and The Fear of Ideas And Other Essays on the Higher Learning* (Quezon City: n.p., 1956), 12.

¹⁷³ Bernardita Reyes Churchill, “Palma’s Momentous Decade (1923-1933),” in *University of the Philippines: The First 75 Years (1908-1983)*, ed. Oscar M. Alfonso (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1985), 178, 181. Palma was referring to Jorge Bocobo, staunch supporter of Quezon, who became the successor of Palma, after the latter’s resignation. For a more detailed and insightful account of Palma’s term and his qualms with Quezon, read Churchill’s entire essay.

the number of positions, salaries of personnel, income, and expenditures, which he never had to do before.”¹⁷⁴ Clearly, Quezon wanted to teach Palma a lesson, or any professor for that matter, who, to borrow the words of the pro-Quezon newspaper *Philippine Herald*, dared to step out “[of] his university cloister.”¹⁷⁵

The assault on academic freedom during Palma’s time was clearly not sectarian but political in nature, and therefore was in some ways different from the crisis that U.P. was to confront in the 1950s. Nevertheless, Palma’s courageous stand against Quezon served as a shining example of a true scholar, and continued to inspire advocates of secular liberalism at crucial times in U.P.’s struggle for intellectual freedom. These advocates included not only the so-called “Palma boys,” such as Teodoro Agoncillo, Leopoldo Yabes, Salvador Lopez and Armando Malay, but also the young guns of the Philosophy department, under the guidance of Ricardo Pascual.¹⁷⁶

Believing that Legislature’s vengeful sanctions against him were beginning to harm the university, Palma eventually decided to step down. But not without leaving his legacy behind. At the height of his conflict with Quezon, Palma delivered a speech on academic freedom. Here, he evoked the idea of the free university, and explained that the right to academic freedom entitles the professor to inquire and express his views not only on the topic of study within the classroom, but on matters beyond those four walls and outside his field of expertise. More importantly, Palma passionately argued, in light of the controversy with Quezon, that the professor, who never ceases to be a citizen in spite of his academic position, must never be forbidden to speak on matters of politics. To do so would be destructive, and even suicidal; for it would mean depriving the nation of “that invigorating contact and influence upon politics of the

¹⁷⁴ Churchill, “Palma’s Momentous Decade,” 186.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted from *Philippine Herald*, February 1933, in Churchill, “Palma’s Momentous Decade,” 180.

¹⁷⁶ Philosophy Professor Zosimo Lee, interview, 2010.

best portion of our sound citizenry which does not make of politics a profession,”¹⁷⁷ persons who, in supposedly being free from “political and social conventionalities,” could give good counsel in the midst of confusion and political discord. What was most inspiring, however, and clearly what captured the admiration and respect of a whole generation of intellectuals, was Palma’s call to exercise their right to academic freedom, no matter what the cost. He says,

If, by reasons of the exercise of a right that belongs to a professor or a citizen, the University is to suffer political persecution, then let it come. Persecutions are of transient nature but rights are permanent, and as such, those rights must be safeguarded to the end so that democratic principles and practices may endure forever in our land.¹⁷⁸

Furthermore, he states:

Our academic immunity is so precious that no sacrifice is too big to preserve it pure and inviolate. If each professor cannot feel safe to proclaim what he considers the truth, because of fear of persecution or displeasure of the men in power, then truth would not come out from his lips or will totally be disfigured. And when that time comes, the University would be nothing more than a mere political agency of the men in power instead of becoming the citadel of learning, unafraid and forwardlooking in its sacred duty to reveal the naked truth as it is in its service to the State.¹⁷⁹

Palma’s speech was first published in the *Philippine Social Science Review* in 1933, and more than twenty years later, at the height of U.P.’s “religious war,” was reprinted in the 1957 special issue of *The Philippine Collegian on Academic Freedom*. This issue, prepared and published under the advisership of Philosophy and Psychology Professor, Alfredo Lagmay, gathered essays written by students, members of the

¹⁷⁷ Rafael Palma, “The University and Politics,” in *Academic Freedom*, 147.

¹⁷⁸ Palma, “The University and Politics,” 150.

¹⁷⁹ Palma, “The University and Politics,” 151.

Collegian's editorial staff, prominent statesmen, as well as professors who were mostly members of an organization called The Society for the Advancement of Academic Freedom.¹⁸⁰

Delaney Rules

For many, the real perpetrator was clearly none other than the Catholic Church, which was known to have successfully infiltrated the university campus through the U.P. Student Catholic Action (UPSCA). Under the guidance of the Jesuit chaplain, Father John Delaney, the UPSCA, whose sole purpose was to “[propagate] Catholic doctrine and practice,” alarmingly grew into an extensive and highly centralized network.¹⁸¹ While Delaney was seen by some as a charismatic man who had nothing but selfless intentions in building a community that nurtured the religious needs of the Catholic faithful,¹⁸² others saw him as a “meddler” who posed a grave threat to the state university's non-sectarian tradition.

Using a hazing incident that led to the death of a fraternity neophyte as pretext, Delaney rallied students and faculty members to demand the abolition of fraternities and sororities in campus. The real objective, however, as some critics claimed, was “to clean student politics” and make way for UPSCA members to wrest power from

¹⁸⁰ Elmer A. Ordoñez, “Memoirs of Diliman Country.”

¹⁸¹ For the history of UPSCA, and the nature and breadth of its influence as an organization, see Lagmay, “The Attack on the State University,” 14-24. Aside from having its own chapter in every unit and college in the University, the UPSCA prompted activities on a massive scale that no organization had ever known before. In addition to its unsurpassable network of influence (an influence even far greater than that of U.P.'s leading fraternity) it was so carefully organized that no group had ever been as highly prepared for instant mobilization. Given its “collective strength” and influence, Lagmay alarmingly points out how such an organization can easily “[establish] a climate of opinion that could make it difficult, if not impossible, for dissenting or nonconforming views to express themselves.” This also explains why UPSCA has been so important to the Hierarchy, so much so that the latter and the Archbishop of Manila “had been persistently maneuvering,” appealing to President Ramon Magsaysay and Secretary of Education Gregorio Hernandez, “to get a UP President who would be sympathetic to the gains of UPSCA in the campus.”

¹⁸² For a more sympathetic view of Fr. Delaney, see Oscar Evangelista, “Some Historical Notes on Father John P. Delaney, S.J. and His Student Welfare Ideas,” in *Icons and Institutions, Essays on the History of the University of the Philippines 1952-2000* (Quezon City: University of the Philippine Press, 2008), 1-24.

the “Greek-letter societies.”¹⁸³ To further secure control, Delaney also went on a crusade against U.P. professors suspected of being atheists and communists, by exposing them and sending students to their classes to spy and report on their religious beliefs. While he accused those who opposed him as intellectually dishonest, he labelled agnostics and atheists as intellectual cowards. As a charismatic man, it was easy for Delaney to convince his flock that there were anti-religious sentiments that were forcing a war on them.

However, some people believed that Delaney’s interventions would not have been so invasive if it were not for the support of President Tan. It was no secret that Tan was UPSCA’s first faculty adviser while he was still the Dean of the College of Engineering, and would remain sympathetic to the Jesuit chaplain’s sectarian goals and aspirations during his presidential term. When U.P. transferred from the old Padre Faura campus to Diliman in 1949, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and followers of *Iglesia ni Kristo* all had to share the use of an interdenominational, old bamboo chapel. Tan’s predecessor, President Bienvenido Gonzalez, who was known to have “scrupulously observed the principle of separation of church and state,” maintained this arrangement to ensure that sectarian activities in the university were “under bounds.” Delaney campaigned for the construction of a separate Catholic chapel, but being no match for the strong-willed Gonzalez, was forced to wait for more favorable times, meanwhile gaining power and influence by infiltrating every unit in the university with an UPSCA chapter. In 1951, Gonzalez ran into conflict with Philippine president Elpidio Quirino and was forced to resign. Tan stepped in and the denominational chapels were finally built.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Ordoñez, “Crisis in Diliman,” in *Academic Freedom*, 36. In 1956, the UPSCA successfully captured the majority of seats in the University Student Council and the university newspaper, *The Philippine Collegian*, as well as the Woman’s Club presidency. See Lagmay, “The Attack on the State University,” 23.

¹⁸⁴ Lagmay, “The Attack on the State University,” 17-18.

Tan's Perennial Support

Tan's support, however, did not end there. His criticism of Pascual's pedagogy, which he claims has made Symbolic Logic unreasonably difficult, was, in fact, prompted by Delaney's own attacks against the philosophy professor for supposedly teaching atheism in his class.¹⁸⁵ However, the most blatant demonstration of sectarian support that emboldened the chaplain and his lackeys was Tan's proposal, again taking the cue from Delaney, to create a Department of Religion, which he formally proposed at a special convocation at the U.P. College of Liberal Arts in December, 1954. In this speech, which Yabes describes as the president's "last and most desperate effort to destroy the secular nature of the University," Tan redefines the meaning of U.P.'s constitutional foundation. In disputing the libertarian idea of the separation of church and state, he calls to attention the invocation at the preamble of the constitution: that the Filipino people "[implore] the aid of Divine Providence." It is therefore not only the recognition of the sovereignty of the people but also the belief in a Supreme Being that serves as the true foundation of what Tan calls "Our Philosophy of Education." This philosophy, which he claims to be "truly reflective of our culture, our traditions and Christian heritage," defines the *raison d'être* of U.P. "as an institution designed to cultivate the intellect along Christian principles." While students should not be compelled to accept this, Tan insists that all employees of the state are required to adopt this philosophy and therefore "teach within a framework of Christian values." From this he concludes that "no professor has a right to teach atheism, nor to teach communism," although one could teach about them for as long as he instructs "without indoctrination."¹⁸⁶ Ironically, in the same breath, he preaches sanctimoniously on the

¹⁸⁵ Elmer Ordoñez, "The Fifties to the First Quarter Storm," in *The University Experience: Essays on the 82nd Anniversary of the Philippines*, ed. Belinda A. Aquino (Quezon City: University of the Philippine Press, 1991), 46.

¹⁸⁶ See Vidal Tan's speech file, "Our Philosophy of Education" (Quezon City: University of the Philippines). Delivered in connection to the bicentennial celebration of the founding of Columbia University, this speech, according to Lagmay, became a kind of template for public speeches and articles written by Catholic leaders and educators. Lagmay, "The Attack on the State University," 18-19. Incidentally, this line

true value of education, insisting that it must “keep alive in young men the courage to dare to seek the truth, to be free.” But it is quite obvious that Tan’s idea of truth and way of life could never be anything else but Christian.

Throughout the speech, Tan refrains from explicitly accusing the Philosophy professors, or anyone for that matter, for teaching the forbidden topics. But it is no accident that he ascribes to his idea of a proper education the status of a philosophy, a word which he says up until now had not been used by U.P.’s own policy makers, either “out of modesty or out of a desire not to misuse the word.” And this he cleverly and subtly contrasts to the not-so-modest Philosophy department which, in failing to introduce to students “the whole tradition of philosophy,” has grossly misrepresented the truth about their own discipline. Tan complains:

I can not for instance conceive of an adequate department of philosophy that does not have men belonging to and teaching different schools of philosophies—that is, if a man has to belong exclusively to one school and thus make it difficult for him to give a fair and objective treatment of the other schools. It is imperative that students be introduced meaningfully to the whole tradition of philosophy, for the *philosophia perennis* is the history of the growth of men’s minds and the consequent development of ideas. It is an inadequate philosophy department which seeks to develop skill in reasoning on only one level of concept: on logical abstractions than on problems of thought based on the realities of everyday life.

In invoking the term *philosophia perennis*, it is curious how Tan projects an idea of the philosophical tradition, in its entirety, not only as the universal heritage to which we all belong but as an objective, indiscriminate gathering of ideas that have supposedly endured the test of time. Whether unwittingly or not, Tan somehow fails

from the constitution which Tan invokes will re-appear in an article against Pascual, published in *The Democratic Youth* (April 12, 1961, 2) by Ambrosio Padilla, a member of the Philippine Senate.

to mention that the idea of *philosophia perennis* itself emerged at a particular historical moment, with a very specific motive.

The philosophical phrase, which became popular in the 20th century and is often attributed to the eighteenth century German rationalist philosopher, Gottfried Leibniz, in fact goes back to the 1500s, to the Italian Augustinian, Agostino Steuco, and his predecessors. Their intention was to establish a continuity in the history of philosophy, and to identify the underlying theme as the search for the single, universal knowledge (*sapientia*). *Vera philosophia* or “true philosophy” could only be one that “leads to piety and the contemplation of God,” and therefore, can be achieved through the study of the various religions which are seen as manifestations of that one truth.¹⁸⁷ It is therefore not surprising that after castigating the Philosophy Department for not only being inadequate but irrelevant, Tan would eagerly propose the creation of a Department of Religion that would provide instruction on systems of faith, which he argues constitute “an integral part of knowledge.”

Perhaps in a different occasion or context, Tan’s suggestion would have been seen as a fairly reasonable proposal. However, in the light of recent events, it was perceived as yet another proof of sectarian encroachment. In fact, Yabes claims that in the history of U.P., it had never known a more serious threat to its freedom and integrity than during Tan’s “theocratic era.”¹⁸⁸ But what was it about this time that inflicted the greatest harm?

Certainly, it was not the harassment that the liberals and independents had to suffer in refusing to endorse the proposal for a Religion department.¹⁸⁹ Nor was it the

¹⁸⁷ For more on the history of the concept of perennial philosophy, see Charles B. Schmitt, “Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27, no. 4 (1966): 505- 532.

¹⁸⁸ Leopoldo Yabes, preface to *The University and the Fear of Ideas*.

¹⁸⁹ A symposium was held to discuss the matter of creating a Religion department. Yabes reports that while the person who was outspokenly critical of the idea was harassed by the administration, repeatedly demanding a copy of his speech, those who were in favor were given a promotion or scholarship/fellowship abroad. See Yabes, “Academic Freedom in the University,” 36.

numerous transgressions of a chaplain enabled by the university president's unconditional support.¹⁹⁰ Rather, with the vision of a Christian state university, which was argued to be not only constitutional but reflective of Filipino heritage, Tan effectively encouraged the sectarians to push aggressively for their cause. Only with a pristine conscience did the sectarians conduct a systematic surveillance of professors suspected of anti-religious sentiments, which consequently spawned a general atmosphere of tension and distrust in the university.

The feeling of anxiety became so oppressive that it was, as Corpuz puts it, fashionable and even respectable for academics to bemoan their precarious condition. In "anticipating unfavorable consequences," they felt justified in keeping their silence and staying clear of ideas deemed unpopular and subversive, lest they suffer persecution "by social stigma, or administrative disapproval, or by the loss of promotional opportunities in rank or pay."¹⁹¹ But clearly it was they, who quietly preferred to "play it safe," who were the real victims of this so-called religious war.

¹⁹⁰ Delaney was notorious for violating the state university's principle of non-sectarianism. During the 1955 Board of Regents committee hearing, it was reported that Delaney had been interfering with academic freedom. According to the testimony of Mrs. Nany Zaballero-Luna, an instructor at the College of Education, Delaney came to her house to complain about a course that she was teaching, where she had discussed "the nature of religious instruction in the Philippine schools." Delaney claimed that students had informed him that Luna was "deliberately slanting [her] instruction to turn the students away from their faith," and asked her to discontinue discussions pertaining to religion. Luna reported this to her department head, who supposedly reported it to President Tan. Tan, however, denied that he was ever informed, which one regent found "very interesting," given the fact that the matter was already well-known among professors and students. (See Arturo Garcia, Gumersindo Garcia, and Ernesto Sibal, "Majority Report of the Five Man Committee of the Board of Regents to Investigate the Charges Against President Vidal A. Tan," in *Philippine Collegian*, July 28, 1955, 9). Furthermore, there was the case of Delaney's unconstitutional use of the Benitez Hall to conduct his lectures on topics such as love, courtship, and marriage. At the beginning, Tan suspended Delaney's use of the Benitez Hall, following the advice of Secretary of Justice Pedro Tuason. However, weeks later, in December 20th, Tan re-granted Delaney the permission to use the hall, arguing that the chaplain's intention to speak on the meaning of Christmas would hardly cause dissension. See "Tan Bans Fr. Delaney From Benitez Hall, *The Philippine Collegian*, December 7, 1955, 1, and "Dr Tan Denies Changing Stand on Delaney Ban," *The Philippine Collegian*, December 20, 1955, 1.

¹⁹¹ O.D. Corpuz, "The Beleaguered Scholar, Diliman, 1956," in *Academic Freedom*, 11.

The threat, however, was far more real than the figment of a paranoia, and it grew increasingly so as Delaney's campaign escalated into the McCarthyite witchhunts in the early '60s.¹⁹² The persecution was real, especially for the Junior faculty members whose careers in Philosophy were unceremoniously aborted by some administrative decision; for Pascual, whose agnosticism had prompted young Christians claiming to be students and alumni of U.P. to circulate leaflets "exhorting all students to spy and report" against him;¹⁹³ and for Professor of Zoology, Agustin Rodolfo, who because of his studies in the Soviet Union had found himself somehow "'frozen' in rank."¹⁹⁴ These were only some of the cases that would effectively serve as reminders of what could happen to scholars who expressed unpopular views.

There was, however, amidst the fear, a "stubborn breed" of scholars who refused to accept that all freedom was lost. While knowing that the oppressive sanctions would eventually lead to the suppression of freedom, they were also certain that keeping silent would only expedite the "unhappy event." Thus, in refusing to remain impotent and irrelevant in their respective intellectual cloisters, this group of intellectuals boldly decided to go public, forming The Society for the Advancement of Academic Freedom. It was the Society which, immediately after its inception in August, 1955, came out with a manifesto signed by a hundred and fifty nine faculty members and administration employees, condemning UPSCA for exerting "strong pressure towards conformity," and creating "an atmosphere of tension, suspicion, and fear."¹⁹⁵ And then again, in 1961, the Society protested against the witchhunt, criticizing CAFA for its misplaced zeal and demanding it to end an investigation that

¹⁹² Ordoñez, "The Fifties to the First Quarter Storm," 42.

¹⁹³ O.D. Corpuz, "The University and Congress," 14.

¹⁹⁴ Elmer Ordoñez, "Nationalism in the Fifties," *The Manila Times*, August 18, 2012. <http://www.manilatimes.net/~manilati/index.php/opinion/columnist1/29186-nationalism-in-the-fifties>.

¹⁹⁵ "Society for Academic Freedom, Manifesto," August 9, 1955, in *Academic Freedom*, 192.

was lacking in authentic evidence and unnecessarily harming the integrity of the University.¹⁹⁶

There was also, from the ranks of the students, a consolidated protest against the CAFA witchhunts. The Student Cultural Association of U.P. (SCAUP), under the leadership of Jose Maria Sison, was organized in 1951, initially with the single purpose of opposing the aggressions of UPSCA.

Ricardo Pascual

While friends and colleagues expressed their indignation in support of Pascual, the philosopher himself “preferred to fight alone.” Ordoñez recounts Pascual’s fearlessness in “opposing singlehandedly” in faculty meetings President Tan’s proposal to dissolve Symbolic Logic. It appeared that he was someone who never backed out from an intellectual brawl. This also explains why, contrary to those who looked nostalgically to better days and lamented the present loss of academic freedom, Pascual would claim that the CAFA investigation was in no way an infringement on his rights. A rather curious statement, coming from a man whose personal beliefs had just been singled out and deemed a scandalous impropriety, not to mention a pretext that legislators would exploit in demanding an investigation and amendment of the University curriculum. And as though that was not violative enough, there was also the suggestion of his immediate expulsion.¹⁹⁷

But if Pascual was unperturbed by the inquisition, or at least appeared to be, it was because he revelled in argumentation. Maybe not entirely for the sake of polemics, but because he believed and perceived himself to be a rational thinker, a man of

¹⁹⁶ “CAFA Urged to End Probe Or Go To Court,” *The Philippine Collegian*, March 29, 1961, 1, 3. The Society was also responsible for sending out the manifesto in January, 1957, which appealed the immediate appointment of a University president, and demanded that the chosen successor of the previous president, Vidal Tan, be committed to the libertarian tradition of the University. For more details on this controversy, see Yabes, “Academic Freedom in the University,” and Appendix A of Masakayan, et al, eds., *Academic Freedom*.

¹⁹⁷ Majul, “The Assault on Academic Freedom,” 194-195.

Enlightenment who took extreme pride in being guided by reason. But to use one's reason—that is, to liberate oneself from dogma, from what Kant called one's "self-incurred tutelage," is to conjure a great deal of courage, a virtue that only truly emerges when one acts in the public sphere. It is, therefore, necessary for reason to be exhibited or demonstrated, even to flaunt its superiority over the cowardice, laziness, and immaturity that make the human mind so flawed and abhorningly inferior. And Pascual, in a sincere effort to exemplify the rational man, was never wanting in such hubris—or self-esteem, to put it positively.

Indeed, if Pascual remained relatively unscathed by the investigations, it was because, in relation to his assailants, he perceived himself to be standing on a higher ground. He remarked, for instance, quite matter-of-factly how the cross-examinations made him feel "just like a professor, answering candidly the queries of [his] students." And in response to the allegation that he was a communist, he merely scoffed at the incompetence of his critics, not only in noting that they failed to dig into his writings, in effect saying that their accusations were ungrounded and hastily conceived; but also in implying that they were barely in a position to judge him, reminding them that they had not even reflected on the issue or have accomplished a tenth of what he has written against communism, which clearly had no other aim but to strengthen democracy.¹⁹⁸

On the Idea of "Partyless Democracy"

If one, indeed, looked closely at Pascual's works, one would see that he was deeply concerned about the fate of democracy in the country. He observed how disillusionment had already begun to creep into the hearts of people, and how this could very well lead them "to swing to the other end." But while the worst had not yet arrived, Pascual urged the people to recognize that a state of emergency existed in the here and now. This was why, in alluding to the Tower of Pisa, whose foundations were

¹⁹⁸ "Dean Pascual Urges Study of Rizal's Free Ideas: Says They Are Relevant Today," *The Philippine Collegian*, March 29, 1961, 5.

reinforced only after it had leaned where it should not, Pascual in an emotional and agitated tone, asked: “need we wait for the Tower of Democracy to lean [far] out where it should not before we exert efforts to save it?”¹⁹⁹

In an effort to provide a solution to the crisis, Pascual published a book in 1952, entitled “Partyless Democracy,” where he sought to revive an idea which President Quezon proposed at a U.P. convocation in July, 1940. In this address, Quezon argued that the existence of political parties had only led to power struggles that have caused disunity and harm to the public good. Would it then not be beneficial to abolish the party system altogether, and instead encourage information and discussion that would lead to cooperation and effective governance? Quezon, however, was aware that it would not be easy to persuade people to see his point, for they had been inculcated with certain “fetishes,” making them believe for instance that a sound democracy can only arise from the strife between the majority and opposition parties, or that individual liberty must never be controlled. Everyone has learned to accept these as “gospel truth.” But trusting that the time was nigh for the Filipinos to do their own thinking, Quezon at the end of his speech posed the challenge to everyone “to study and master the philosophy of democracy,” in the hope that the Filipinos could finally make democracy their own.²⁰⁰

With the beginning of the Second World War, Quezon’s idea was shelved, leading to a disruption in the debate that would have determined its destiny. Pascual believed that if only the discussion were allowed to take its natural course, public opinion would have undoubtedly endorsed the idea. A curious optimism for someone who himself had witnessed the “verbal battles” where Quezon’s theory was strongly opposed. People were wary of the president’s authoritarian tendencies, and critics

¹⁹⁹ Ricardo R. Pascual, *Partyless Democracy: A Blueprint for Political Reconstruction of Post-War Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1952), 5.

²⁰⁰ Manuel L. Quezon, “The Essence of Democracy,” in *Partyless Democracy*, 274.

cautioned that the proposal was merely an excuse to suppress the Opposition and to advocate a one-party system.

Pascual, however, had a different opinion. He admired Quezon for criticizing the evils of the party system, despite his success in partisan politics. From Pascual's standpoint, Quezon's proposal was nothing but a selfless gesture, "with only the objective of making Democracy more and more of, for, and by the people." And to further illustrate the President's honorable intentions, Pascual recounts how Quezon, in reply to the question of how his theory would be put into practice, argued that the abolition of political parties, which was at the heart of the idea of a partyless democracy, should never be achieved "through laws, or through legislation," but "by force of public opinion." This meant a long, tedious process of educating the people, towards making the average citizen politically aware and involved in public issues. Only when people have achieved this maturity, Quezon explains, "can you do away with political parties."²⁰¹

This answer, according to Pascual, "did not quite quiet the restlessness of the minds of his hearers." And so, twelve years later, believing in the merits and reasonableness of the proposal, Pascual himself would resurrect Quezon's idea to finally give it a proper defense. But first, he de-mystifies the fetishes of democracy by exposing their essentialist claims as false. In doing so, he retrieves what is here often forgotten—that is, the historical, which unmask all values claiming to be universal and eternal as transient products of the flows of time. Drawing mainly from Maximo Kalaw's work on *The Development of Philippine Politics*, Pascual gives an account of the birth and development of political parties in the Philippines, giving special attention to the Federal party. This party, which was the first political group to be established, was born under American sovereignty, which curiously was a time when democracy

²⁰¹ See Manuel L. Quezon, "A Partyless Government in a Democracy," in *Partyless Democracy*, 275- 287. This speech was delivered at an event organized by the U.P. Alumni Association at Villamor Hall in August 7, 1940 and was followed by an open forum.

did not yet exist in the country. Furthermore, Pascual explains how this party served as a means to subdue revolutionary elements and persuade Filipinos to recognize the sovereignty of the colonial power. It was therefore not exactly the “avenue of expression of the liberties and freedom for which democracy is famous.” After a parade of neatly arranged proofs, the philosopher finally goes in for the kill. He argues:

It is manifestly false that where there are political parties there is, at once, democracy. From this it follows that it is also false that where there is no democracy there are no political parties.... Again, where there is democracy there are political parties may be true. From this, it does not follow that where there are no political parties there is no democracy....²⁰²

While it is true that in some cases, the absence of political parties is due to a denial of the bill of rights, and therefore to an absence of democracy, it does not necessarily follow that in all cases where political parties do not exist, freedom is curtailed. For as long as the people enjoy the freedom to speak, assemble, and worship, then democracy exists. In other words, the condition that makes democracy possible is not determined by the presence of political parties but by the bill of rights. Unfortunately, people fail to critically examine the beliefs into which they are indoctrinated. This leads them to commit a gross number of non-sequiturs, which as we have seen, results to the unjust condemnation of Partyless democracy as a contradiction in terms.

The Logical Positivist

As a graduate student in the University of Chicago in the mid-1930s, Pascual had the opportunity to work with the British analytic philosopher, Bertrand Russell. At that time, one of the latest trends in philosophical studies was Logical Positivism, a movement in which Russell was one of the leading proponents. It was no surprise that Pascual, fresh from his doctoral studies, came back to the Philippines spreading the

²⁰² Pascual, “Partyless Democracy, 32.

“gospel” of postivism, which in practical terms meant the application of the cold and scientific method of symbolic logic. For Pascual, however, it was not merely a fad. In analyzing socio-political issues, and observing people’s predisposition to fall into dogmatic slumber, Pascual earnestly believed, contrary to President Tan’s opinion, that Symbolic Logic was not only relevant but indispensable to solving the crises of our times.

As a logical positivist, Pascual understood philosophy as an activity whereby propositions could be proven to be either true or false. With verification as the goal, facts naturally become of prime importance. This helps to explain why our philosopher, when asked if he believed in God, replied nonchalantly that “he had little respect for ‘belief’ because of its ‘instability;”²⁰³ or when asked if he was an agnostic, confessed shamelessly saying, “I know nothing,” words that resoundingly evoked the wisdom of Socratic irony. As a positivist, Pascual simply regarded matters of faith as beyond the scope of proof, and therefore meaningless to philosophical inquiry.²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, people came to the “illogical conclusion” that our agnostic, in assuming a skeptical position towards the transcendental, was effectively denying the existence of God. In an attempt to correct this erroneous assumption, Pascual argues that agnosticism, far from being a fixed proposition, is “an attitude based on scientific probings.” In light of insufficient evidence, an agnostic would suspend judgment but never bring his search

²⁰³ “UP Professors Testify Today,” 3.

²⁰⁴ To further understand Pascual’s thinking, it is helpful to have an ample knowledge of logical postivism. This philosophical movement, which began in the late 1920s with the Vienna Circle, was an attempt to integrate Empiricism with “a sound theory of logic.” As profound “admirers of science,” the logical positivists held the belief that only propositions which are verifiable through empirical evidence (i.e., sense experience) or logical analysis are meaningful. Consequently, Metaphysics, whose propositions are incapable of empirical verification, are deemed meaningless and therefore carry no import to knowledge. Thus, the principal aims of logical positivism are as follows: “to present a consistently empirical account of scientific method and to demonstrate the meaninglessness of metaphysics.” See Julius Rudolph Weinberg, *An Examination of Logical Postivism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936); Albert E. Blumberg and Herbert Feigl, “Logical Postivism,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 11 (1931): 281-296; Nicholas G. Fotion, “Logical Postivism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 508.

to an end. In fact, he adds, “he is an ‘unfortunate’ agnostic who stops in his pursuits.”²⁰⁵ But regardless of the conclusion that one reaches at the end, Pascual believed that the freedom of religion that our Constitution clearly provides must also allow people the freedom to have no religion.

Needless to say, philosophy, as far as Pascual conceived it, was far from merely being a mental exercise of proving. Again, in contrast to what Tan claimed, the professors of the U.P. Philosophy department did encourage the study of different ideologies, including communism, with the intention to provide “a comparative study” that would “broaden the intellectual horizon of the students.” In fact, in a radio interview, Pascual argued that “in order to love democracy more, the different, competing ideologies should be studied to their rock bottom.”²⁰⁶

In reading *Partyless Democracy*, one is impressed by the traces of Marxist philosophy, in which Pascual most certainly did not merely dabble out of curiosity. While he faithfully advocated democracy to the end, one could see that he wrestled with the challenges of Marxism, and at times found inspiration in its ideals for his own construction of a “New Democracy.” Condemning the social inequalities that plagued the present system, he distinguished the old form of democracy from the new one, which “post Marx, cannot be indifferent to the silent moans and wails of the exploited teeming millions.”²⁰⁷ It was precisely this economic tension between classes that partyless democracy could help to alleviate, and hopefully before a class struggle erupts and ensures proletarian dictatorship.

Pascual asserts that in a partyless democracy, where political parties are abolished, the State would no longer be caught in the power struggle of groups and institutions competing for vested interests and political supremacy. Under the system of partisan/geographical representation, we have seen time and again how political

²⁰⁵ “Dean Pascual Urges Study of Rizal,” 5.

²⁰⁶ “Pascual Denies Red Charge Anew.” *The Philippine Collegian*, March 14, 1961, 2.

²⁰⁷ Pascual, *Partyless Democracy*, 39.

parties “destroy each other” in wrangling for constituent votes, leading “to the neglect of the welfare of the people.” To avoid this, Pascual proposes occupational representation, where representatives of each group will only be elected by members belonging to that particular group. In this electoral system, farmers, for instance, would never campaign against fisherman, as “their candidates are not competing for the same votes.” And even if there were several candidates vying for votes within a group, election would be based not on parties or personalities but on principles. In other words, voters in their respective group will inevitably elect the representative “who can best give them what they need.”²⁰⁸ Furthermore, because “different occupations have no ground of competition with one another,” and in fact are “mutually dependent upon the good of every other occupation,” this political set-up would most likely lead not to factions and antagonism but to greater cooperation and unity.²⁰⁹ Pascual also argued that since this “New Democracy” would no longer be based on individual liberty but social control and planning, it would allow the State to encourage “not production for profit but production for consumption. . . [and] not only by those who can afford but basically by those who do not have.”²¹⁰ For these reasons, Pascual concluded that partyless democracy was the means by which social welfare and justice could be achieved.

Whether Pascual was right, or naive, is a matter that could be studied more carefully on another occasion. However, there is no doubt that in his earnest attempt to

²⁰⁸ Pascual, *Partyless Democracy*, 172.

²⁰⁹ Corpuz wrote an essay presenting a full critique of Pascual’s idea of partyless democracy. Here, he complains that Pascual’s “single-minded resolve” to abolish political parties in order to make way for his proposed system of government has only led to inconsistencies and gross errors in logic. One of the few assumptions Corpuz contests is the idea of occupational representation which he argues does not take into account “intra-occupational wrangles,” as well as the fact that common occupational interests are not the only thing that bind persons. In fact, people who belong to one profession may be “divided in their opinions on religious, educational, business or political issues.” O.D. Corpuz, “Dr. Pascual’s Partyless Democracy,” *Comment* (October 1956): 55. For a rebuttal, and Corpuz’s response to it, see Armando Fl. Bonifacio, “Partyless Democracy: A Rejoinder,” *Comment* (1957): 93-106.

²¹⁰ Pascual, *Partyless Democracy*, 117.

redeem democracy from its reified state, Pascual identified a more serious fetish than those that Quezon had long identified. For what lay at the heart of the problem that led not only to the decay of democracy but to people's disillusionment with it, was democracy's reification into *res publica*, "a state of affairs concomitant with the passive consent of the people." In other words, people had somehow forgotten that the real foundation of a democracy could be "nothing less than the active participation" of its constituents.²¹¹ Instead, they assumed that democracy was a given, and were disillusioned precisely because they failed to see the gap that naturally existed between what democracy promises and what it can actually deliver. As Pascual cleverly puts it, the "great implication of [our] democracy" is

not that we have the cake and we want to eat it, but that we want to eat a cake, hence we must prepare it. The test of the pudding is in the eating; but no amount of wishing can make us test what we have not. Let us make the pudding to our heart's content.²¹²

While it seems that the idea of partyless democracy never caught on, Pascual has been compared to a few distinguished people in Asia who have equally critiqued the Western democratic tradition and helped conceive "a new concept of democracy" that was not only faithful and suitable to Asian culture and needs but what could give a real alternative to the political structures of the West and of Soviet Russia. This includes the Indian Member of Parliament Shriman Agarwal, whose idea of a Gandhian Constitution was based on the concept of "decentralised democracy," as well as Indonesian president Sukarno, whose idea of "Guided Democracy" emphasized strong leadership inspired by the "family principle" of an "Indonesian Democracy of ancient times."²¹³

²¹¹ Pascual, *Partyless Democracy*, 5.

²¹² Pascual, *Partyless Democracy*, 15.

²¹³ See Marguerite J. Fisher, "New Concepts of Democracy in Southern Asia," *The Western Political Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1962): 625-640. It is also important to note that Pascual's "New Democracy" uncannily echoes exactly the same words that the Chinese Communist revolutionary Mao Tse Tsung used in 1940. This definitely merits a

Pascual's Intellectual Hero

Aside from being accused of being a communist, Pascual, as we have mentioned, was also depicted as a threat to the Filipino way of life. Not only for being an agnostic who denied “our Catholic tradition,” but also, as President Tan pointed out, for teaching a philosophical method so foreign that it was obscure and irrelevant to the life of his own students.

Curiously, critics have failed to mention that Pascual was not merely a logical positivist; in fact, throughout his career as an academic, he was first and foremost a scholar and avid follower of the Filipino national hero, Jose Rizal. While he emphasized the importance of Symbolic Logic to philosophical inquiry, and therefore recognizing his intellectual indebtedness to Bertrand Russell, Pascual attributed to Rizal “the primary position of intellectual leadership in the country.”

It would be worth pondering why Pascual, at the height of the CAFA investigation, did not simply demand for academic freedom, as many of his colleagues did. Instead, he urged Filipinos to study Rizal's thoughts and beliefs, and to use this wisdom to understand present problems. From the excerpts he quotes from Rizal's correspondence with the Jesuit priest, Father Pastells, one can see why Pascual, being a rationalist, revered the Ilustrado from Calamba, Laguna, even claiming him to be “the greatest of the Filipino heroes.” For even amidst the discouragements and criticisms of fellow Ilustrados, Rizal persisted in his endeavors to awaken his fellowmen to the deplorable reality of their existence and to a consciousness of a Filipino nation. In openly criticizing the abuses and transgressions of the religious orders, Rizal exposed the fallibility of the Church, an institution like any other, wrought by human passions and errors. But his critique was not out of spite but from his love for humanity. In hoping to free his people from the dogmatic impositions of the Church, Rizal equally emphasized the importance of self-esteem, urging everyone to “look at his own affairs

comparative study.

through the prism of his own judgment and self-love.” “Like the sap that drives the tree skyward in search of the sun,” self-love was for Rizal not the nonsensical vanity that Father Pastells had claimed it to be, but “the greatest good that God has given to man for his perfection and integrity.”²¹⁴ And it was precisely in the hope of inculcating this self-love that Rizal, according to Pascual, was prompted to study records of the past, making corrections and adding commentaries and explanations of Antonio de Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, not only to temper prejudiced remarks, but to provide a clear picture to his Filipino readers, who unfortunately no longer knew their origins, of the culture and achievements of their ancestors, so that “they might take pride in accepting their descent from them.”²¹⁵ In consecrating his life, as well as his death, to the freedom of his people and to the struggle against obscurantism, Pascual places Rizal in the pantheon of Enlightened free thinkers and philosophers, such as Galileo Galilei, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine, who have all equally suffered persecution for their beliefs.²¹⁶

But it was not just Rizal and these honorable men who have fallen and suffered in the name of truth. The CAFA trial was a reenactment of the Inquisition, and this time, it was Pascual’s turn at the stake. It would not be difficult to imagine that our philosopher perceived his persecution not in terms of an infringement of his academic freedom but as the logical outcome, and more importantly, the consummation of his own struggle to bear witness to truth.

Throughout his academic career, one can see how Pascual looked up to Rizal for intellectual inspiration. Not only did he, in declaring publicly his agnosticism, strive as a scholar to look at life “through the prism of his own judgment,” but as a teacher, sought to impart the same virtue to his students. While he himself strongly believed in

²¹⁴ “Dean Pascual Urges Study of Rizal,” 1.

²¹⁵ Ricardo Pascual, “Rizal’s Contribution to Filipino Nationalism,” (paper presented at the International Congress on Rizal: First Centenary of the Birth of Jose Rizal, Apostle of Filipino Nationalism, Martyr, and Hero, Manila, December 4-8, 1961), 131.

²¹⁶ See Ricardo Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave: A Reiteration of the Greatness of the Martyr of Bagumbayan* (Manila: Luzon Publishing Corporation, 1950), 95-99.

democratic ideals, it was never enough to simply provide an encomium of democracy. In teaching a whole spectrum of thought, caring little to avoid what was considered taboo, he tried to give his students their inherent right to choose the ideology they thought was best.²¹⁷ But more importantly, for Pascual, philosophical instruction was never merely a parade of universal concepts. Again, following the wisdom of Rizal, Pascual urged Filipinos to examine their own historical heritage, to recognize their own intellectual lineage and to understand that their present struggles are born out of a particular configuration of time and circumstances. And for this, Rizal's works provided perfectly the history and social analysis that were crucial to understanding who we are as a people and what we have been fighting for.

Naturally, Pascual regarded it as a serious impediment that people were ignorant of Rizal's writings. It is because of this ignorance "that many do not and cannot acknowledge the national hero's singular leadership,"²¹⁸ and to bring the implications further, why we constantly find ourselves caught in the same deplorable situation that Rizal was in decades ago. But while the situation seemed bleak, Pascual was also undeniably an optimist. Being a rationalist, there was no doubt in his mind that with proper education, people would inevitably see, through the light of their own reason, that Rizal was indeed their intellectual leader. If only people dug into Rizal's writings, and similarly, into his own, these witchhunts would not have occurred.

Rizal Beyond the Grave

Obviously, Pascual was wrong. There were some people who did read Rizal's writings, but instead of regarding him as their intellectual leader, took offense at his anti-clerical views. They were willing to honor Rizal as their national hero, but with the condition that his criticism be tempered, in the hope of presenting him as an ally of the Church.

²¹⁷ "Pascual Denies Red Charges Anew," 2.

²¹⁸ "Dean Pascual Urges Study of Rizal," 1.

On May 18, 1935, just a month before Rizal's birth anniversary, a document was discovered by Father Manual Gracia, lying in the vault of the Archbishop of Manila. It was, so it was claimed, the "original" of Rizal's retraction of his anti-Catholic writing and Masonic affiliation. Understandably, people were skeptical: why was the document withheld from Rizal's family after his execution? And from the time that the editorial staff of *El Renacimiento* in December 29, 1908 noted that "reliable persons... had gone to the Archive of the Archbishop's Palace in order to look for this document [retraction]" and found nothing, why did the document resurface only now, after "a span of about 26 years?"²¹⁹ To all this, the response was simply that the document was "providentially misplaced."

With the document lying all this time at the "providential vault," and having been brought to light at that "providential hour," Pascual remarks how it all seemed to him "too 'providential' all the way through." Thus, on November 15th, 1935, only a few months after that strange discovery, Pascual came out with his book, entitled *Dr. Jose Rizal Beyond the Grave*. By applying "scientific technique and method," Pascual analyzes the document in question, in the hope of proving whether Rizal's retraction was genuine or not.

When the document was first discovered, there were some who argued, in the hope of persuading the public, that the retraction was not to be taken as a defamation of Rizal as a National Hero. A "thought-provoking opinion," Pascual remarked, for not only is half of Rizal's writing about religion but that the greatness of this man, who was "not merely a martyr who died by force but principally a thinker," lies not only in his death but in his work, his words and actions.²²⁰ Seeing that everything was at stake, it was not only clear to Pascual that the matter could not be taken lightly, but that the whole controversy was "a frame up and a foul scheme of some of [Rizal's] enemies

²¹⁹ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 60.

²²⁰ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 3-4.

who [did] not want the name, work, and spirit of the Martyr to move his People.”²²¹ Thus, in an attempt to redeem his hero from this injustice and terrible disgrace, Pascual summons Rizal from the grave as it were, presenting his life and work in hoping to awaken and remind people of his spirit and greatness. With a clear objective, Pascual poetically writes,

It is not our purpose here to disturb those who are asleep, principally Dr. José Rizal (*requiescat in pace*), but paradoxically to awaken those who are awake so that those who are asleep may not be disturbed. A paradox that is all the more necessary, because of the present confusion among the living about the dead. The only and best way out of such a confusion is to make the dead live in their immortal thoughts that speak silently but very effectively to the understanding of those who can and want to understand.²²²

Without any formal training in graphology, (and perhaps armed only with the resolve of a man that has become exasperated with what he perceived as a fabrication of “proofs”), Pascual boldly engages a study of the document, comparing the penmanship in the retraction document and the handwriting in letters Rizal had written during that time. Comparing the degree of slants, and identifying “the unnatural stops and pen lifts” in the signature, Pascual concludes that the writer of the retraction document, “was not writing continuously.” From these moments of hesitation, which betrays a lack of “careless abandon,” Pascual infers that the writer was a forger. Quite understandably, critics have tried to discredit Pascual, noting that he is “not a recognized authority in this field,” and that the document, if it be analyzed, must be done by no less than “a board of handwriting experts of unquestionable standing.”²²³ Nevertheless, as we shall see, his scholarship, which was seen to exude sharpness and audacity, have earned him the respect of prominent scholars of his time.

²²¹ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 176.

²²² Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 101-12.

²²³ Editorials, *Philippine Magazine*, March, 1936, 118-119.

For the skeptical reader who is dissatisfied with Pascual's handwriting analysis, the next chapters of the book may perhaps be considered more tenable. Here, Pascual further makes his argument, analyzing the veracity and plausibility of Rizal's retraction by examining the Martyr's life and his entire corpus, and in the process, lays bare the inconsistencies he finds. For instance, how could Rizal, who encouraged self-esteem and self-judgment, and was clearly against dogmatism insist, even voluntarily insert in his retraction the statement that Catholicism was the religion in which he was "born and educated?" While Father Vicente Balaguer, the priest who administered the retraction, claims that it was Rizal's way of making his Catholic education known, Pascual finds such explanation preposterous, and thus replies:

That [Rizal] was "educated in the Catholic religion" was factually true, if we are talking of and referring to Rizal, the young and adolescent student, this young man who remained and died like a young man only, who was not true to Rizal's life. But if we are talking of and referring to Rizal who left Catholicism fourteen years before his execution in 1896 and who was educated in the free atmosphere of the civilized world, it follows that such a phrase was not true to facts, facts that could not now be altered, unless we want to invent bedtime stories and not to record events. I just wonder if Rizal forgot his own life history, principally the best years of his life, at the time that he was said to be writing that phrase which he himself inserted voluntarily. Because it was not the truth and we could not expect Rizal to write something that was not true, I cannot believe that Rizal inserted that phrase.²²⁴

To further build his case, Pascual, comporting himself like a defense lawyer in court, then "[calls] for a witness the sister of Dr. Rizal, Miss Trinidad Rizal." Unlike the people summoned to testify to Rizal's retraction, who he points out were, quite suspiciously, "all priests," Pascual establishes the credibility of his star witness as one

²²⁴ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 45.

who “does not belong to any sectarian organization,” and who therefore has no other interest but to serve the truth. The interview with Trinidad took place on August 17, 1935, “in the presence of Mr. Guillermo Tolentino as a witness,” but in playfully evoking a court case, Pascual provides a transcription of the conversation, presenting her statements “in the form of cross-examination.” Through Trinidad’s testimony, Pascual shows, “by way of disproofs,” that Rizal never expressed his desire to retract, nor mentioned his intention to marry Josephine Bracken. The latter, being an explicit request to be granted the sacrament of marriage, has been argued as proof that a retraction must have taken place. But Pascual finds it all too strange that Rizal would retract, according to the notarial statement of a certain Father Luis Viza y Marti, on the morning of December 29, 1896, but did not say a single word about it to his sister, Trinidad, who visited him later that evening.

Faithful to the rules of a court proceeding, Pascual then summons a Professor of Psychology as an expert witness who would show through a psychological study how Rizal’s conversion was not plausible. Furthermore, he exposes the “absence of reliable records and genuine circumstantial evidence,” and reminds us of the Church’s history of “pious frauds,” putting to doubt the credibility of the Jesuit priest Father Pio Pi’s claim, in his book *La Muerte Cristiana del Doctor Rizal*, that the Martyr’s retraction was an “historical fact.”

But while painstakingly discrediting the document and every possible argument raised in support of the retraction, Pascual himself is not satisfied with simply laying out the facts, or the lack thereof. Towards the end of the book, he engages a discussion of Rizal’s convictions, believing that a study of the controversy would not be complete without an examination of the philosophical content of the hero’s works.

When the mysterious document first went public, varying opinions were raised. There were some who entertained the possibility that Rizal, in hoping to be complaisant to his old professors or to save his family from further persecution was persuaded to recant. Others, however, dismissed the retraction as completely bogus, refusing to

believe that their great hero, given his manly character, could be coerced to do anything against his will. Pascual himself did not and could not, at least before the act of proving, totally dismiss the idea of a retraction under duress, pointing out that the Martyr had to succumb to his own forced death, despite his protests and claim of innocence. But he was equally aware, and rather alarmed, that members of the Church were not satisfied in proving that Rizal forcibly recanted; the retraction had to appear as nothing less than what Father Pio Pi called a real conversion, a “marked ‘change of heart.’” And this was why, according to Pascual, it was not enough to show that Rizal’s old teachers prevailed over him, fearing that such retraction would appear merely as a kind of appeasement. No, it had to be Father Balaguer, the Jesuit missionary who was with Rizal in Dapitan, who, in the end, was able to convince the great Martyr to sacrifice his self-love to God, and “although it would be contrary to the voice of [his] reason, [to] ask from God the grace of faith.”²²⁵ Through a depiction of a man crying and refusing to be condemned eternally, Father Balaguer demonstrates how Rizal converted “from being a ‘heretic rationalist and free-thinker’ to being ‘a faithful son of Catholicism.’” And only through such narrative, Pascual argues, could members of the Church show that the retraction was not forced but “morally and religiously valid.”²²⁶

To strip Rizal of reason and reduce him to a servile follower of the Catholic Church—this was, for Pascual, the greatest injustice:

Because Dr. Jose Rizal was principally a thinker, a philosopher, and an educator who paved his way to Martyrdom not through rocket shooting, nor opportunism, but by thinking and philosophizing to the best of human reason and judgment he was endowed with—thinking and philosophizing that earned him enemies, enemies who executed him, and execution that crowned his work

²²⁵ Fr. Vicente Balaguer’s notarial testimony on August 8, 1917, quoted in Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 81.

²²⁶ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 56.

and made his already beloved name dearer still to the hearts of his sincere countrymen and enlightened people of the world.

What better way then to redeem the honor of a philosopher than to uphold and make known the ideas he lived and died for?

In discussing Rizal's philosophical convictions, Pascual demonstrates how the great Martyr consistently declared himself a rationalist throughout his life, not only in the letters he had written to Father Pastells, but also in Father Balaguer's own testimony of the alleged retraction. In the letters, one could see that while Rizal was a man who clearly had faith in God, he believed not in the revelation found in the Sacred Scriptures but "in that living revelation of Nature that surrounds us everywhere," which reflected divine goodness and wisdom more than any book, parchment or temple could.²²⁷ Furthermore, Rizal could not have been more critical of the dogmas of the Church. He fearlessly disputed, for example, the infallibility of the Church's authority, stating that while it is "an institution more perfect than others," it very much remains "human to the end, with the defects, errors, and vicissitudes of the works of men." And in demonstrating one of its major flaws, Rizal questioned the doctrine of redemption, objecting to the belief that "Christ was the only Redeemer of humanity from sin and its punishment,"²²⁸ and that before His coming, people were "[in] profound hell."

But despite such convictions, would it not have been possible that Rizal, fearing his death, retracted in order to save his soul? Certainly, Pascual would not allow it; for Rizal had a clear sense of his life-ideal, and struggled throughout his entire life to impart to his countrymen that "little of light" which he had found, the light which Pascual believes refers to the "rationalist and scientific principles" that opposed "narrow dogmatism."²²⁹ But even in Father Balaguer's own story, corroborated by Father Pio Pi, we find Rizal, now with the knowledge of his imminent execution,

²²⁷ Jose Rizal's fourth letter to Father P. Pastells, April 4, 1893, quoted in Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 111.

²²⁸ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 126.

²²⁹ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 87.

declaring, with absolute resolve, that “he was guided by the reason that God had given him... [and] that as such he would go before the Tribunal of God, tranquil for having complied with the duty of a rational man.” Considering that Rizal’s conscience was “a peaceful and tranquil sea of oil,” amidst “the raging storm of persecution,” Pascual asks in vexation, “What then was the conversion for?” And considering that Rizal was one who not only reflected on ideas carefully before accepting them as his own, but believed earnestly that “a man ought to die for his duty and his conviction”—is it really possible that he would be easily convinced to take back what he had said and done, and thus retract? “No! A thousand times no!” Pascual exclaims. Rizal would have “to rise from his grave and descend so low so as to make that retraction a genuine one.”²³⁰

The Controversial Book Review

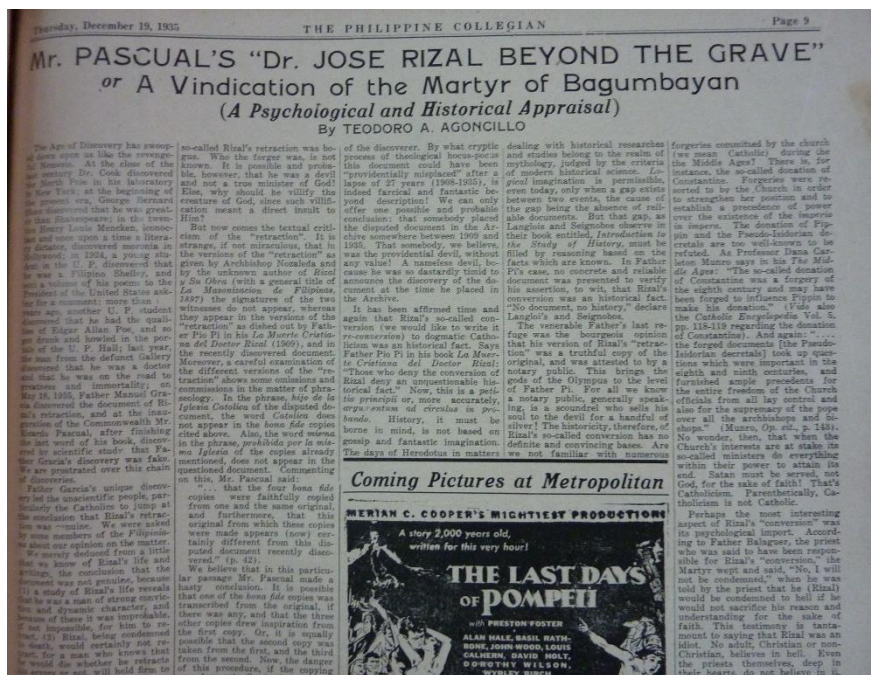


Illustration 2: Teodoro Agoncillo’s controversial book review of Pascual’s *Dr. Jose Rizal Beyond the Grave*.

²³⁰ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 176.

But what became of Pascual's polemical work? We know that a second edition was published in 1950, and the author himself explains that the reprinting was prompted not so much by the desire to correct the material defects of the first edition but by a "revival of interest" in the controversy of Rizal's retraction. He was here referring to Rafael Palma's prize-winning biography of Rizal, whose chapter on the retraction makes reference to Pascual's graphological study. With teeming pride, Pascual cannot resist inserting his English translation of Palma's chapter in the appendix of the latest edition of his book.²³¹

Not everyone, however, was pleased with Palma's biography. Pascual notes in his preface how the Catholics have zealously opposed not only the use of taxpayers' money to purchase the English translation by Justice Roman Ozaeta of Palma's work²³² but also the proposal to make the book a required reading for High School students. While the Catholic bishops have made it clear that they are not demanding the ban of Palma's book, they denounced its "unfounded accusations against the Jesuit Fathers" as part of an anti-Catholic and masonic propaganda.²³³

But such controversy was not the first of its kind, and it was certainly not the last. Aside from Pascual who, as we have elaborately explained, was castigated through the witchhunts of 1961, Senator Claro M. Recto would equally find himself condemned and labelled an anti-Catholic communist by members of the Hierarchy when he authored and urged the passing of the Rizal bill in the mid-1950s. The Rizal bill, which proposed to make the unexpurgated versions of *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* a compulsory reading in the tertiary level, was deemed "as in the case of a certain biography of Rizal," a discrimination against the Catholics in the country.²³⁴

²³¹ Pascual, *Rizal Beyond the Grave*, 187-197.

²³² Palma's book, in its original Spanish, was simply entitled *The Biography of Rizal*. It was Justice Ozaeta who, in translating the work into English, gave the title *Pride of the Malay Race*.

²³³ See "Joint Statement of the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines on the Book *The Pride of the Malay Race*," January 6, 1950. From http://www.cbceonline.net/documents/1950s/1950-malay_race.html.

²³⁴ "Statement of the Philippine Hierarchy on the Novels of Dr. Jose Rizal," April 21,

What Pascual fails to mention, however, was that there was another telling incident in relation to his book. Just a few weeks after its publication, Teodoro Agoncillo, who had just graduated with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and was then virtually unknown—and who would later become a well-known Filipino historian—wrote a review of Pascual's work, praising the author not just for his astounding logic but for presenting an analysis so thorough, “to the extent,” he quips, “of almost breaking the microscope in the Geology Department.” Aside from a few criticisms, the review was mostly a reiteration of some of Pascual's arguments, but with occasional, blasphemous references to the connivance of the Church and the devil. The irreverent Agoncillo did not only call the forger “a devil and not a true minister of God,” but also argued that it could only have been the “providential devil” who placed the document in the Archive. Furthermore, picking up on Pascual's statement on the Church's history of pious frauds, Agoncillo cites more examples of these forgeries and bitterly remarks:

When the Church's interests are at stake its so-called ministers do everything within their power to attain its end. Satan must be served, not God, for the sake of faith! That's Catholicism. Parenthetically, Catholicism is not Catholic.²³⁵

Two weeks later, a certain Atilano Salvo wrote an article in response, reviewing Agoncillo's review.²³⁶ Calling attention to the fact that Agoncillo was not only a co-member of the *Filipiniana*, a group which Pascual had founded, but also “partisan on this question of the retraction,” Salvo points out why the author of the review could not be impartial, thus failing to provide a real critique of Pascual's book. In fact, the review, Salvo asserts, is at best a summary. And to make it worse, Agoncillo

1956. From http://www.cbconline.net/documents/1950s/1956-novels_of_rizal.html.

²³⁵ Teodoro A. Agoncillo, “‘Mr. Pascual's Dr. Jose Rizal Beyond The Grave' or A Vindication of the Martyr of Bagumbayan (A Psychological and Historical Appraisal),” *The Philippine Collegian*, December 19, 1935, 9.

²³⁶ Atilano Salvo, “Reviewing a Review (Being an Answer to Teodoro A. Agoncillo's Article, ‘Psychological and Historical Appraisal’),” *The Philippine Collegian*, January 6, 1936, 4-5.

fails irresponsibly in distinguishing his opinions from those of the author of the book, making it appear as though the ideas were all his. In addition to this serious charge of careless, if not intentional plagiarism, Salvo argues how Agoncillo's review, if one were to assess it as a summary, is equally misleading. For while Pascual does mention that forgeries occur in the Catholic Church, Agoncillo hyperbolizes this claim to large proportions, asserting how such dishonest practice is committed by the Hierarchy as a rule of thumb, "to strengthen her position and to establish a precedence of power over the existence of the *imperio in impera*."

Whether Agoncillo was merely making the implications of Pascual's arguments more explicit or indeed using the review inappropriately in a personal tirade against the Church remains a topic for an exciting debate. Salvo's scathing review, which nonetheless was a fine and sound rebuttal, must have effectively convinced people to question Agoncillo's judgments, so much so that another review—a "proper" one—of Pascual's book, had to be made. Written by the Vice-President of the same club (Filipiniana) which Pascual founded and to which allegedly Agoncillo belonged, the review was published a week after Salvo's article came out.²³⁷ But because the review criticizes Pascual not merely for his lack of expertise in handwriting analysis but also for his biases against the Catholic Church, everyone seemed to have been finally appeased and no "counter reviews" followed.

However, the repercussions of the controversial review did not end with Salvo's critique. While the Editor-in-Chief was suspended from classes for a week, the Managing Editor was "severely reprimanded." It appears though that behind the disciplinary action was in fact a Columban priest by the name of Father E.J. McCarthy, who demanded that controversial matters be prevented from "seep[ing] into the

²³⁷ Jose Ramirez, "A Brief Review of Mr. Pascual's Dr. Jose Rizal Beyond the Grave," *The Philippine Collegian*, January 13, 1936, 4.

columns of the university paper in the future,” particularly those that offend the Catholic community.²³⁸

Father McCarthy

Curiously, as one looks at Father McCarthy’s involvement in University affairs, one cannot help but feel a sense of *dèjà vu*. Like Delaney in the 1950s, McCarthy preached in lecture halls and meetings of the Scholastic Philosophy club on the Foundations of Morality, deploring the growing problem of immorality in Philippine society and condemning the professors who he blames are teaching the wrong principles. One book he severely denounced was a textbook by Professor Macaraig, entitled “Social Problems,” which McCarthy claims has “at least twenty-two passages... which are a direct attack against Catholic preachings and morals.”²³⁹ Apparently, there were others on his black list, and McCarthy bragged that he had sufficient evidence to have four professors dismissed and that there were three other faculty members who must take extreme caution in teaching “anti-Catholic” tenets. He threatened that if these professors did not “clean house,” he would bring the case before the Board of Regents, and if that fails, “write a report to the fourteen Catholic bishops in the Philippines” who in turn will instruct all priests to conduct “anti-U.P. sermons... from the pulpit all over the Islands.” To assure compliance, McCarthy also swore that an “espionage system” in the University would be established, “by enrolling students in the classes of the professors suspected of ‘misbehaviour.’”²⁴⁰ From this, it appears that Delaney was simply following a tradition and that the witchhunts really began long before the 1960s.

²³⁸ “Dean Espiritu Takes Disciplinary Action on Publication of Retraction Review,” *The Philippine Collegian*, January 6, 1936, 1 and 8.

²³⁹ “Fr. McCarthy Condemns University Textbook,” *The Philippine Collegian*, January 13, 1936, 1.

²⁴⁰ “Anti-U.P. Propaganda is McCarthy’s Latest Stunt,” *The Philippine Collegian*, January 20, 1936, 8.

Unfortunately, we do not know for certain if Pascual made it to the McCarthy list. What we do know, however, is that around this time, there was news that the teaching contract of the Indian scholar and Head of the Philosophy Department, Dr. Dharendra Nath Roy, was not renewed, and was therefore going to be forced to leave the University by the end of that school year. Having served the University since 1928, we can assume that Pascual and Agoncillo, both students of philosophy, which was then a very small department, were taught by Roy, or at the very least knew the professor.

In an interview, Roy himself explains that the non-renewal of his contract might have been prompted by “the displeasure of certain elements in the Philippines and the University” at his criticisms against the friars of the country. Justifying himself, Dr. Roy explains, “I based my work on researches from documents and the works of Rizal. And after I found what I found, I simply couldn’t be very nice to them.”²⁴¹

Roy was here referring to the book he published in 1930, entitled *The Philippines and India*. In the preface, he explains how he got inspired upon hearing the news that the Philippine Teachers’ Federation was sending distinguished Filipinos for a visit to India. He thought that this could be “the beginning of the end of a long cultural isolation” caused and enforced by colonialism between these two nations, and that it would be the perfect opportunity to write a book that, in remembering their ancient connection, could very well “foster self-confidence and self-respect.”²⁴² Unfortunately, the plan for the expedition was dropped, and Roy, being profoundly discouraged, admits that he would have abandoned the project if not for President Palma who encouraged him to see it through.

At the very beginning, Roy makes it clear that he is writing in protest to “a crime against humanity”—a crime that “force[s] an alien civilization upon a people in

²⁴¹ Dharendra Nath Roy, quoted in “Students Regret Roy’s Departure, *The Philippine Collegian*, February 3, 1936, 2.

²⁴² Dharendra Nath Roy, *The Philippines and India* (Manila: Oriental Printing, 1930). i.

total disregard of its past,” and dehumanizes them into “mere automatons.”²⁴³ He was alluding to the evils of Spanish colonialism, which did not only brainwash the Filipinos into submitting to “Castilian supremacy,” but in unleashing a form of “theocratic feudalism,” had let loose a “whole gang of most insolent friars to garrote ruthlessly all hope of native originality and independent thinking.”²⁴⁴ One could easily see how such statement could have gotten Roy into trouble. But what the Indian professor failed to mention in the interview was that he was equally critical of the new American masters who, “with their democratic persuasion backed by the logic of the bayonet,”²⁴⁵ were not really any better than their colonial predecessors. For it seemed that despite the Jones Law of 1916, which promised Philippine independence upon the establishment of a stable government, the Americans have always been finding excuses to prolong their sovereignty in the Islands, proving nothing but their insincerity.

As part of the attempt to justify America’s continued presence, a series of articles began to appear in 1924, written by a certain Katherine Mayo. The series, which was entitled *The Isles of Fear*, was considered by the Filipinos as clearly “a campaign of racial prejudice,” which won the approval of the American Chamber of Commerce in Manila and was clearly intended to dissuade Members of Congress from supporting early Philippine independence.²⁴⁶

It is in response to Mayo’s pejorative description of the Philippines as “The Isles of Fear” that Roy’s first chapter, as Palma tells us in his introduction to the book, is entitled “The Isles of Hope.” For while Mayo portrays a very bleak picture of a race hopelessly afflicted by disease, poverty, and malnutrition, Roy describes for us the beautiful city of Manila, with “its wonderful sanitary arrangements... [and] sewerage system,” as an example for India and China to follow. And while Mayo depicts the

²⁴³ Roy, *The Philippines and India*, ii.

²⁴⁴ Roy, *The Philippines and India*, 4.

²⁴⁵ Roy, *The Philippines and India*, 75.

²⁴⁶ Alfredo T. Morales, “Contributions of American Thought to Filipino Ideas of Independence (1898-1934),” *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* XIV, no. 3 (1949): 281.

beastly, corrupt cacique and the individualist *tao* [literally, human, and here, specifically referring to the Filipino], and not to mention an entire Filipino race lacking in political will,²⁴⁷ Roy reminds us of the countless revolts that have repeatedly proven this people's patriotism and desire for political freedom. "With all these movements, hopes, and ambitions," it is no wonder, Roy quips, that Katherine Mayo portrayed the Philippines as the Isles of Fear.

While Roy's compassion towards the Filipinos is unmistakably genuine, one cannot deny that he had his own agenda. As an Indian philosopher, he inevitably understood the Filipinos in relation to his own people, who have suffered the same fate of colonial aggression and whose face continue to be "blackened by the cruel hands of

²⁴⁷ With regard to the granting of sovereignty to the Philippines, there was at the time, according to Roy, that "fresh excuse that economic development should precede political independence." In response, Roy quotes Palma who claims that because he does not see the matter as an American, economic development does not have to be a prerequisite, for "the desire to be free precedes that of our material well-being." Mayo, on her part, however, tries to prove how economically ill-prepared the Filipinos are for political independence, given their poverty and the overwhelming presence of disease. Quoting an "eminent world-sanitarian," Mayo asks, "how can they stand the stress of modern civilization until they get their bodies into better shape?" And then she continues to explain that the cause for this economic problem lies partly in "the lack of continuity of effort," describing the Filipino's lassitude "as a tale of grand beginnings, -of ambitious conceptions begun with a flourish, carried on for a brief day and then let fall, forgotten, as a child drops and forgets a toy." While Mayo partly attributes this shortcoming to the "Filipino's small bodily strength," she also shows how the Filipinos generally lack political unity and will. Interviewing a few "men of importance," while maintaining the anonymity of her sources, Mayo shows a dissenting view towards Independence. Not only the Filipino business men are against it, but even politicians do not really believe in it. The politicians coax students to make noise, to clamor for it, but only because they make a living out of it. Then, Mayo talks about the Independence Fund, which, being part of a movement "to demonstrate the strength of the Independence movement, was created immediately after America suspended its support for the Filipino missions to appeal their case to the U.S. Congress. While a sum was indeed successfully raised, out of the pockets of "poor Juan," Mayo exposes the extravagant spendings of the members of the mission, which included Manuel Quezon, Manuel Roxas, Sergio Osmeña, and Rafael Palma. See Katherine Mayo, "Nameless and Afraid," in *The Isles of Fear: The Truth About the Philippines* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.), 1925. In stark contrast, Roy depicts Filipino leaders in a more sympathetic light, showing not only how they have the confidence of the people but also, in commemorating the death of Rizal, how "religiously they hold to his sublime idealism." But not only the leaders are earnestly patriotic. Roy notes how students, of their own initiative, gathered in protest against Senator Osmeña's appeal for a Philippine government similar to Canada. Contrary to what Mayo's sources say, the students were not mere puppets, and knew exactly what they wanted. See Roy, *Philippines and India*, 16-18).

Western prejudice.”²⁴⁸ Consequently, he was not preaching national consciousness but a “Malayan Renaissance” that emphasized an “awakening of the East.” And in this turning from the West to the East, India was crucial as “the source” of an ancient past, and an exemplar for Filipinos to follow. Roy writes,

Do we not see that this beautiful land of the Philippines this “gem of the Orient sea” with its only three centuries of Spanish rule, had to go so far as to disown people’s ancestral names, to graft a Western Castile in its extremely Oriental heart? Do we not see that the Western hysteria of speed and progress is fast depriving it of its natural sympathy for things Oriental and is successfully creating a mentality to be almost ashamed of itself? And yet India has not yielded.

Despite the misfortunes and foreign aggressions, the Hindus have remained steadfast towards their ideal and civilization.

To give him his due, Roy did not only speak of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore or the philosopher Bhagaban Das. He applauded the countless Filipino martyrs who fought for emancipation, as well as the young Filipinos who have awakened to Rizal’s call. Deeply moved by such an “intensely patriotic soul,” Roy quotes that famous excerpt in *El Filibusterismo*, where the Martyr implores the youth not only to “consecrate their golden hours, their illusions, and their enthusiasm” but “generously pour out their blood” for “the welfare of their native land.”²⁴⁹

Twenty years later, the same excerpt appears as an epigraph in Pascual’s book, but here presented in quite an ingenious manner. Printed on onion skin paper, Rizal’s words are set on the backdrop of a 1946 painting by Vicente Alvarez Dizon, which portrays the martyred priests, Rizal’s execution, and Andres Bonifacio holding the flag of the Katipunan. At the foreground, the youth, naked and with open arms, stands on a heap of bones and skulls. And below, lies the caption:

²⁴⁸ Roy, *Philippines and India*, 206.

²⁴⁹ Jose Rizal, *El Filibusterismo*, quoted in Roy, *Philippines and India*, 16.

“Rizal, here we are who have consecrated our crimson hours to the good of Our Fatherland!”—The Youth of the Land.

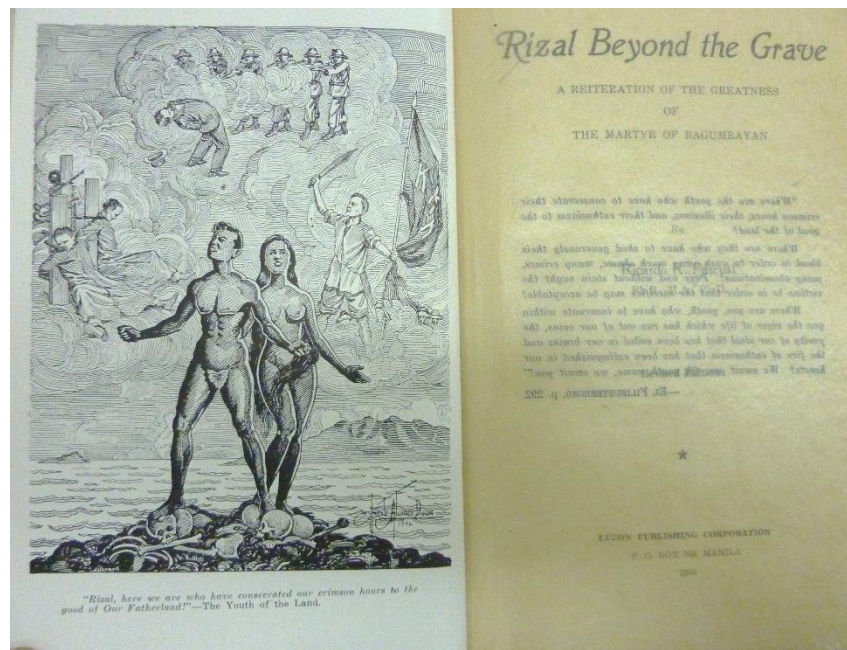


Illustration 3: Frontispiece of Ricardo Pascual’s Rizal Beyond the Grave.

So what became of these philosophers who sacrificed their crimson hours? We know that Roy was repatriated, and continued to publish and teach as a professor at the University of Calcutta. Pascual, on the other hand, fled to America in 1967, after 34 years as a professor and administrator at the University of the Philippines. One remembers that Rizal himself, Pascual’s hero, had, at one point, a strong desire to leave. He signed up to work as a medical man for the Spanish army in Cuba at the end of 1895, hoping to get away as far as possible to avoid being implicated in the revolution that he already knew was about to happen. Unfortunately, Rizal was arrested in the Mediterranean while on a boat to Barcelona and never made it to Cuba. Pascual, on the other hand, was more fortunate and was given a teaching position in the Philosophy department at Bradley University, Illinois, where he taught for ten more years until his retirement in 1977, and was awarded Professor Emeritus.

In 1985, Pascual died an expatriate at age 73. But unlike Roy who could have easily been forgotten, Pascual’s legacy would linger for many years, and people today

still hear tales about the battles which this philosopher had valiantly fought back in the days. Only a few months ago, a heated email exchange transpired on Yahoo Groups, where people were arguing, of all topics, whether Pascual retracted or not. The philosopher must have rolled over in his grave; or, perhaps rolled over laughing at the irony of it all, if we like to imagine him a good sport. What seemed to have prompted the discussion was a comment made regarding the obituary published on November 17, 1985, at the Chicago Tribune, announcing that a mass was going to be held for the late Ricardo Pascual at the St. Mark Catholic Church, Peoria.²⁵⁰ A certain Eddie Calderon remarked that the professor was buried in a Catholic Church, and since atheists are not given this privilege, he concluded that Pascual must have returned to his original faith. This, he further claims, is corroborated by friends who knew Pascual and told him “that he did in fact accept the Lord on the hour of his death.” Contesting this alleged retraction, a certain Gil Fernandez retorts that Pascual died of a sudden “heart attack,” and thus could not have had the time to suddenly have a change of heart. He further argued that he himself had spoken to Pascual’s widow, Lourdes Pascual, who happens to be his good friend. In their conversation, she attested that “her husband died as an Agnostic, and had not made any changes of his lifetime beliefs,” but that being a devout Catholic herself, Lourdes decided to have her husband buried in a Catholic cemetery.²⁵¹ It seems that in the end, Lourdes herself wrote, addressing Calderon directly, explaining that Pascual was, indeed, agnostic, and “the high esteem that Bradley University has for him is... related to the philosophy he lived by.” She thus warned him “to be careful not to propagate topics that may hurt the feelings of the living and the memory of one departed, especially an honored Filipino in his adopted country.”

²⁵⁰ See http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1985-11-17/news/8503190373_1_professor-bradley-university-sisters.

²⁵¹ See email exchange in <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RP-Rizal/messages/22587?m=e&o=0&tidx=1>.

It may seem that the matter has been resolved once and for all, and that Pascual was easily proven not guilty of retraction. But perhaps, while we assume that the charge of retraction was nothing but a disgrace to his name, Pascual himself is probably smiling, and cannot believe his luck that he could follow the footsteps of Rizal and finally share his fate from beyond his grave.

Chapter Four

Writing Our Story: Paths and Pathologies

In exploring the intellectual landscape of academic philosophy, we have seen, in the previous chapters, the work and struggles of two of the most prominent philosophers in the Philippines, who, in their own right, were pioneers in their respective advocacies. While these philosophers came from two distinct intellectual traditions, and differed significantly in their passions and style of thinking, or in the way they responded to the socio-political issues of their time, it is also evident that they both sought to grapple with the influence and frailties of religion, and being inspired by and defying their teachers, dared to speak out of place in their desire to give their people a voice.

The history of academic philosophy in the Philippines, however, goes beyond the struggles of these two philosophers. In this chapter, we listen to other voices who have equally concerned themselves with the problem of Filipino identity, which is here played out in a long-standing preoccupation with the search for a Filipino philosophy. Wrought by optimism and despair, and by intellectual congeniality, as well as intrigues and disgruntlements, this journey reveals how Filipino philosophers—given their biases, self-criticism, and aspirations—have told their story, evaluated their work, and defined their purpose.

“We Shall Try to Be Post-Modern”²⁵³

In 2010, Brother Romualdo Abulad of the Society of Verbum Divini (SVD) and Chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of San Carlos, Cebu City, delivered a paper at a regional philosophical gathering with the theme, *Pilosopiyang*

²⁵³ See Raymundo R. Pavo, “Filipino Philosophy and Post-Modernity,” *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* 3, no. 15 (2010): 238-254.

Pinoy: Uso Pa Ba? (“Filipino Philosophy: Is It Still Relevant?”)²⁵⁴ In addressing the question, Abulad cites scholars such as fellow SVD confrère, Father Leonardo Mercado, and Jesuit philosopher Albert Alejo, lamenting how their work have led people to associate Filipino philosophy primarily, if not exclusively, with an anthropological approach.

While acknowledging Mercado’s attempt at presenting a systematic philosophy of the Filipino masses as a “landmark work,” Abulad criticizes the author’s methodology of metalinguistic analysis and phenomenology of behavior for neither being “indigenously Filipino.” Furthermore, he complains that Mercado’s analysis of the kinship of Filipino languages, which “would have been an impressive contribution to both philosophy and anthropology,” was just “too brief to be credibly anthropologically exhaustive.” Apart from this, he argues that Mercado’s “discovery” of a “non-dualistic,” “non-compartmentalized,” and “non-linear” Filipino worldview also applies to the Chinese and Indian *Weltanschauung*, and therefore (again) not original or indigenous to the “common [Filipino] *tao*.” Abulad is skeptical, to a point that he wonders whether the Oriental stereotype had not preempted Mercado’s own investigation.

Abulad finds Alejo’s efforts equally unimpressive. He comments on how the latter initially had grand hopes of presenting a complete description of the “philosophical concept” of *loob* (“inner self”) and consequently, a definitive statement about Filipino identity, but would realize in the end that “he succeed[ed] in doing something less.” Abulad points out that Alejo himself acknowledges his own failure by admitting that he was not able to construct a definition. And although Alejo adds that it was not, after all, his intention, and sees his work as merely the beginning of

²⁵⁴ See Bro. Romualdo Abulad, SVD, “Pilosopiyang Pinoy: Uso Pa Ba? (The Relevance of Filipino Philosophy in Social Renewal),” (paper presented at the 10th Philosophy Gathering, Sancta Maria Mater et Regina Seminarium, University of San Carlos, Cebu City, November 19, 2010). The quotations in the following paragraphs are taken from this source.

more works to come, Abulad is convinced that these are merely ways by which this Jesuit philosopher tries to assuage his “sense of frustration.”

The fault, however, lies not only in Alejo’s inadequate efforts. Noting how *loob* is merely an echo of the “Socratic self” which always already implies the imperative of self-understanding, or of the concept of *Geist* in German Idealism Absolute Spirit, Abulad asserts that it is “not really a Filipino discovery,” putting to doubt its very value as a philosophical concept worthy of examination.

While Abulad makes it clear that his critique is not meant to be pejorative, even proving his good faith by stressing that he compares Alejo’s work “to such *greats* as Socrates, Descartes and Hegel,”²⁵⁵ it seems that it is precisely the whole “tradition” of philosophy weighing upon him that prevents him from understanding Alejo’s ideas in their own terms. Compared to these “great” men, Alejo is not as original as Socrates, nor as successful as Hegel, for whom Abulad is all praises for constructing “the greatest system ever conceived by the Mind”; but worst of all, Alejo is merely replicating the antiquated philosophical problem of the Cartesian dualism between mind and body, which, though he may not know it, is clearly “indicative of his captivity.” It is this “seeming failure” that, for Abulad, constitutes “(Alejo’s) main contribution to Filipino philosophy,” in so far that “it becomes something which no one needs to undertake again.”²⁵⁶

These criticisms may appear odd and misguided, especially when one considers the wealth of research and reflection on *loob* in Philippine studies. But one could also see them as part of the historical adventure of Filipino philosophy, a reaction or response to the debates of the times, and therefore, part of a *mélange* of biases, fears, and desires. Here, we strive to emulate that virtue for which Abulad admired his teacher and mentor, Dr. Emerita Quito—a kind of open-mindedness which she declared to be

²⁵⁵ My emphasis.

²⁵⁶ For an elaboration on these arguments, see Romualdo Abulad, “Book Review of Albert Alejo, S.J., *Tao Po! Tuloy! (Isang Landas ng Pag-unawa sa Loob ng Tao)*,” in *Karunungan*, Vol. 20, 1990, 137-143.

“a sine qua non of philosophical research”—“to render to every philosopher the widest possible benevolence of interpretation.”²⁵⁷

One wonders, then, why Abulad denies his fellow Filipino philosophers the benevolence that he himself esteemed as “a gesture of intellectual charity.”²⁵⁸ But if such strong, moral intention does underlie one’s thinking and scholarship, which Nietzsche claims to be behind every philosophy,²⁵⁹ then it is no surprise that the same benevolence could turn into a kind of self-righteousness, which is committed to rectifying any assault made against the virtue that one holds dear. With this in mind, one realizes that, beneath the objective, rational calm of arguments, Abulad’s critique was really a form of retaliation.

Abulad refrains from naming people—he hopes not to offend anyone—, but one can sense his annoyance when he states that “the [worst] about the anthropological approach is that it tends to arrogate unto itself the truth about the Filipino mind, thus excluding or at least debasing other so-called merely expository, descriptive, or non-

²⁵⁷ Emerita Quito, *Homage to Jean-Paul Sartre, Professorial Chair Lecture No. 2* (Manila: De La Salle University, 1981), 2.

²⁵⁸ Romualdo Abulad, Introduction to Emerita Quito, *A Life of Philosophy: Selected Works (1965-1988) of Emerita S. Quito* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1990), iii.

²⁵⁹ Nietzsche is a wonderful companion when one tries to understand philosophers, as he lays bare the vices and prejudices that fester beneath their calm, rational exterior. We have always uncritically attributed to the philosopher that selfless “will to truth” and without knowing it or understanding fully, have given him the highest honor of being the exemplary thinker. Thus, when Nietzsche, declaring war, vowed “to auscultate idols”—to touch these “eternal idols,” he says “with a hammer as with a tuning-fork”—to make audible their hollowness which try to remain unheard, we are not merely referring to the ideals that philosophers have elevated and secured as “truths,” but inevitably, to philosophers, who themselves have been taken as idols. Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Twilight of the Idols,” in *The Works of Nietzsche*, trans. Thomas Common (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), 98. And this is why Nietzsche exposes, first and foremost, that love for wisdom for which philosophers are known is nothing but a ruse, and that they are not as childlike, honest, or disinterested as they are wont to appear in their pursuit of “truth.” As Nietzsche says, “Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.” Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Prejudices of Philosophers,” trans. Walter Kaufman, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 13.

anthropological philosophies.” In his frustration, he lists the names of “these others [who] are, so to speak, legion” who have been ostracized, which strangely enough also identifies Alejo as one of the “bright academics” Ateneo has produced in its “legendary preoccupation with phenomenology and existentialism.” He tries to name everyone, except for himself of course, which only makes us suspect that he is one of those who have been cast aside. And if only to further emphasize the virtues of open-mindedness and benevolent inclusion which he tries to practice, Abulad warns that “this list is far from complete and exhaustive,” and this is only because “[he is] not cognizant of what’s going on everywhere.”

Abulad’s critique is, however, also an expression of a philosophical preference. He objects to the anthropological approach because, as he explains, “the Filipino is without roots,” and “unlike India or China..., we are a nation without solid tradition.” But it is because of this “historical fact,” of which we must not be ashamed, that we can easily fathom the spirit of postmodernity. Here, it becomes clear that Abulad criticizes the notion of *loob* not because he is searching for the “genuinely” indigenous but that he wants to prove that the latter does not exist; for it is in establishing this lack of ground, or “the meagerness of our roots,” that Abulad happily announces that Filipinos “are in the best position to start anew from scratch,” which he claims to be a strength rather than a weakness in the realm of philosophy.

It appears that Abulad regards postmodernism as the climax in the historical movement of philosophy, whose evolution can be described as a relentless “attempt to establish that crucial beginning.”²⁶⁰ From the Socratic wisdom of ignorance, to Descartes’s methodic universal doubt, and Husserl’s universal epoche, Abulad gleans a pattern of a constant clearing of presuppositions, and asserts that postmodernism “has at last found the key [that] would completely secure the foundationless and groundless knowledge whose unpredictable insights are boundless and limitless.” Thus, to ensure

²⁶⁰ Abulad, “Pilosophiyang Pinoy.”

and secure our place in this “postmodern metanarrative,” Abulad argues that “the best strategy” in doing Filipino philosophy would be “not to indulge in any strategy at all, but simply to philosophize as one is inspired to do”—except, perhaps, the anthropological approach, which he categorically dismisses as “not the best way” to do Filipino philosophy.

Abulad is not alone in these views. Dr. Alfredo Co of the University of Sto. Tomas (UST) Philosophy Department, is equally critical of those who still continue to toil desperately and “wallow in a pseudo-nationalistic... search for a Filipino identity.”²⁶¹ While he remembers and acknowledges how this search for an indigenous Filipino philosophy was part of the “historical situation” of earlier scholars, he is convinced that “the world has already moved to a new age of Globalization and Postmodernism,” and that people must accept that this age requires “a shift away from power struggles and towards a greater cooperation through a dialogue of cultures, faiths, and world-views.” Those who fail to catch on with the “new millennium” are in danger of “really lagging behind.” Furthermore, Co argues that the Filipino, “like the Philippines, is a Spanish creation,” and therefore cannot boast a great civilization of its own, like China or India, but, like Abulad, he sees this not as a weakness but a virtue; that in being inheritors of Western culture, and at the same time imbued with Chinese, Indian, Muslim and Malayan influences, the Filipinos are naturally polymorphous, allowing them to transcend the limits of their race, and at the same time belong to the universe.

The Filipino culture is East and West, North and South. Truly we are at once Postmodern and Global. We are beyond definition, beyond recognition, beyond identification and beyond description. We are never anchored on the monotony of one but on the countless many. We truly need not have to search

²⁶¹ Alfredo Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Fifty Years Ago and Fifty Years From Now,” in Alfredo Co, *Across the Philosophical Silk Road, A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co*, Volume VII (España, Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2009), 62.

for our identity. Ours is the identity of the new age—ambivalent, polymorphous, processual, always becoming.²⁶²

In Search of a Filipino (Philosophical) Identity



Illustration 4: PAPR Pulong-Isip in Kalyabne Resort Years Ago. Left to Right: Manny Dy, Emerita Quito, Leo Garcia, Alfredo Co, Florentino Timbreza, Leonardo Mercado. Taken from the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP) Facebook page, April 24, 2014.

Before being initiated into the “postmodern age,” however, Abulad and Co were both part of an exclusive organization that was created specifically for “the promotion and publication of research in Filipino indigenous philosophy.” Founded by Emerita Quito in 1983, the Philippine Academy of Philosophical Research (PAPR) gathered, “strictly by invitation,”²⁶³ a number of “well respected names in philosophy,” including leading scholars of the anthropological approach, such as Mercado and

²⁶² Co, “Doing Philosophy,” 62.

²⁶³ Among the PAPR’s charter members included Claro Ceniza and Florentino Timbreza of De La Salle University (DLSU), Alfredo Co of UST, Fr. Vitaliano Gorospe and Manuel Dy, Jr. of Ateneo de Manila, Fr. Leonardo Mercado, S.V.D., of the Divine Word University (DWU). Curiously, there were no representatives from U.P. So exclusive was the group, that as of 1992, only three new members were admitted: Romualdo Abulad, incumbent President of PAPR, Leovino Garcia, then President of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP), and Rainier Ibana, then president of the Philosophy Circle of the Philippines (PCP). Alfredo Co, “Filipino Philosophers in a Dialogue on Filipino Culture—A Report,” *Karunungan* 9 (1992): 1-2.

Florentino Timbreza, in the hope of contributing “to the better understanding of our national psyche.”²⁶⁴

A year later, the PAPR came out with its first annual journal publication, *Karunungan* (“Wisdom”), and beginning in 1986, organized regular meetings called *Pulong-Isip* (“a meeting of minds”). Caught in the euphoric aftermath of the EDSA People Power revolution that had overthrown the dictatorial regime of former President Ferdinand Marcos, these gatherings were designed as a “Philosophy Laboratory” where members could discuss the issues of the times.

From journal essays and meeting reports, one can see that the research in Filipino indigenous philosophy was concomitantly a search for a Filipino identity. The Filipino, having been diagnosed, for as long as one could remember, to be suffering from an identity crisis, was perceived as a “cultural hermaphrodite,” dwelling “on the borderline between East and West without knowing whether he belongs to one or to the other.”²⁶⁵ What complicated the matter was his inferiority complex which, resulting from centuries of colonial subjugation and perpetuated by his own cult of the foreign, had formed a “patina,” which was believed to be “covering whatever was indigenously Filipino.” The task, therefore, that philosophers and scholars alike took upon themselves was, as Quito explains, to look into the myths, legends, aphorisms, and sayings of the people, believing that beneath the layers, there was something “distinctively Filipino” that was waiting to be retrieved.

Entangled in this search for a national identity was our philosophers’ yearning for their own: an identity not only through a contribution to society that was distinctively philosophical, but in having a philosophical character that was uniquely Filipino. As a group, they were made aware of their “alleged absence... in the February revolution celebration,” and Quito, bravely broaching the matter, asked: was it because

²⁶⁴ Editorial, *Karunungan* 1 (1984): v.

²⁶⁵ Emerita Quito, “Filipino Volksgeist in Vernacular Literature,” *Karunungan* 1 (1984): 73.

we were confined in our ivory towers and too apathetic to get involved? Or were we just “deliberately slow” in expressing our views? Rest assured, the philosophers were “very much involved” in the EDSA revolution, although mingling with the crowd not as philosophical associations craving attention with their large banners but, in their humble and quiet way, as “freedom-loving” individuals. And if they were slow in formulating a consolidated view, it could only be because philosophers “have to weigh consequences and determine the ramifications of [their] opinions.”²⁶⁶

Despite this self-assured exterior, it appears that our philosophers were all too conscious of the fact that they had “failed to make a dent in our history.”²⁶⁷ This makes it difficult to tell how much the excuses were meant on the one hand to address critics, and on the other, to appease their self-doubt. But while they had missed the chance to play an important role in this momentous event of a people revolution, they looked to the future, hopeful that in defining their task in the age of “national reconstruction,” they could come closer to finally having a “strong impact upon the people.”

The February revolution was therefore, in many ways, seen as a new beginning, a “founding event,” not only for the nation moving towards reconstruction, but also for the disengaged philosopher who, after this defining moment, has been forced to realize that he “can no longer be divorced from history.”²⁶⁸ In light of this social responsibility, suggestions were made on how the philosopher could make an impact in society. Known to be “a man of virtue and wisdom,” it was argued that the philosopher should influence politics, as was no one more worthy than him to take on such a task, lest it fall into the hands of men of lesser stature.²⁶⁹ Also, because of his indefatigable devotion to truth, the philosopher was known to be an “emancipator of mental slaves,” whose mediation was crucial in freeing the Filipino from the “cultural barriers that have

²⁶⁶ Emerita Quito, “Pulong-Isip: Meeting of Filipino Minds,” *Karunungan* 3 (1986): 1.

²⁶⁷ Romualdo Abulad, in Quito, “Pulong-Isip”: 15.

²⁶⁸ Manuel Dy, Jr., in Quito, “Pulong-Isip”: 9.

²⁶⁹ Alfredo Co, “President’s Annual Report: 1985-1986,” *Karunungan* 4 (1987): 4.

alienated him from his brother Filipinos.”²⁷⁰ Finally, in believing the philosopher to be the moral and intellectual leader of society, he was equally expected to provide the vision and foundation that would facilitate the transformation of Philippine society.²⁷¹

Indeed, these were high expectations, that their recommendations sounded more a eulogy for their beloved philosopher than a practical plan of action. Nevertheless, the desire among them to contribute to nation building was undoubtedly earnest, as one could see in their less ambitious, albeit concrete and relevant efforts at providing their own philosophical analyses.

To our philosophers, the EDSA revolution was a phenomenon rich in philosophical content. Their analyses exposed the Filipino values underlying the thinking and behavior of the people, sometimes showing the ambivalent nature of these cultural traits, but always with a sympathetic gaze towards the Filipino psyche.²⁷² The emphasis on values was, on the one hand, a reaction to the criticism and denigrations, colonial or otherwise, that have been consistently hurled at Filipinos for what were perceived as weaknesses and “negative” traits. On the other, it was a response to the plea made by Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani for a national moral rehabilitation. Attributing the source of “our economic problems and political instability” to “the weakness and corruption of the moral foundations of our society,”²⁷³ Shahani proposed the idea of a “Moral Recovery Program,” urging the need for self-examination on a national level. The aim, she proposed, was to conduct an “inquiry into the strengths

²⁷⁰ Florentino Timbreza, in Co, “President’s Annual Report”: 7.

²⁷¹ Manuel Dy, Jr. in Co, “President’s Annual Report”: 6.

²⁷² See Manuel Dy, Jr. “Outline of Project of Pilipino Ethics,” *Karunungan* 5 (1989): 35-41, Emerita Quito, “Ambivalence of Filipino Traits and Values,” *Karunungan* 5 (1989): 42-46, and Florentino Timbreza’s paper in Quito, “Pulong-Isip,” 17-23. As a response to criticisms born out of judging Filipino traits against Western standards, there were also efforts to define the Filipino psyche by exploring its oriental affinities. For examples of these, see Alfredo Co, “Confucian Model for a Filipino Philosophy of Value,” in *Across the Philosophical Silk Road*, 15-27, and Alfredo Co, “Elements of Chinese Thought in the Filipino Mind,” *Karunungan* 5 (1989): 27-34.

²⁷³ Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani, quoted in Dy, “Pilipino Ethics,” 35. See Leticia Ramos Shahani, *A Moral Recovery Program: Building a Nation, Inspiring Our People to Action* (Manila: Senate of the Congress of the Philippines), 1988.

and weaknesses of the Filipino character with a view to solving the social ills and strengthening the nation's moral fiber."²⁷⁴

However, inasmuch as these philosophers aligned themselves with this objective, both celebratory and critical of Filipino cultural values, there was also and always the desire to move—sometimes too quickly—beyond the confines of the nation. Here, too, lies what was perceived as the unique contribution of Philosophy, which many philosophers believed needed to be differentiated from the Social Sciences, whose active efforts in exploring Filipino identity were at the time clearly achieving pioneering results. Thus, in a colloquium held in 1991, President of the Philosophical Circle of the Philippines (PCP) and PAPER member, Dr. Rainier Ibana sought to distinguish the task of the social scientist from that of the philosopher.²⁷⁵ While the former lays out the data of cultural traits and behavior that constitute a people's civilization (*kabihasan*), with no judgment on moral values, the philosopher endeavors to develop the culture and way of life (*kalinangan*) of the people,²⁷⁶ specifically in its spiritual aspect, to get beyond the confines of their race and towards realizing their noble aspiration to be human (*pagpapakatao*, the striving to become more human). To do so, the philosopher, situating the Filipino in the larger context of "Humanity," sheds light on values that have proven, from time immemorial, vital to

²⁷⁴ Shahani, *Moral Recovery Program*, 6.

²⁷⁵ See Rainier R.A. Ibana's paper entitled "Ang Tatlong Konteksto ng Pagsusuri sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," in Co, "Dialogue on Filipino Culture," 10-18. Co's report was a compilation of papers read at a colloquium organized by the Philippine Circle of the Philippines, held on February 24, 1991, at the Ateneo de Manila University. The theme of the colloquium was "Critique of Filipino Culture."

²⁷⁶ To further understand how Ibana distinguishes the social scientist from the philosopher, it is important to clarify the difference between *kabihasan* and *kalinangan*. *Kabihasan* comes from the word *bihasa*, which refers to actions that are repeated and therefore to which one becomes accustomed, and in this case, what constitutes tradition or civilization. *Kalinangan* also refers to culture, or a people's way of life, but gives emphasis to *linang* which implies care or an enhancement. Usually, the term is used to refer to land that has been cleared to prepare it for sowing. See Virgilio S. Almario, ed. *UP Diksiyonaryong Filipino: Binagong Edisyon* (Pasig: Sentro ng Wikang Filipino-Diliman and Anvil Publishing Inc., 2010), 167 and 702. From this distinction, one can deduce that the philosopher is someone who does not merely describe culture but toils to bring the latter to a more elevated condition.

the growth of civilizations, such as justice, courage, goodness, truth, and piety. Metaphorically, Ibane describes the task of philosophizing vis-à-vis these universal values as the act of gazing at the eternal stars, which remain unchanged with the revolving of the earth, giving light and direction “in the midst of darkness and chaos of history.”

One assumes that it was also in connection to a solidarity with the rest of “Humanity” that some of our philosophers proudly perceived the EDSA revolution not merely as an object of philosophical analysis but a philosophy-in-the-making, and as such, an invaluable gift of the Filipinos to the world. The peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy that transpired as a result of this momentous event presented a formidable critique of Marxism, which has long claimed violence as a necessary evil of political and social change.²⁷⁷ Alternatively, the EDSA revolution was seen as a “people’s revolution,” where both bourgeoisie and proletariat, along with other persuasions, participated “not as forces struggling against each other but as a unified front against a common oppressor.” As such, the event was seen not so much a critique as it was a realization of a philosophical ideal, specifically “a genuinely Marxist phenomenon.”²⁷⁸

A Fetish for the Universal

Not all the philosophers, however, were unequivocally optimistic. As the euphoria died down, some felt that the lessons of the EDSA revolution were too easily forgotten and that the Filipinos had slunk back to their old habits. Expressing profound disappointment, one philosopher described the revolution “as clearly one that had no teeth, dormant, no intelligence, no consciousness, and no direction.”²⁷⁹ Abulad,

²⁷⁷ Dy, in Quito, “Pulong-Isip,” 9.

²⁷⁸ Abulad, in Quito, “Pulong-Isip”:13-14.

²⁷⁹ Co, “Bakit, Pinoy, Bakit?” in Co, “Dialogue on Filipino Culture,” 6. “Malungkot, subalit dapat sabihing ang ating tinawag na EDSA Revolution ay mistulang walang ngipin, natutulog, walang talino, walang malay, at walang patutunguhan.” See also Florentino Timbreza, “Nationalism and Filipino Cultural Traits and Attitudes,” in Co,

however, would explicitly relate the problem to the current feebleness of our philosophers: while they may have supported this populist movement, it was not because they had a well-thought-out philosophical conviction, but like the rest of the herd, were “motivated by a hazy, spontaneous feeling of rebellion.” He argues:

What moved our countrymen to EDSA in those wonderful four days of February was not a philosophy, but a long pent-up sense of disillusionment for a regime which had cheated them of all their dreams and resources. No wonder that the “social revolution” that was supposed to follow the “political revolution” has been long in coming. Perhaps some would say that there was an implicit philosophy in the people’s revolution; however, it cannot be denied that no one has yet dared explicitate [sic] this philosophy in its magnificent wholeness and convincing logic. If there is still so much confusion in our country today, part of the blame—I should say—is due to the lack of conscious philosophy which our people can fall back upon.²⁸⁰

The reason for this failure, according to Abulad, could only be attributed to the fact that our philosophers have stubbornly (and cowardly) preoccupied themselves with what he calls “imitative reflection.” In an earlier essay, he calls it the “regressive” option, which describes expository scholarship, along with research with an anthropological or historical scheme²⁸¹ as merely “designed to unveil what already exists.” But while he acknowledged the need for “an enunciated *Weltanschauung*” and regarded it as “already a step in the right direction,” Abulad would demand much more from philosophy than merely articulating a way of life and making “our people conscious of their true selves.”

To be worthy of its name, philosophy could not simply be allowed to “regress” to the givens. It must rise above the status quo and by looking into the future, into the

“Dialogue on Filipino Culture, 25.

²⁸⁰ Abulad, in Quito, “Pulong-Isip”: 16.

²⁸¹ See Romualdo Abulad, “Options for a Filipino Philosophy,” *Karunungan* 1 (1984): 17-27.

“not yet,” usher the beginning of a new society. In contrast to the “regressive” schemes, Abulad called this nobler task of philosophy, quite predictably, the “progressive option,” describing it as the “philosophical attempt to put forward a somewhat novel and untried philosophy, often times with the intent of commencing a movement.” For this, he looked up to Karl Marx as the exemplary of a philosopher who, with his “new philosophical synthesis,” did not merely interpret the world but sought to change it.²⁸²

Here it becomes clear why Abulad objected to the anthropological schemes of Mercado and Alejo—not because they sought out the indigenous (as he would argue in his later postmodern phase), but because he found their philosophy too limiting. He had only the grandest hopes for Filipino philosophy, and believed that if it were to be “authentic,” it would have to “transcend the limits of this country and its perennial quality... recognized by thinkers of other lands.”²⁸³ In other words, philosophy, to earn its title, must prove to be not only comprehensive but universal.

Philosophia, The Sacred Cow

Unlike Abulad, Quito was—at least on the surface—critical of philosophy’s claim to universality.²⁸⁴ While he keenly looked forward to the construction of a Filipino philosophy, which he believed was immediately possible, she complained how our philosophers had become too preoccupied with the idea, brooding excessively over the question whether it exists or not. The reason, she explains, is an underlying obsession with the Greek concept of *philosophia*, which with its emphasis on logic and truth, and concern for ultimate causes, is just completely the opposite of the Filipino’s

²⁸² See Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), 145. Abulad notes that Marx’s progressivism lies not in his critique of Capitalism but in his presentation of Communism as “a new social set-up” that will subvert and replace the old order.

²⁸³ Abulad, “Options for a Filipino Philosophy,” 27.

²⁸⁴ See Emerita Quito, “A New Concept of Philosophy,” in Quito, *A Life of Philosophy*, 10-11. Here, she argues: “Despite its claim to universality, philosophy is not actually universal; a philosophical truth can wear multiple masks, each of which is a private scrutiny of the world and of reality, and each is valid and true.”

predilection for intuition and practical wisdom. Unfortunately, this bias for *philosophia* has prevented some of our philosophers from being receptive to what Asian sages have alluded to as folk wisdom or spirit, making them oblivious to the corpus of Filipino myths and legends that could otherwise provide the perfect access to the people's collective consciousness. To further distinguish this folk wisdom from *philosophia*, Quito insists on using a different term (although still very German), saying that she would "have no qualms about using the term *Volksgeist* [spirit of the people], instead of 'philosophy'" to designate the Filipino spirit.²⁸⁵

It appears that Quito was trying to undermine the hegemony of the abstract and theoretical *philosophia*, by putting it on equal footing with *Volksgeist*. And further challenging the "classical definition of philosophy," she argued:

If the classical Greek definition were to be rigorously applied, namely, that philosophy is "the science that studies all things in their ultimate causes and first principles", then there is no philosophy in Philippine culture. But then, what ought to be philosophy if not the collective mind of a people interacting with its own universe? What should philosophy be if not the attitude of a people toward life and a Supreme Being? What is philosophy (literally, "love of wisdom") if not a people's concerted effort to acquire wisdom in order to live well? This collective mind, this general attitude toward life, this concerted effort to acquire wisdom which is manifest on the popular or grassroots level constitutes the folk spirit (*Volkgeist*) of the Filipino and it should (or will) eventually emerge as a formalized philosophy on the academic level.²⁸⁶

While Quito does not explain what she means by "formalized philosophy," she tells us that this formalization is underway. If *Volksgeist* refers to the spirit of wisdom of the people expressed in myths, legends, rituals, etc., one can assume that

²⁸⁵ Emerita Quito, "Structuralism and The Filipino Volksgeist," in Quito, *A Life of Philosophy*, 732.

²⁸⁶ Emerita Quito, *The State of Philosophy in the Philippines*, Monograph Series No. 5 (Manila: De La Salle University, 1983), 10.

formalization refers to the process of decoding, organizing and conceptualizing the data into an intelligible whole. In the end, however, Quito reveals that she still hopes that *Volksgeist* would one day serve as the cornerstone for “a universal philosophy in the Greek sense of the word.”²⁸⁷

One wonders then if Quito’s preference for *Volksgeist* was not so much a recognition of the Filipino’s unique way of philosophizing as it was her way of saying that we have not yet reached an advanced stage worthy of being called “philosophy.” While it is true that Quito expressed on occasion an optimism and openness for the possibility of a (universal) Filipino philosophy in the distant future, she also had serious bouts of skepticism that questioned the Filipino’s capacity for philosophical thought.

An interesting case in point is the controversial essay that Quito wrote in the late ‘70s, where she declared the Filipino language and mentality as simply incompatible with philosophical reflection. Due to the personalistic and optimistic behavior of the Filipinos, and not to mention the derogatory manner by which they speak of the philosopher,²⁸⁸ she argues that philosophy in the Philippines was clearly “a losing proposition.” Furthermore, she argues:

Even our language does not lend itself to philosophy. There are no equivalents to words like being, essence, existence, becoming, actuality, transcendence. . . . Is the Filipino language lacking in abstract terms because Filipinos do not think abstractly, or is the Filipino incapable of thinking abstractly because language does not permit him? Will there ever be a Filipino philosopher in the future who, like Sri Aurobindo and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan of India, would give the cultural world its share of philosophical gems of thought?

It is my personal opinion that there will not be any. Our mentality or our *Weltanschauung* is too personal and emotional to allow a more transcendental

²⁸⁷ Quito, “Filipino Volksgeist,” 738.

²⁸⁸ Quito refers to the *pilosopo*, who is known in Filipino society as someone who likes to argue for the sake of arguing, and sometimes argues to get his way.

way of viewing things. The Philippines has produced many artists, writers, economists, musicians, even scientists, but I doubt whether there will be any philosophers. I would be most happy were I to be proved wrong.²⁸⁹

Here, we see that Quito believed that it was not only “premature to speak of Filipino philosophy, moreover, of a Filipino philosopher,” but that the whole prospect was completely bleak. Ironically, while Abulad dubbed Quito the “Filipino Socrates” and acclaimed legendary her open-mindedness, her view reveals a serious derogation of her fellow Filipinos.

Abulad, too, saw that Quito’s statement strongly suggested the inferiority of the Filipino mind. And yet, he tried to mitigate the harshness in his mentor’s indictment, by insisting that it “not be taken as a statement of fact but as a challenge.” And indeed, one must admit that Quito’s infamous position became controversial enough to elicit significant responses, and therefore marked a crucial moment in the history of philosophy in the Philippines.

Writing History/Continuing Their Story: Filipino Philosophy and the Curriculum

While Quito is known for her infamous essay, one must not overlook the fact that she was also at some point actively engaged in promoting the use of the Filipino language in the teaching of philosophy. In 1974, Quito published a textbook, entitled *Ang Kasaysayan ng Pilosopiya* (The History of Philosophy), which was the first philosophy book written entirely in Filipino. Apart from this radical choice of language, however, everything else seemed to have followed the usual, philosophical narrative. Out of the nineteen chapters, only one (the first one) discusses Eastern philosophy in relative detail—specifically exploring Indian and Chinese thought—while the rest, as expected, is dedicated to a discussion on the history of ideas of Western philosophers. In the chapter on Political Philosophy, Quito makes a one-page

²⁸⁹ Emerita Quito, “Lectures on Comparative Philosophy,” in Quito, *A Life of Philosophy*, 519.

detour and mentions Philippine president, Ferdinand Marcos's idea of a democratic revolution, which she praises as an "original ideology."²⁹⁰ But other than that, neither Filipinos nor their "other" Asian neighbors are mentioned in the historical narrative.

While Quito's effort to write a philosophy book in Filipino is undeniably important, one realizes that the idea of a history of philosophy is often, if not always, assumed to be a narrative of Western thought. We should not think however that Quito was alone in this. One examines the philosophy curriculum in several Filipino universities and realizes that the history of ideas is predominantly a presentation of the birth and development of Western concepts. And while it also includes Eastern philosophy, it refers mainly to Indian, Chinese, and Japanese traditions.²⁹¹ The problem is, no one really questions these narratives anymore, as they have become the norm and structure of our philosophical education.

This, however, has never precluded efforts to explore our own philosophical tradition, and even to insert "Filipino philosophy" into our curriculum. But the real question is, how have we inserted our thinking into the grand philosophical narrative, and what place have we given ourselves in the intellectual discourse? Are we allowed to interrogate and challenge Western-European thought, or have we conveniently created a space in the margins so that we can talk about our philosophy to our heart's content, without having to disturb the smoothness of the narrative of the "Great West?"

It was not until the mid-'80s that "Filipino Philosophy" (FIPHILLO) was offered for the first time as a course at the De La Salle University (DLSU). According to Florentino Timbreza, the idea, which came from DLSU Brother President Andrew Gonzalez, F.S.C., in consultation with Quito, who was then chair of the Philosophy

²⁹⁰ Quito, *Ang Kasaysayan ng Pilosopiya*, 217.

²⁹¹ Apart from minor differences, the Ateneo, UP, DLSU, and UST philosophy curricula present the history of (Western) ideas in four periods: Ancient (Greek), Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary philosophies. See <http://www.admu.edu.ph/ls/soh/philosophy/undergraduate-courses> (Ateneo website), <http://www.pilosopiya.com/courses> (DLSU website), <http://philosophy.ust.edu.ph/undergraduate.html> (UST website), and <http://web.kssp.upd.edu.ph/philo/degrees.htm> (UP website).

department, was indeed “a brave attempt to dig into the unexplored layers of Filipino experience embodied in the people’s cultural heritage.”²⁹² And Timbreza, who had taken it upon himself to teach the course, attests to the “arduous responsibility” of “preparing a syllabus with practically nothing to start with.”²⁹³ To this day, FIPHILLO is taught at DLSU as one of the basic (core) courses, but now with a different content, where the emphasis has shifted from the study of culture to the socio-political ideas of reformists, revolutionists and present-day thinkers, like Rizal, Jacinto, Bonifacio, Quezon, and others. From the course description, we learn that this focus on the ideas of individual thinkers is called the “traditional approach,” an initiative that is attributed to none other than Dr. Rolando Gripaldo.

Harking Back to the “Greeks”

To understand why Gripaldo deviates from his predecessor and chooses a “traditional approach” instead, or why he names it as such, it is important to see how he distinguishes it from the other schemes, which he calls the cultural and constitutional methods. In his *Critical Bibliography on Filipino Philosophy*, Gripaldo identifies these three approaches, as a means to organize and classify the philosophical texts he had collected. The cultural approach, which, like Abulad, he identifies with ethnophilosophers like Mercado and Timbreza, refers obviously to research on the Filipino *Volksgeist*, as an extraction of the philosophical presuppositions that underlie

²⁹² Florentino T. Timbreza, “Understanding Filipino Philosophy,” *Karunungan* 4 (1987), 9. Gonzalez, who had one point became the chair of the Technical Panel for Humanities, Social Sciences and Communications (1995-1997) for the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), was also responsible for drafting a philosophy curriculum that included a seminar on Filipino philosophy as a major subject See CHED Memorandum Order [CMO] No. 44, 1997. In an essay written in 1982, Gonzalez reveals that his attempt to indigenize the social sciences at DLSU began in the late ‘70s, after being inspired by Alfredo Lagmay of the Psychological Association of the Philippines, who had suggested it at an annual meeting of the Social Sciences Division of the National Research Council of the Philippines. Andrew Gonzalez, “Indigenization of the Social Sciences: A Red Herring?” in Virgilio E. Enriquez, ed. *Indigenous Psychology: A Book of Readings* [Quezon City: Akademya ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Philippine Psychology Research and Training House, 1990), 109-110).

²⁹³ Timbreza, “Understanding Filipino Philosophy,” 4.

a people's language and literature. The constitutional approach, on the other hand, is a relatively curious category which Gripaldo uses to refer to all expository work of Filipino scholars on foreign philosophers and philosophies. Here, he insists that all philosophical research, despite being foreign in content, must be considered as part of "Filipino philosophy" provided that the author is, by nationality, Filipino. While Gripaldo acknowledges that this approach is particularly problematic, and expects many to disagree, he remains convinced that the Filipino scholar, who is bound to interpret the meaning of the text, inevitably produces an interpretation that can only be an expression of his "Filipino mind."²⁹⁴

What is interesting is not so much how reasonable or flawed Gripaldo's arguments are as why he insists on loosely defining—or so it appears—the parameters of "Filipino philosophy, so much so that it becomes an all-inclusive category. According to him, this approach is drawn from a personal reflection on his task, not as a philosopher, but as an "historian of philosophy." He argues:

A historian of philosophy is a historian. As a social scientist, the historian of philosophy describes, classifies, and analyzes the existing data. Then he interprets the data in the light of the existing contemporary state of knowledge or thinking. He initially transcends the quarrels of philosophers, philosophical schools, or teachers of philosophy. He describes the nature of this quarrel. Then he takes a position.²⁹⁵

Gripaldo imputes to the historian an objectivity that is humanly impossible. Nevertheless, one can understand that he idealizes the historian/social scientist as a way of reacting to the petty squabbles that beset our philosophers. For although Gripaldo talks of rivalry among logical positivists and existentialists in faraway Europe, and how each camp calls the other "charlatans" or "heartless philistines," and worst of all,

²⁹⁴ Rolando M. Gripaldo, *Filipino Philosophy: A Critical Bibliography, 1774-1997*, 2nd ed. (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2001), 5.

²⁹⁵ Gripaldo, *Filipino Philosophy*, 5.

describe the other as “nonphilosophical,” one gets a sense that a similar, homegrown quarrel is happening in our midst.²⁹⁶ With this in mind, one begins to understand that Gripaldo is trying hard not to provoke ill feelings or to aggravate tensions. And he does this, he claims, by rehabilitating the term “philosophical,” using it not to discriminate but “to transcend the quarrels of some schools of philosophy.”²⁹⁷ Indeed, what better way to do this than to ensure that no one is left out, in acknowledging everyone as a contributor, in his/her own right, to Filipino philosophy?

In a paper delivered recently, however, Gripaldo further reveals the dilemma he was faced with when he was then writing the bibliography. He says,

If I discard all Filipino writings on foreign philosophers and philosophies, then my research work will be reduced into a few pages as there are only very few writings done on both (i) ethnic and indigenous philosophical ideas and (ii) on original or derivative but distinctive philosophical works by Filipino themselves. This is something I was not prepared to do.²⁹⁸

Not prepared for what, one may ask. While the volume of the work may have been slightly a concern, one suspects that Gripaldo was primarily unwilling to be the cause of a major polemic and be on the receiving end of resentful invectives, which would have surely been the case if he excluded a huge bulk of writings. Despite these apprehensions, however, Gripaldo would still offer his own position in the end, declaring the traditional option as the “genuine philosophical approach,” which of

²⁹⁶ In the Foreward, Thomist scholar, Tomas Rosario, Jr. sympathizes with the author, and encourages the “scholars of ‘pure philosophy’” to rethink their position, to ask themselves “whether philosophy in general should be an exclusive enterprise or. . .[a] dialogue with the natural and social sciences for it to be relevant.” Being an Ateneo philosophy professor, it is interesting how Rosario does not say anything against or in defense of the constitutional approach, which his department is known for, but does vocally support a shift in interest “from a Western outlook of philosophy to an indigenous philosophical world-view.” Tomas Rosario, Jr., foreward in Gripaldo, *Critical Bibliography*, iii.

²⁹⁷ Gripaldo, *Filipino Philosophy*, 15.

²⁹⁸ Rolando Gripaldo, “Filipino Philosophy: Past and Present,” (paper presented at the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society [PNPRS] Panel during the PAP Philosophical Conference, April 9, 2013), 4.

course then completely undermines his initial intention of freeing the “philosophical” from being a discriminatory term. But now one wonders if the point of including everyone under the classification of “Filipino philosophy” was intended precisely to lessen the severity of his later judgment.

And so, after benevolently gathering everyone into the all-inclusive category of Filipino philosophy, Gripaldo completely discredits the works that fall under the constitutional and cultural approach, in favor of his traditional scheme. While expository scholarship clearly predominates philosophical research in the Philippines, Gripaldo shows not only how fellow scholars are questioning its place in “Filipino philosophy,” but how it is on the whole an undesirable phenomenon, for having “no or very little originality as inputs.” As for the cultural approach, its contribution to “Filipino philosophy” remains indisputable, except Gripaldo points out, similar to Abulad’s opinion, that it “undermines the authenticity of the genuine Filipino philosopher.” What is interesting is that these are the same arguments we heard twenty years ago, which means that there has not been since then a serious attempt to study the nature and rationale behind our philosophical practices—in other words, to understand, before judging, why we do what we do. And what’s worse is that we keep using these oversimplified arguments, as Gripaldo does, to deem these practices inferior.

For Gripaldo, in the end, only the traditional approach, which in “follow[ing] the Greek philosophical model,” allows us to practice philosophy authentically, no longer as a collective worldview but as an individual activity, which presents “one’s personal view” on the great, philosophical themes such as freedom, truth, the meaning of life, and the like. Consequently, the task in the traditional approach lies in identifying Filipino individual thinkers and understanding their ideas, which may very well begin with the study of our reformers and revolutionists.²⁹⁹ In the same way that we learn

²⁹⁹ Gripaldo, “Filipino Philosophy: Past and Present,” 4.

about Greek philosophy by acquainting ourselves with the ideas of individual Greek thinkers, so will “Filipino philosophy” be constructed from the philosophies of individual Filipino thinkers.

There is, of course, nothing new about this. There have always been attempts to study the philosophy of our national heroes, “leaders of the social transformation” who Majul aptly reminds us were not all military leaders but “men of ideas.”³⁰⁰ But only some of our philosophers have acknowledged them,³⁰¹ since others have maintained the belief that in the Philippines, “there are no real philosophers in the strict sense.”³⁰²

There is no doubt that Grialdo’s bibliography, with its all-inclusive approach, is an admirable attempt at providing a comprehensive list of works. But what makes it truly important and intriguing as a text is how it shows, on the one hand, the author struggling to overcome the problems and social pressures that he grasps quite perceptively, and yet, on the other, how he ends up shamelessly embodying and perpetuating the same prejudices and confusion that have long afflicted our philosophers.

Our Greek Heritage

Nonetheless, let us take a closer look at the traditional approach which Grialdo suggests. In following the Greek model, he asserts that our task is to identify our Filipinos thinkers, in the same way that the Greeks have done, with special mention to the originary example of Thales, who is hailed the putative “Father of Philosophy.” But while the task itself of recognizing our intellectual progenitors is undoubtedly vital

³⁰⁰ Cesar Majul, *Apolinario Mabini, Revolutionary* (Manila: National Heroes Commission, Vertex Press, Inc., 1964), 1.

³⁰¹ In addition to Majul, are for instance the works of Ricardo Pascual’s *The Philosophy of Rizal* (Manila: Pedro B. Ayuda & Co., 1962) and Remigio Agpalo’s *Liwanag at Dilim: The Political Philosophy of Emilio Jacinto*, Professorial Chair Lectures, Monograph No. 21 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1976).

³⁰² Quito, *State of Philosophy*, 9.

and in fact long overdue, does it not seem superficial, and perhaps even misleading, to think that the legacy of the Greek tradition can be reduced to this? Haven't our philosophers, for better or worse, internalized the Greeks in more profound ways that have shaped and influenced their thinking? Or are we perhaps simplifying and not seeing Gripaldo's connections?

The Greek legacy, as we are told, is synonymous with philosophy. As Heidegger demonstrates convincingly, the moment we begin to ask what philosophy is, we are inevitably brought back to its Greek origin. Ferriols himself wondered what philosophy was, and like Heidegger, was convinced that an understanding of Greek thought was the key. For this reason, Ferriols, who was proficient in Greek even as a Juniorate,³⁰³ took upon himself the task of translating into Filipino the fragments of the Early Greek thinkers.

Unlike Gripaldo, Ferriols could not readily accept what he had heard about Thales, and was doubtful whether the latter should really be considered the first philosopher. Ferriols tells us that it was Aristotle who dubbed Thales as the first to philosophize "according to the proper method," for identifying water as the prime matter (*prote hyle*), the stuff of which everything is made.³⁰⁴ But Ferriols, searching through the fragments known to be written by Thales, had found nothing to support Aristotle's claim. What he did find was a fragment where Thales speaks of water, not as prime matter though but as *stoicheion*, or what Ferriols translates as element (*sangkap*). What Ferriols discovers here is not only that an inaccurate interpretation was committed but that this misreading is reflective of a significant difference in attitude between Aristotle and Thales. While Aristotle was looking for an answer—in fact, the answer—in insisting on the idea of an all-governing prime matter, Thales had simply offered a conjecture (in Tagalog, *hula*), for in his observations he saw that water

³⁰³ C.G. Arevalo, S.J., "All About Roque J. Ferriols, S.J. (Three Biographical Notes)," in *Pagdiriwang sa Meron*, 4.

³⁰⁴ Roque Ferriols, S.J., *Mga Sinaunang Griyego* (Manila: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1999), 7.

was what seemed or appeared (*para bagang*) to have the character of bringing things together.

From his own reading of the Greek fragments, Ferriols was able to get beyond Aristotle's misinterpretation and see for himself who Thales was. And precisely because he could go back to the source, he discovered that beyond this penchant for water for which Thales was known, there was a whole spectrum to the philosopher's character that was reflected in the many other stories that are today not so often told. Thales was an astrologer, who carefully observed the heavens, and through a patient study of the Babylonian account of the movement of the universe, was able to predict (*hula*) an eclipse. But Thales did not only have a scientific mind, for he also understood the world metaphorically, declaring that everything was full of god and that the land was a leaf floating in a universe of water that trembled with the slightest movement of the waves. He was also laughed at once for falling into a well, as he was walking absentmindedly, intently looking at the stars, and if only to prove to everyone that a philosopher is not always a fool, he bought all the olive mills in spring when they were being sold cheaply and sold them expensively when harvest came in autumn. But what seemed to have earned Thales the reputation of a great thinker was, more than his ideas, his proclivity to wonder about not merely the fragments of experience but about everything all-together as a whole.³⁰⁵

Heidegger's own reflection on the early Greek philosophers has also led him to discover that what was distinct about these thinkers was that their relationship with Being was still harmonious, a disposition not of control and desire for absolute knowledge but one of awe and wonder. Curiously, it was because of this that they were considered the "Greater Thinkers" (e.g., Heraclitus and Parmenides), and they were called not philosophers but *aner philosophos*, literally "he who loves the *sophon*."³⁰⁶ It

³⁰⁵ Ferriols, *Mga Sinaunang Griyego*, 8-9.

³⁰⁶ Martin Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Jean Wilde and William Kluback (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 49.

was only later that the philosophers (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) would actually appear, when the Greeks were forced to rescue being from the assault of the Sophist, who with his reasoning “always had ready for everything an answer which was comprehensible to everyone and which they put on the market.”³⁰⁷ To do this, thinking became “philosophy,” where the love of *sophon*, originally a harmony, became a “striving towards the *sophon*,” a yearning for that which we can never have. Consequently, philosophy became a search for what being is—that is, its Beingness, or that which makes being what it is. And it is as the task of capturing this Beingness that Aristotle would later define philosophy as speculative knowledge of the first principles and causes. Like Ferriols, Heidegger must have seen Aristotle’s obsession for answers, and comments sarcastically on the absurdity of his thinking: “After two-and-a-half thousand years it would seem to be about time to consider what the Being of being has to do with such things as “principles” and “causes.”³⁰⁸

Heidegger gives us crucial insights on the Greek philosophical heritage. In asking what philosophy is, he does not only return us to its source, but describes for us the physiognomy of its Greek origin. And because *philosophia* binds us to a historical tradition, it is certainly not just a thing of the past but “a path along which we are traveling.” But whose path is it really? Heidegger is unequivocal, warning us at the beginning of his work, that the “we” of which he speaks refers only to the people of the Western-European historical tradition. When he speaks of *philosophia* therefore, he is not claiming to present a universal narrative, but wants to tell the story of a particular journey it has taken, which traces the “path that leads from the actuality of the Greek world down to us.”³⁰⁹ And here, indeed, in showing the shift in philosophical focus on being, and the loss of the original harmony with *sophon*, and eventually to an enframing that is “attested by the rise and dominance of the sciences” and the atomic

³⁰⁷ Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* 51. *Sophon* means “One (is) All,” referring to all things that exist as part of the whole.

³⁰⁸ Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* 57.

³⁰⁹ Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* 41.

age, Heidegger traces the path along which the Western-European society has traveled and brought the Greek heritage to a completion.

Heidegger called this completion the “end of Philosophy.” This is not to say, however, that philosophy has attained perfection but that philosophy as metaphysics has reached its “most extreme possibility,” which is accomplished not only by Marx but in the development of the sciences.³¹⁰ From this, he claims that “to the extent that philosophical thinking is still attempted, it manages only to attain an epigonal renaissance and variations of that renaissance.”

It is important, indeed, to ponder on what Heidegger is saying here, especially in relation to our own articulation of or search for a Filipino philosophy. In understanding philosophy as a journey that occurs in history, tracing its determinate beginning with the Greeks all the way to its consummation in the Western-European historical tradition, we are forced to ask ourselves if the idea of a Filipino philosophy is still even viable. Perhaps Quito was right all along, and those who believed in the idea was holding onto an illusion. But would it not be possible to root ourselves in the Greek intellectual heritage and from there trace our own philosophical journey, without being oblivious to nor continuing from (neither would be impossible anyway) the Western-European tradition? And then, against Heidegger’s wishes, claim this our

³¹⁰ Heidegger explains that while the sciences have tried to separate themselves from philosophy and establish their independence, their development has not really led to philosophy’s dissolution but to its completion. Because no matter how much the sciences, including psychology, sociology, anthropology and the like, try to deny their origin, their scientific attitude betrays how they have taken over the task that philosophy had partly done in the course of its history; that in “[speaking] about the Being of beings,” in interrogating the whatness of things, the sciences are “the ontologies of the various regions of beings.” Thus, it is in the sciences that philosophy becomes “the technology by which [man] establishes himself in the world,” a technology that Heidegger describes as Enframing. Thus, Heidegger explains that “the end of philosophy proves to be the triumph of the manipulable arrangement of a scientific-technological world” and further sees this as “the beginning of the world civilization based upon Western European thinking.” Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking, in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), 57-59. See also Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* 33.)

right to philosophy and refuse that it has come to an end? Perhaps, but we would miss out on a very crucial possibility.

To say that philosophy has ended is not in any way a pejorative statement against those of the non-Western European tradition in implying that they had missed their chance. In fact, Heidegger wishes to end philosophy so that thinking can begin. This means: to put an end to “thinking” that has made the “technological-scientific-industrial as the sole criterion of man’s world sojourn,” and finally allow thinking that is “content with awakening a readiness in man for a possibility whose contour remains obscure, whose coming remains uncertain.”³¹¹ Only in this sense, which is contrary to the traditional notion of “thinking” as “re-presenting,” as “a kind of willing,” can thinking finally become a non-willing, an act of waiting.³¹²

We would have to clarify and explore further what this thinking actually means for us, and how it can be carried out. But what is easily discernible at this moment is that this task of thinking which awaits us at the end of philosophy can potentially liberate us from the burden of categories and prejudices of a Great Tradition, which, whether we admit it or not, has determined and against which we have measured our thinking even before we could really begin. “That we are still not thinking,” is, according to Heidegger the “most thought-provoking.” But it also means that with the end of philosophy, we can begin, we are forced to begin to think for ourselves. Again, this is not say that we would be completely oblivious to the Western-European tradition, or even to the “Greater Eastern” tradition for that matter. Rather, in saying that philosophy has concluded, we accept that we no longer need to and can no longer continue on this path. And for us who were never meant to travel along this road anyway, the task at the end of philosophy lies in reflecting on the path that thinking has taken for us--not excluding our adventures along this Western-European path, but also

³¹¹ Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy,” 60.

³¹² See Martin Heidegger, “Conversation on a Country Path About Thinking,” in *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 58-68.

now including the other paths to thinking that we have neglected or rejected in our desperate attempt to be “philosophical.”

Lundagin mo, Beybe! (Jump, baby!)

While many scholars sought to establish a Filipino philosophy, seeking new strategies on how to go about it, Ferriols was very critical of the whole endeavor, yet very different from Quito’s skeptical view. Like Heidegger, Ferriols understood that thinking could not and should not be limited within the confines of a concept such as philosophy. While he was indefatigable in establishing the Filipino language as a medium for philosophical discourse, he believed that to develop a Filipino philosophy was simply a waste of time, like “blowing bubbles against the wind.” As early as 1974, he already explained his position on this matter:

Chuang Tzu did not try to develop a Chinese philosophy. He simply awoke to the Way within him and around him, tried to awake even more, knew that what he lived could not be put into words—When all that can be said has been said, the most important thing cannot be said—yet felt compelled to say all that he could say. Hundreds of years later what he said still lives and is called Chinese philosophy. He is surprised. It is the Way that matters to him, not the label.³¹³

Unlike our German philosopher, however, Ferriols did not dwell on this problem, nor did he try to bring philosophy to an end or suggested how thinking must proceed. For him, the matter was really very simple: if one really wanted to philosophize, one should simply think, and if one were to think, one would have to begin. And so, with words that never fail to encourage and amuse students, Ferriols would say in class, *Lundagin mo beybe!* (Jump [into the water], baby!).³¹⁴

³¹³ Roque Ferriols, S.J., “A Memoir of Six Years,” *Philippine Studies* 22, no.3/4 (1974): 339.

³¹⁴ In an essay written by Ferriols to introduce philosophy to “beginners,” he warns against the automatism of rules and method that impede our thinking. He uses the metaphor of students who are trying to learn to swim, who by the poolside are eagerly take down notes of everything that the teacher is saying. But when the teacher tells

In understanding the Greek tradition and what it means for us, Ferriols's study of the pre-Socratics has indeed proven invaluable. Through the eyes of Ferriols (and not Heidegger's), we see Thales from an angle slightly askew: not as the great thinker who was one with the great *sophon*, but as a man, who with very human passions and faults, wondered about the universe. And for Ferriols, this curiosity, this desire to question, to travel, to search, to learn, are not extraordinary abilities of a genius but the natural proclivities of every human. Of course, there are people who refuse to nourish these tendencies, and some, like Thales, who have chosen to live a life of endless wonder and learning, and the reason for which we remember him as an exemplar of the true philosopher. Nevertheless, Ferriols, with the soundness not of proof but of his common sense (if only Quito had used hers too), conjectures that there were others, long before Thales was even born, with the same kind of curiosity, and for this reason the latter was most likely not the first man to think.³¹⁵ He says,

This is not the place to investigate whether there was this kind of awareness that took place in other cultures—and when. But in the Greek world, this awareness happened, it seems, at the time of Thales. I will not say that Thales was the first among the Greeks to experience this awareness. At the moment of the birthing of a new type of thinking, people are not aware that something new is beginning. That's why no one takes note of every detail about this new birthing. But at the moment when this new type of thinking begins to exist, people will look back to the past, and recognize through the clouds of vague memories the shape of heroes of a new thinking. It was the form of Thales, it seems, that was recognized, and that's why he was named the “first philosopher” of the Greeks.³¹⁶

them to jump into the water, they can't and won't stop writing. See Roque Ferriols, S.J. “Sapagkat ang Pilosopiya ay Ginagawa,” in <http://pilosopotasyo.tripod.com/una.html>.

³¹⁵ Ferriols, *Sinaunang Griyego*, 9.

³¹⁶ Ferriols, *Sinaunang Griyego*, 10.

In reflecting on the origins of our philosophical journey, Ferriols shows us the indeterminateness of beginnings; for while history “officially” recognizes the Greeks as the progenitors of philosophy, and Thales as the “first” among them, the past is a “cloud of vague memories” to which we must always return, in search for those other heroes who may have been ignored or who are now just beginning to emerge in clear sight, and whose thinking may have very well existed before and beyond the Greeks. Heidegger could not have seen this, so intent was he in tracing the Western-European historical tradition, that the beginning, the source of thinking could only be Greek.

From all this, we can better understand what Grialdo was trying to do, something that Ferriols himself was not able to; that through the traditional approach, we would seek out our own intellectual heroes, and lay out our philosophical journey, not as a continuation of but alongside the Greeks. Of course keeping in mind the legacy of Thales that Ferriols presents to us, as both “first philosopher” and “not-the-first thinker,” so that in seeking out our heroes, we would also remember those who are overlooked.

Curiously, despite its history of Filipinization, the Ateneo philosophy curriculum does not offer a course on Filipino philosophy. But if one considers how Ferriols’s views have played a part in this, then it is not that surprising. This is not to say that efforts to indigenize the discipline have not continued in the Ateneo, since half of its philosophy core courses are still taught in Filipino. It is more likely though that underlying the curriculum was the belief that in order to filipinize philosophy, it would be best not to talk about it (i.e., in a module such as Filipino philosophy), but rather, to put it in practice, to allow the “Filipino,” through the vernacular, to permeate every moment of philosophical discourse, and from there build a philosophical vocabulary and tradition of our own. Of course one would have to study carefully how far this ideal is actually being achieved—which is precisely what is lacking—a course (which could have easily been titled differently, if Ferriols had qualms about calling it “Filipino philosophy”) that would provide a venue consecrated not only to an

engagement with the works of our philosophers but to a reflexive study of the history and development of the philosophical discipline in the Philippines. DLSU has their FilPhilo course, but even UST has its seminar on Filipino Philosophy, which ironically, was included in the curriculum through Co's initiative.³¹⁷

Underlying the absence of a Filipino philosophy course in the Ateneo curriculum was not just a reflection of Ferriols's mistrust for labels. He was, more than anything, afraid of being caught in discourse, which he believed distracted people from the goal—which is to think.³¹⁸ On the one hand, when one evaluates the situation and sees how our philosophers have been stuck searching, defining, and strategizing the best approach to Filipino philosophy for more than twenty years, one has reason to believe that Ferriols had a point. On the other, one wonders how far thinking can actually go without understanding or making explicit to itself the path that it has thus far traveled, or even be relevant, when it tries to avoid engaging others in discourse.

It is hard to imagine that Ferriols would be completely unengaged, especially for a philosopher who has always been meticulously watchful of things. But in order to consecrate fully his time and effort to thinking, he opted to stay away from polemics. Did this make him less relevant?

Judging from the force of Ferriols's insights, one cannot help wonder if his book on the Presocratics is the kind of expository scholarship that Abulad and Gripaldo believed to be doomed. Reading his reflections on the task of a historian of philosophy, one sees not only how it surpasses Gripaldo's own musings, but how it profoundly

³¹⁷ The "Seminar in Filipino Philosophy" at U.S.T., according to the course description, is "aimed at a philosophical investigation on the existence, or development" of Filipino Philosophy, and does not in any way presuppose the latter. In doing so, its aim is to give "a survey of the corpus of writings of published Filipino Philosophers," such as Abulad, Co, Garcia, Ibane, Mercado, Quito, etc. See <http://philosophy.ust.edu.ph/undergraduate.html>.

³¹⁸ In an interview, Ferriols explains that while his philosophy was a reaction to the irrelevance and impersonal character of Scholasticism (specifically what Etienne Gilson calls Cartesian Thomism), he had chosen not to reveal this in any of his books. His fear was that if he had engaged in such polemics, that he would be stuck in discourse, in an endless debate on who is right and wrong. (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

anticipates and defines an important task. With Ferriols's words, I, too, am forced to a self-evaluation:

In the discipline of history of philosophy, the aim of the researcher is to understand, to be part of, to experience the spirit of the person in search.... A respect for what was really thought, thwarting one's own tendency to hasten and claim that what was not thought was thought, courage to engage an encounter with the thinkers one is trying to understand.... He also needs a critical spirit: he will come to realize that he has unexpected talents for thinking—he will be forced to use areas of his brain that he was never been in the habit of using—and horizons of understanding will unravel before his astonished eyes. He will also sense errors, narrow-mindedness, a disregard for what should be obvious--and he will learn from all this too.³¹⁹

“Philosophers,” in the loose sense

When one looks at the various attempts by some of our philosophers to write the history of philosophy in the country, one sees that they often begin with the “colonial” stage, when philosophy was primarily taught by Spanish friars and priests in seminaries and was predominantly a Scholastic Thomism. Abulad calls this the “first colonial phase,” to distinguish it from a “second colonial phase,” when waves of Filipino scholars, after their studies in America and Europe, brought home a new range of philosophical ideas. These were seen as “exciting times,” which not only “brought about the emergence of a new philosophical landscape in the Philippines,”³²⁰ but challenged and finally overcame the hegemony of Scholastic thought.³²¹ What came next was, for Abulad, an “indigenous phase,” when our philosophers became self-

³¹⁹ Ferriols, *Sinaunang Griyego*, 10.

³²⁰ Alfredo Co, “In the Beginning... A Petit Personal Historical Narrative of the Beginning of Philosophy in the Philippines,” in Co, *Across the Philosophical Silk Road*, 39.

³²¹ Romualdo Abulad, “Contemporary Filipino Philosophy,” *Karunungan* 5 (1988): 4-5.

conscious of their contribution to the “nationalist cause,” and the question of a “Filipino philosophy” became a primary concern. Co corroborates this part of Abulad’s narrative, but the two will differ in how the story will go on. For Co, our history of philosophy continues with a second wave of scholars who, finishing their Ph.D. from 1986 onwards, are expected to carry further, match, or surpass the “legacy of the first wave of Filipino philosophers” (1950-1985) through an ever greater expertise and sustained publication. Abulad, on his part, also sees our history in a linear progression, but his measure of progress is qualitatively different. Through the progressive option, which we have mentioned earlier, the goal for the future is to move beyond the first stage of indigenization (or the “early indigenization,” which refers to the anthropological schemes of Mercado, Timbreza, and Quito) towards the second phase (“late indigenization”), which is when the Filipino scholar becomes a true philosopher, that is, an “original thinker.”³²² Unfortunately, it seems that the Filipino still operates on “borrowed methodology,” and has therefore “not yet come to a point where he is able to develop a research procedure so original that his peers abroad will be in a position to imitate him.”³²³ Consequently, Abulad will argue that we are really still at the “groping stage,” in search of a “Father of Filipino philosophy,” “a leading spirit... from whose philosophy we shall find a source of eternal inspiration.”³²⁴ Does this mean then that Filipino philosophy has been all this time only moving along what we may call pre-history, and that the real one has not even begun?

³²² Earlier, we saw that Abulad’s exemplary philosopher was Marx. But for that same reason, the philosopher, as an original thinker, had to be Hegelian. Like Quito, Abulad believed that Hegel’s originality consisted “in his lack of originality” (Abulad, “Contemporary Filipino Philosophy,” 9). Here, originality does not mean, as it is popularly believed, the “defiance of what is respectable, honored, and established,” but a courageous subversion of all prejudices, including one’s own, in one’s search for truth. In other words, the philosopher is one who gets beyond “petty squabbles,” to usher “the emergence of the philosophical Jerusalem, where all doctrinal incompatibilities melt as in a wedlock.” Romualdo Abulad, “The Filipino as a Philosopher in Search of Originality,” *Karunungan* 2 (1985): 9.

³²³ Abulad, “Contemporary Filipino Philosophy”: 8.

³²⁴ Abulad, “In Search of Originality”: 16.

More than twenty years later, the progenitor has not appeared, and I doubt if Abulad ever believed that such a figure would be found—well, at least not in his (or anyone’s) lifetime. A true-blue Marxist-Hegelian, Abulad is convinced that the road to Truth (i.e., originality) can only be “a long and laborious journey... the entire length of which has to be traversed since every moment is necessary.” But even the diligence and patience of an excellent apprentice cannot ensure success. As Abulad tells us, “the Ph.D. and even moreso the M.A., gives no foolproof guarantee,” for although these degrees may be important for practical reasons, “they cannot replace that invisible instant of transformation,” in Plato’s words, that “leaping spark,” which “brings a philosopher suddenly into being.” Abulad explains further:

This moment of illumination can never be taught; it engulfs one in an almost mysterious fashion, when one least expects it, but always after prolonged, patient and loyal engagement with the subject. It lasts only a moment, but it is a moment of awakening, after which all dark areas light up, all enigmas dissolve and all uncertainties vanish.³²⁵

In the end, however, no one really knows if or when it happens, because “God is the only silent witness on this lonely road to authenticity.” And as if that were not enough to keep the philosopher out of our reach, Abulad reminds his fellow Filipinos:

As pioneers of a Filipino Philosophy we can in no way regard ourselves as originators of philosophy. Philosophy is not our invention. Arrogance in the face of outstanding achievements from both sides of the globe is foolhardy and uncalled for. Let us admit, then, at the very outset that we are virtual newcomers in an intellectual game which has been producing masters for more than two millenia.³²⁶

No matter, with the prospect of having a “Father of Filipino Philosophy” sometime in the future, we can still hope, and “do our heroic best to clear the ground for his advent,

³²⁵ Abulad, “In Search of Originality”: 10.

³²⁶ Abulad, “In Search of Originality”: 15.

even if we ourselves will not live to see the glorious day.”³²⁷ This is why, like Co, Abulad will suggest that we march happily into the future, for the “best strategy” is “to keep on doing the thing which [we] have been called to do, with hardly the need to worry about whether the ideas [we] are giving birth to are foreign or Filipino.”

At first glance, it appears that Abulad is saying the same thing as Ferriols: that instead of worrying about titles, and self-consciously aiming to achieve what we may call “Filipino philosophy,” we should simply allow ourselves to think. But at a closer look, one sees a crucial difference: while Ferriols does not define a goal or say what we must become, Abulad identifies and describes quite elaborately an ideal. One would think, that later, when he spoke about the postmodern age, he would finally abandon his teleology. But he only reasserts it, so that in 2010, echoing his idea of a progressive option, he would argue that the relevance of a philosopher is measured by how effectively he achieves what is expected of him, and that is to “lead the pack to new spiritual frontiers.”

Sometimes, Abulad understood that philosophy was not just about building systems. The philosopher, he says, excels not just in his mastery of the philosophical traditions of both East and West, but also in the way his intellect “cuts deeply into established prejudices and provides thought with a power that knows no sacred cows.” Unfortunately, it never occurs to him that philosophy itself has become an idol. For the Greeks, philosophy was an endless yearning for the *sophon*. For Abulad and other scholars like him, it was not Being but philosophy and the philosopher that they most revered and kept safely out of their reach. And it was with these idols that the sincerest efforts of their fellow philosophers were always safely beneath the mark. There are no words better to describe such a deplorable situation than that, in Nietzsche’s words, “the lie of the ideal has so far been the curse on reality.”³²⁸ In the end, one wonders

³²⁷ Abulad, “In Search of Originality”: 17.

³²⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, “How One Becomes What One is,” in *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Inc., 1989), 218.

how this is any different from those scholars, who with their regressive schemes, Abulad criticizes for not stepping-up to realize the dream. They are really only the two sides of the same coin.

“The Philosopher and the Pilosopo”

Gripaldo was also inflicted by this ideal, this measure that renders reality “not quite.” He laments that, while there are a few Filipino philosophers, many have remained merely teachers or scholars of philosophy.³²⁹ Quito, who had the same grievance twenty years earlier, labeled them as philosophers, “in the loose sense.”³³⁰ But while Quito saw no redemption, Gripaldo urged his fellow Filipino scholars to aspire, not simply to become a philosopher, but to be a world-class thinker.

In this so-called “postmodern” and global age, when publishing at tiered journals has become the measure, and consequently the desire, of every scholar, the philosopher realizes that he can no longer merely be a professor in the narrow walls of his classroom but in order to survive, must have a “global impact.” Speaking at a colloquium on “The Relevance of Philosophy to the Modern Filipino Intellectual” in the late ‘70s, former chair of the U.P. Philosophy department and student of Pascual, Armando Bonifacio, had already warned us about the danger of underestimating the value of teaching. He argued that within the academic setting, philosophy was certainly relevant to the student’s intellectual development, but that “the paramount question of course [was] whether the philosophy teachers themselves [saw] the relevance of their enterprise.”³³¹ Judging from the way students have become alienated from philosophical concerns, Bonifacio thinks that philosophy teachers do not see their own relevance, and therefore are not able to convey the importance of philosophy and show its application to life.

³²⁹ Rolando Gripaldo, “The Making of a Filipino Philosopher,” 39.

³³⁰ Quito, *State of Philosophy*, 9.

³³¹ Armando Bonifacio, “Philosophy and National Survival” *Sophia* 6 (1976-1977): 52.

Both Quito and Bonifacio attest to the pejorative meaning that Filipinos normally impute to the term “pilosopo,” referring to a person who not only “perorates endlessly,”³³² but one “who pretends to know.”³³³ But while Quito thinks that this perception cannot be helped, Bonifacio believes that the image of the “pilosopo” can still be rehabilitated. Unfortunately, philosophy teachers have only succeeded in maintaining this bad image. And if now being “world-class” becomes the primary goal, one can only imagine the philosopher alienating himself even more; for he would certainly be running after the latest trends to make himself relevant to the world, which may or may not be useful to the society to which he belongs. All the more, indeed, philosophy in the Philippines would become a “losing proposition.”

It is curious, however, that despite their knowledge of Pilosopo Tasyo, a character in *Noli Me Tangere*, neither Quito nor Bonifacio would use Rizal’s complex portrayal of the Filipino philosopher to nuance their own description; for while those who could not understand his wisdom dubbed him a fool or a madman, or a charlatan who shows off his knowledge, the well-educated, called him, with utmost respect, either as “Don Anastasio or the philosopher Tasio.”³³⁴ Was the importance of Tasyo overlooked because he was merely a fictional character not meant to be taken seriously? And yet, Pascual would find it relevant to point out that Rizal himself had vouched that Tasyo represented something or someone real in life.³³⁵

Tasyo was no Socrates, although the latter may have also appeared strange.³³⁶ From the dialogues of Plato, we find Socrates depicted as a man in control, that not

³³² Quito, *State of Philosophy*, 9.

³³³ Bonifacio, “National Survival”: 50.

³³⁴ See Jose Rizal, “Tasio” and “In the Philosopher’s Home,” *Noli Me Tangere*, trans. in Ma. Soledad Lacson-Lochin (Makati: The Bookmark, Inc, 2006), 97-107 and 218-231.

³³⁵ Pascual quotes Rizal’s letter to Señor Barrantes: “But I have pictured side by side with evil, the good; I have pictured an Elias and a Tasio, because Elias and Tasio exist, exist, and exist. . . ; only you and your coreligionist, fearing that this little good that I have pictured would serve as example for the bad and would redeem them, shout that it is false, poetic, exaggerated, ideal, impossible, improbable....” Letter to Ponce, Aug. 18, 1888, quoted in Pascual, *Philosophy of Rizal*, xv.

³³⁶ Socrates was notoriously known for walking barefoot and unwashed. Rarely

even alcohol could intoxicate him. Though he may be, under that Apollinian guise, as a physiognomist had once revealed, “a cave of all evil passions,” Socrates became a “master over them all” by making a stronger tyrant out of reason.³³⁷ In the *Apologia*, we find him warning the people of Athens, so certain of his worth, that if they kill him, it is not he who will suffer but they, who will not easily find another one like him, a gadfly given to the state by God to ensure that they may live in humility and virtue.

Tasyo, on the other hand, was someone who hardly had control over his emotions or any situation. He had to give up his philosophy studies to follow the wishes of his mother who was afraid that he would become a godless sage. Later, being orphaned and widowed, he floundered in his loneliness, seeking solace in his books to a point that he became neglectful of worldly matters, which gradually led to the loss of his fortune. And yet, Tasyo was no fool. He was a realist who understood the ways of people, and having observed them for too long, saw that “no one loves naked truth for its own sake.” And so, with the same prudence that he advises Ibarra to play along and feign obedience to persons of power, the philosopher Anastacio (whose name in Greek means “resurrection”), writes in hieroglyphics to save his books from being burned, in the belief that a future generation will come, with the proper education, to decode and make his message known.

No one understood the importance of education better than Pascual himself. But despite the many books he had written and the intellectual influence with which he led the U.P. Philosophy department in the struggle against clerical aggressions in the 1950s, Pascual is still remembered as “a negligible father of philosophy in the State university.”³³⁸ It is said that he was “more interested in provoking his students, shattering their religious beliefs, than in writing philosophy articles or books.”³³⁹

changing his clothes, he “efficiently wore in the daytime what he covered himself with at night.” <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/socrates/>.

³³⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Twilight of the Idols,” 113.

³³⁸ Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines,” 53.

³³⁹ Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines,” 53.

Furthermore, people are not aware that Pascual had organized in the '50s what he would call the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP), which is today thought to have been established only in 1973, under the initiative of Professor Jorge Revilla of the University of the East (U.E.).³⁴⁰

In addition to these contributions, Pascual wrote a libretto for an operetta which was meant to “[embody] Rizal’s theory of complete education.”³⁴¹ It is here that we find a very important dialogue between Tasyo and the schoolmaster, who we know from *Noli*, was borrowing books from the old philosopher, and was discovering knowledge that was radically changing his perspective on education.³⁴² As in the novel, Pascual writes a scene where the schoolmaster complains to Tasyo: while he himself had hoped to put an end to whipping students as a form of punishing, the parents themselves are asking that it be reinstated. It is in response to the schoolmaster’s anguish that Tasyo sings:

My young friend, your own task is much greater than mine!

I expose rottenness long encrusted in time

But you tend to the seed that must reach the sublime!

You bravely carve the future out of tender mind

On teaching truly rests the end fate of mankind.

Have patience my friend, good luck to you and your kind!³⁴³

The Philosopher-Teachers of the San Beda Philosophy Department

³⁴⁰ Dr. Reyes, interview, 2011.

³⁴¹ Pascual’s libretto was the first prize winner in a national competition, and was performed as an operetta, with the musical composition of Dr. Eliseo Pajaro. Its premiere performance, which was held on the evening of August 26, 1962, was according to Pascual, “a fitting climax” to a year-long celebration of “the First Centenary of the birth of Jose Rizal.” Preface to Pascual, *Philosophy of Rizal*, ix-x).

³⁴² See Rizal, “The Tavaills of a Schoolmaster,” *Noli Me Tangere*, 136-147.

³⁴³ Ricardo Pascual, “Ba Be Bi Bo Bu,” in *Rizal on Education: A Tetralogy of Dramas* (Manila: Community Publishers, Inc, 1962), 32.

In idealizing him as an “original” or “world-class” thinker, we run the risk of denying the philosopher the possibility of assuming other forms. In the story that follows, we see an instance of how the philosopher takes the most unassuming form of a teacher, who, although may not have a “global impact,” can provide an impetus for thinking which is crucial in his particular context.

In 2008, Arcadio Malbarosa, Rafael Dolor, Feorillo Demeterio, III, and Max Felicida, all tenured faculty members of the Philosophy Department of San Beda College-Mendiola, were without warning handed, via courier, their termination letters. The administration had closed down their department as the result of what it claimed to be a “streamlining of course offerings... for national development.” The real reason, however, was that these four professors came into conflict with the monks of the Benedictine Abbey, as the result of their struggle to change radically the philosophy curriculum. With the dissolution of the department, it was obvious that the Benedictine monks had enough and decided it was time to eliminate these “trouble-makers.”

In an email sent by Malbarosa to fellow philosophy professors, he explains that the change started in 1993, the beginning of his five-year chairship, when the San Beda Philosophy department “embarked on the progressive and systematic development of a program that approximated the Frankfurt School.”³⁴⁴ The intention was, at the beginning, primarily a positioning—while Ateneo was known for its phenomenologist-existentialist approach, U.P. and U.S.T. for their Analytic and Thomist tradition respectively, the philosophy professors at the San Beda College envisioned their program as the “country’s center for Critical Theory.”

This ideological positioning, however, was more than a search for a niche. Malbarosa and Felicida, both former scholastics at the Divine Word seminary, had done apostolate in the urban poor in the early days. While scholasticism was officially what they learned in the seminary, their immersion had given them an understanding

³⁴⁴ Arcadio Malbarosa, email, March 28, 2008.

of the alienation that was prevalent in Philippine society. Demeterio, on the other hand, had studied linguistics in U.S.T., and later in U.P., where he found in the Literature department a strong tradition of Marxism and Critical Theory. It was he, the most prolific writer in the group, who would later articulate the “pathology” of philosophy in the country as a kind of alienated thinking, whose “fatal emphasis on the answer component” has taken philosophical ideas out of context, using them as “answers” without really understanding the real questions that arise in our own society. Philosophy is therefore, according to Demeterio’s diagnosis, “alien in origin” because it “disregards the life-giving circuit” where paradigms, questions, the act of searching, and answers are supposedly drawn from tradition and brought back to it.³⁴⁵

Coming from their respective backgrounds, and with a shared view of the problem of alienation, these professors were convinced that the current humanist approach to philosophy, as found in Ateneo or U.S.T., was no longer viable, and that in order for philosophy “to bite the social problems that are surrounding us,” it would have to be repositioned as a discipline in the social sciences. It was in relation to this new thrust that a course entitled “Explorations in Filipino Philosophy” was introduced. It was “a critical survey of the central issues, questions, themes on the status or existence of Filipino philosophy.” The course, however, was meant not merely as a survey of the works of Filipino philosophers, as in the case in Co’s “Seminar in Filipino Philosophy,” but a venue to understand Filipino philosophy but in relation to the works of Filipino scholars in the social science disciplines.

The real trouble, however, began not really with the changes in the curriculum but when these professors brought to practice what they taught in the classrooms. Of course, the monks had long ago pulled out their seminarians from the program when the new one was implemented in 1993, and was sending them to study philosophy at

³⁴⁵ F.P.A. Demeterio III, “Re-Reading Emerita Quito’s Thoughts Concerning the Underdevelopment of Filipino Philosophy,” *DiwaTao* 1, no. 1 (2001). From http://www.geocities.ws/philodept/diwatao/emerita_quito.htm.

UST and Christ the King seminary. But what seemed to have really triggered the animosity was when the four professors became actively involved in supporting students in their struggle to uphold their rights in their Magna Carta.³⁴⁶

The conflict between students and administration ensued from the latter's implementation of the uniform policy for Freshmen in 2007. The contention was that the policy, which was implemented without consulting the student body, was a clear violation of the Magna Carta. While the administration tried to make excuses, even questioning the legitimacy of the Magna Carta itself, the students saw it as a disturbing sign of the lack of respect for their rights.³⁴⁷ To express their indignation, the students held a rally from June 21 to 22, which ended in a march through the streets of Mendiola.³⁴⁸ Expressing their support for their students, the Faculty Club, under the leadership of Mathematics Professor, Dr. Fedeliz Tuy, did not only release their position on the matter, but took part in the rally themselves, to reaffirm the students of the importance of their struggle.

A few months later, the conflict escalated when the administration announced that it would no longer collect a schoolpaper publication fee from the tuition fees. Without the financial support from the administration, it only meant one thing: the eventual demise of the school newspaper, *The Bedan*. For sixty-five years, *The Bedan* was known for its critical journalism, and had maintained that reputation during Malbarosa's term as its Technical Adviser. Under the leadership of E.J. Mangahas as Editor-in-Chief, *The Bedan* supported and worked closely with Student Council

³⁴⁶ Felicida notes, however, that their radicalism did not start with the Magna Carta issue but way back in the late '90s when he, Malbarosa and Demeterio were actively involved in forming a labor union. Known and respected as a department of intellectuals, it was the philosophy professors who convinced the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) to join the union, which was the crucial step in legalizing the organization. (Felicida, interview, 2011).

³⁴⁷ See "Survey: 85.61% of Bedans Say Uniform Policy Violated Student Rights," and "Administration's Arguments for Policy Unfounded: Freshies Reject Uniform Policy Resoundingly," in *The Bedan* (Red is Dead) LXV, no. 1 (2007): 8-9. From <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18047886/Red-is-Dead-Issue-by-65>.

³⁴⁸ "The Cry of Mendiola: Bedans Unite to Defend Magna Carta," *The Bedan* (Red is Dead) LXV, no. 1 (2007): 2.

president and philosophy major, Janking Suravilla in the fight to uphold the Student Magna Carta against the uniform policy.³⁴⁹ But it was precisely for its criticism of the administration that the latter tried to suppress its freedom of speech. Again, the teachers, in support of their students, expressed their indignation, criticizing the administration's action as "a prelude to [the] annihilation of further values, even life," and commenting how it was uncannily similar to the Martial Law days. But Demeterio saw an opportunity in the crisis, and predicted that "although the tradition of structured and organized publication might suffer a set back, the writing will go on." And given a strong Bedan studentry, he was certain that "the paper could become even more radical as it gains total independence from the admin."³⁵⁰ And true enough, The Bedan staff was more than ready for the challenge, with a retort that Managing Editor, Ramon King, III captures quite eloquently: *Ano ngayon kung wala kaming pondo?* (And so what if we have no funds?).³⁵¹



Illustration 5: Cover of the 65th issue of *The Bedan*. Taken from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18047886/Red-is-Dead-Issue-by-65>, April 27, 2014.

³⁴⁹ E.J. Mangahas, interview, 2011.

³⁵⁰ Ramon King III and Loise Laine Limos, "Bedan Community Expresses Solidarity with The Bedan," *The Bedan*, LXV, No.5 (2007), 2. From www.scribd.com/doc/18047906/The-Bedan-Sept-Oct-Issue-by-65.

³⁵¹ Ramon King II, "Ano Ngayong Kung Wala Kaming Pondo? :P" *The Bedan* LXV, no.5 (2007), 9.

But as we know, the students were not the only ones sanctioned. A few months before our philosophy professors were handed their early retirement package, the rector-president Father Mateo de Jesus decided to terminate the operations of the Graduate School of Philosophy (GSP). Felicida, who was the Dean of the GSP, was completely shocked by the news, for it had only been a year since the agreement was made between him, the former rector-president Father Anscar Chupungco, O.S.B., and the Board of Trustees that the Masters program would be given at least three years to establish and develop before being evaluated.

The idea, in fact, of a graduate program came from Chupungco himself, who as a visionary, dreamed that San Beda would eventually attain university status. But in order for this to happen, the College needed a Liberal Arts program, and so in 2006, he sought the help of our four philosophy professors to design what came to be a Masters program of Philosophy in Cultural Studies and Good Governance, which clearly had the thrust of applied philosophy.

In retrospect, Felicida believes that aside from the ideological differences, they were simply “victims of internal problems in the monastery,” of the feud between Chupungco and his successor, De Jesus. Nevertheless, precisely because they believed in Chupungco’s vision, they could not simply turn a deaf ear to the many misguided actions of the administration. Thus, in an article published in *The Bedan*, Felicida exposes the anomalies behind the closure, claiming that while the decision was done through a referendum, the voting ensued without any thorough deliberation grounded on vital information. In a sourly tone, he says:

As the dean, I should have been invited by the board to present the programs that I had developed in order for them to have a well-informed discussion....

This did not happen. The Board either decided that it knew what I knew and

therefore I was unnecessary or it forgot about me in its state of awe at the new rector.³⁵²

However, what makes this abrupt closure even more questionable is its blatant disregard for the three students who had already enrolled in the program. In fact, the administration used precisely this issue to argue that the program was not economically viable and was causing “financial hemorrhage,” exactly the same argument that was later given with the dissolution of the Philosophy department. Needless to say, the claim was erroneous (e.g., the Economics department had less enrollees than the Philosophy department); and Dolor had found out that while the Vice Dean already stopped all student applications to the philosophy program, there had not been any study done with regard to the closure of the philosophy department. Thus, the real issue was that San Beda was being run like a monastery, and that the Abbott and his lackeys were expecting no less than perfect obedience from everyone. It is therefore not surprising that our philosophy professors, who have been accused of radicalizing the students, were perceived as a complication that posed a serious threat to the “order.”³⁵³

The “Pathology” of Filipino Philosophy

Considering this fairly recent case of an ideological and political scuffle with a religious order, one can only agree with Demeterio that Abulad’s evolutionary scheme is misleading; for while it is true that our philosophers, coming fresh from their graduate studies abroad, had brought new ideas that “cracked the granite walls of

³⁵² Maxwell Felicida, “Reflections on the Abolition of the Graduate School of Philosophy,” *The Bedan* (Red is Dead) LXV, no. 1 (2007), 12.

³⁵³ Felicida explains that it was a case of “management style,” and notes how De Jesus summarily terminated the entire workforce of the canteen, all 21 personnel, since the president and active members of the union came from their ranks. But Felicida also remembers in the 1970s, at the height of student radicalism, when the faculty of Political Science, carrying a black coffin, rallied in Mendiola. After that, the administration closed down the Political Science department. Rafael Dolor claims, however, that it was not only the Political Science that was dissolved in the ‘80s, but Philosophy and AB English as well. It was only with Father Odillard De Joya Arceo, O.S.B. that Philosophy was re-instated during his term as Dean in 1985-1996. (Felicida and Dolor, interview, 2011).

Thomistic Philosophy,” we cannot really say that we have evolved out of our “colonial phase.” Quite the contrary, Demeterio points out that Scholasticism is far from being “a thing of the past,” being the “the most predominant mode of doing philosophy in the Philippines.”³⁵⁴

Furthermore, Demeterio questions whether there was indeed an evolutionary development, as Abulad’s entire narrative claims, especially from the early indigenous to the late indigenous phase. He finds these “smooth transitions” to be “quite tricky,” especially when one considers what really happened, which in his assessment was “not an evolutionary movement but a devolutionary one.” Demeterio says:

By distancing themselves from the agenda of the early indigenous phase, many Filipino philosophers slid back to the concerns of the second colonial phase, where they took the easy way again of preoccupying themselves with the purposeless expounding of one foreign philosophy after another.³⁵⁵

One reason, he says, is that this transition from early indigenization to its later phase is a “transition motivated by the intellectual boredom resulting from the over-saturation of works on early indigenous philosophy.”³⁵⁶ In fact, it was the same boredom that propelled scholars to move away from Thomism and seek out new ideas. But while boredom could be taken positively, as it is already suggested above in the way it urges the mind to search for more, Demeterio sees it as an alienation of the mind that seeks out western theories not for their relevance but for their “dramatic novelty and exotic foreignness.”³⁵⁷ Without a real engagement with the problems of society, it became easy for scholars of the second colonial phase, as well as those of the later

³⁵⁴ Demeterio III, “Re-Reading Emerita Quito’s Thoughts.”

³⁵⁵ Feorillo Demeterio III, “Thought and Socio-Politics: An Account of the Late Twentieth Century Filipino Philosophy, 16. From <https://sites.google.com/site/feorillodemeterio/filipinophilosophyessays>.

³⁵⁶ Demeterio, “Thought and Socio-Politics,” 17.

³⁵⁷ Demeterio, “Thought and Socio-Politics,” 18.

indigenous phase “to be lost in their profundity, forgetting in the process that philosophy is [sic] ought to be a theoretical engagement with reality.”³⁵⁸

Coming from a Marxist and Frankfurt School tradition, Demeterio was obviously partial to what he called a “critical Filipino philosophy,” (i.e., philosophy as a critique of society), which for him could never be “a mere academic desire of some armchair intellectual” but “something that is actually premised on a social, cultural, and national interest.”³⁵⁹ But the question is—and here Demeterio tries to understand further—why did our philosophers shirk away from these interests and instead nurture their fetish for the new?

According to Demeterio, the reason for the pathological underdevelopment of critical Filipino philosophy lies in a historical trauma, citing particularly the intellectual suppression that occurred during Martial Law. Basing his analysis on the data collected in Gripaldo’s bibliography, he notes a surge in critical philosophy in the late ‘60s, reflecting the political unrest at that time and the birth of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968. With the declaration of Martial Law, however, one observes a sudden plateau in the number of works in critical philosophy beginning in the early ‘70s, a steady decline until the mid-80s, until finally, a resurgence in the late ‘80s during the EDSA revolution.

Demeterio further substantiates his argument by citing oral accounts of philosophy professors who experienced those oppressive times. In an open forum held at UST on February 8, 2002, for example, Quito recalls how she critiqued Martial Law in one of her books but was approached by an agent who asked her to remove this portion from her work. Others, like Timbreza and Dy, also attested to the precariousness of those times, explaining how it was necessary for one’s survival to “lie low.” Indeed, as Malbarosa and Felicilda pointed out, there were many, like Fr. Edicio de la Torre and Fr. Balweg, who continued to practice critical philosophy by

³⁵⁸ Demeterio, “Thought and Socio-Politics,” 18.

³⁵⁹ Demeterio, “Thought and Socio-Politics,” 18.

joining the “underground movement.” Demeterio contests this, not only because of the anti-intellectualism that at a certain point became prevalent in the underground movement, but because he believes that critical philosophy can only exist in public discourse, where everyone is given an equal opportunity to express, defend and critique ideas.

While Demeterio presents an interesting argument, one wonders how much this “trauma” can actually be held responsible for what is perceived as philosophy’s devolution. For if Demeterio himself notes that there was a resurgence of critical philosophy around the time of the EDSA revolution, then there must have been a point when our philosophers came to terms with their fears. Yet this does not explain why scholars of the late indigenous phase slid back to an expository form of scholarship rather than continuing the tradition of critical philosophy. Furthermore, Demeterio relates the decline of critical philosophy to the rise of philosophy as an interpretation of the Filipino *Weltanschauung*, whose “phenomenal growth” beginning in the late ‘70s and reaching its peak in the early ‘80s, coincided perfectly with Marcos’s dictatorial regime. For Demeterio, however, this was no coincidence: this kind of philosophy thrived during those years of Fascism not only because it was considered “politically tame,” but because it fed into Marcos’s construction of a mythic nationalism. Here, he concludes that, like many intellectuals in the social sciences, our philosophers too were “collaborators” during this time; that while they may not have been part of the “dictator’s intellectual machinery,” many of them “joined the epistemic bandwagon that [was] partial towards the churning out of nationalist discourses.”³⁶⁰

A Philosophy of the Masses

There was, indeed, a collaboration that took place, but not exactly a dramatic complicity in a fascist’s evil designs. In the maiden issue of the journal, *Karunungan*,

³⁶⁰ Demeterio, “Thought and Socio-Politics,” 21.

we learn from Quito that the PAPR was in fact an offshoot of a UNESCO-sponsored conference on Teaching and Research in Philosophy in the Asia-Pacific Region. In that fateful meeting, which was held in Bangkok, in February, 1983, Quito reports that the participants lamented the fact “that indigenous philosophy was neglected in favor of European and American trends.”³⁶¹ The consensus was that Asia, being one of the world’s oldest civilizations, had its own distinct philosophical character, but that “it will not surface unless local philosophers dig to the roots of their own indigenous culture.” It was then agreed upon that the formulation of a philosophy autochthonous to the people, if it exists, would be the aim and focus of subsequent research.³⁶²

Long before this UNESCO-PAPR initiative however, there were already efforts in the early ‘70s to articulate the Philippine worldview. These efforts, which constitute the anthropological approach to philosophy, have been subjected to much criticism, not only for their unwitting “collaboration” with the Marcos regime but also for not being philosophical enough. A closer look into its historical context, however, will reveal that underlying this philosophical approach, though it may on the surface be merely descriptive (and therefore, regressive), is in fact a critique of the existing, predominant prejudices and structures of our thinking. Such explanation could enable us to rehabilitate our understanding of the anthropological approach, against the views of its critics, and reevaluate its significance for the history of Filipino philosophy.

One of the pioneers of the anthropological approach to philosophy was Father Leonardo Mercado of the Society of Divine Word. In 1974, he published a book entitled *Elements of Filipino Philosophy (EFP)* which claimed to present a philosophy of the common (Filipino) tao (human person). To do this, Mercado found it necessary to get beyond the limits of the philosophical discipline by employing anthropological tools of investigation: on the one hand, a metalinguistic analysis of Philippine languages, with the underlying premise that language reflects the worldview of its

³⁶¹ Editorial, *Karunungan* 1 (1984): v.

³⁶² Quito, *The State of Philosophy*, 13.

native speakers, and on the other, a phenomenology of Filipino behavior, complementing the former with a nonverbal analysis of the actions of people. The crux of his arguments, however, is fairly consistent and simple: that in contrast to the compartmentalized thinking of the Western man where one sees a dichotomy “between mind and matter, between body and soul, between one and the many, and between thought and reality,” the Filipino, “like his Oriental neighbors,” has a holistic or non-dualistic view of the world, where object and subject are harmonized but at the same time are both held as distinct.³⁶³

Throughout the book, Mercado explores this theme of non-dualism in the various aspects of the life of the Filipino. While it is not my intention here to discuss the work in detail, it would be helpful for the reader to get a sense of how the author develops his argument. For instance, in the third chapter, he discusses the phenomenon of *loob*, which he identifies as the Filipino’s conception of selfhood. In explaining its holistic and interior aspects, Mercado relates *loob* to the body in terms of the dialectic link between interiority and action. One example he explores is the phenomenon of *utang na loob*, which he translates as “debt of volition.” In the citation below, he shows how *loob* governs and determines human social behavior.

As the Tagalog proverb puts it, *Ang utang na loob ay hindi mababayaran ng salapi* (debt of volition cannot be repaid by money). Unlike ordinary debts where stipulations are made, *utang na loob* makes no condition. If X saves Y’s life from drowning, Y has an everlasting ‘debt of volition’ to X. X does not give any terms. But out of his own will (*kusang loob*) Y tries to show his goodness to X whenever he can at his own discretion. *Loob* becomes an interior law which tells Y to behave generously and amiably to X even for a lifetime.³⁶⁴

Further, he writes:

³⁶³ Preface to Leonardo Mercado, SVD, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1974). Henceforth, *EFP*.

³⁶⁴ Mercado, *EFP*, 65.

Anybody without the sense of ‘debt of volition’ is considered ‘shameless’ (*walang hiya*), an expression which most Filipinos resent. Likewise to reject a ‘debt of volition’ leads to *hiya*, which may be an expression of interiority.³⁶⁵

In this sense, *loob* acquires an ethical quality, as it pertains to a way of relating to the other. *Kagandahang-loob* and *kabutihang-loob* (“goodness”) clearly show that an essential part of *loob* is human benevolence, which is none other than a sharing of one’s interiority (*isang pagpapakaloob*) as a response to the call of people in need (*nagmamakaawa*). *Loob*, therefore, corresponds to moral conscience, which as *budhi* (the Tagalog word for conscience) not only refers to emotions but to “‘understanding,’ ‘will,’ or the faculty of intuitive discernment.”

Mercado further explores this theme of non-dualism to explain, for example, the Filipino concept of time. Unlike in Western thought where the emphasis is on the objective measure of temporal progression (in categories of past, present, and future), the Filipino experiences time subjectively, rendered meaningful only in connection to his memory.³⁶⁶ This synthetic worldview of the Filipino, according to Mercado, also manifests in his desire to live harmoniously with others. Again, unlike the Westerner who is private and individualistic, the Filipino is depicted to be group-oriented, known as the *sakop* (*tayo-tayo* or “us”) behavior.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Mercado, *EFP*, 65.

³⁶⁶ Here, Mercado cites examples of actual interviews done in Laguna, a province south of Manila:

What time do you turn on your radio in the morning?

When the cocks crow for the second time at dawn.

How far is the Center from your house?

One cigarette. (Meaning one can reach the Center after he has smoked one cigarette).

When did you last see a movie in town?

That time when the eldest daughter of the barrio captain got married. (Mercado, *EFP*, 114).

³⁶⁷ See Mercado “Chapter V: The Filipino as Social Being,” in *EFP*, 92-104. Mercado suggests that this *sakop* philosophy, which is based on “Filipino communitarian interpersonalism,” and which can therefore encourage the *bayanihan* spirit and *pakikisama* (smooth interpersonal relationship), provides an alternative to “the Western ideal of democratic procedure which encourages individualism.” (Mercado, *EFP*, 197).

While Mercado believed in the pioneering character of his work, calling it “the first systematic attempt to present the philosophy of the Filipino masses,”³⁶⁸ he reminds his readers that the study is not meant to be exhaustive, and that as a “humble beginning,” it merely “sketches the general lines of Filipino philosophy.” As the title of the work suggests, the goal is to present “elements” that would hopefully “serve as raw materials for future improvements.”³⁶⁹

These explanations, however, did not completely win the sympathies of Mercado’s contemporaries. While the book revealed new possibilities for research, Mercado was accused of being “*non-engage* [sic] in his philosophizing,” and that in being “guided by superstructural theories of anthropologists and linguists, he placed himself high above the subjects of his inquiry,” and failed to connect with his own people.³⁷⁰ U.P. Psychology and Philosophy professor, Virgilio Enriquez, would also find fault with Mercado, not only for lacking the proof to substantiate his claims but also for being too prescriptive.³⁷¹ Others, still, have criticized his later works: while the contents of his work have been deemed “unsatisfactory as social science and just as inadequate as philosophy,”³⁷² his eclectic methodology, which combines philosophy, theology, psychology and sociology, has been judged as pedagogically unsound, especially as a textbook for students.³⁷³

³⁶⁸ Preface to Mercado, *EFP*.

³⁶⁹ Preface to Mercado, *EFP*.

³⁷⁰ Nicanor Abueg, “Review of Elements of a Filipino Philosophy, by Leonardo Mercado,” *Philippine Studies* 22, no. 3-4 (1974): 384.

³⁷¹ Virgilio Enriquez and Amelia Alfonso, “Ang Pananaw sa Buhay at Weltanschauung na Mahihiwatigan sa Sikolohiya ng Wikang Tagalog,” in Virgilio Enriquez, ed., *Ang Weltanschauung ng Pilipino* (Manila and Singapore: Surian ng Wikang Pilipino and Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1980), 16.

³⁷² Ramon Reyes, “Review of Applied Filipino Philosophy, by Leonardo Mercado,” *Philippine Studies* 25, no.3 (1977): 368.

³⁷³ See Manuel Dy, Jr. “Review of Elements of Filipino Ethics, by Leonardo Mercado,” *Philippine Studies* 28, no. 4 (1980).

In the Legacy of Religious Filipinizationists

While some of these criticisms may have been well-founded, it would still be in our best interest, in writing our history, to always keep looking back to the past for something that we may have missed. And perhaps in this case, it may be an emerging form of a new thinking that, because of prejudices, we easily mistook for nothing. Indeed, the harshest thing is not so much judging a work a failure at one point in time, but condemning the past as past, as something which Abulad once said, “no one needs to undertake again.”

Despite the criticisms surrounding him, Mercado never engaged in polemics. It was only thirty years after his first book was published that our philosopher finally addressed his critics, reflecting on the path that his thinking had taken, and showing, as we shall see, how it was part of a larger struggle. Looking back to his seminary days, Mercado tells us that the person who influenced him to write on Filipino philosophy was his teacher and fellow confrère, Father Ambrosio Manaligod, SVD. It was in a Philippine history class in 1957 that Mercado heard his teacher speak passionately on the first Filipino clergy, a topic on which the latter had apparently done extensive research for his dissertation. It was in the process of gathering data from the archives of various local religious orders that Manaligod became aware of the unequal treatment against the native clergy, an awakening which later culminated in his advocacy of Filipinization that “antedated the Second Vatican Council.”³⁷⁴

In response to this discrimination, and following the legacy of Filipino priests whom Manaligod identifies as “filipinizationists,”³⁷⁵ he (coming from Isabela), along

³⁷⁴ Ambrosio Manaligod, “Four Generations of Filipinizationists,” *The Ilocos Review* 2, no. 2 (1970): 156. So passionate was Manaligod about his advocacy that Mercado remembers his outburst while delivering his commencement speech at a graduate exercise in the seminary. After expressing his gratitude to the Society of the Divine Word for his education, strangely enough, he suddenly shouted: ““I will destroy them! I will destroy them!” referring, of course, to his non-Filipino confrères. Leonardo Mercado, “Why I Started to Write on Filipino Philosophy,” in *Essays on Filipino Philosophy* (Manila: Logos Publications, Inc., 2005), 14.

³⁷⁵ Manaligod cites Father Pelaez, the martyred priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora (known as GomBurZa), and Gregorio Aglipay.

with Jesuit Father Hilario Lim of Zamboanga, Dominican Father Benito Vargas of Catanduanes, Augustinian Father Antonio Garin and Recollect Father Salvador Calsado from the Visayas, and Franciscan Father Julio Obvial of Batangas, wrote directly to Pope Pius XII, completely by-passing the papal nuncio, in appealing “for greater indigenous membership and leadership.”³⁷⁶ A few months later, the letter was followed by a Memorial “on the condition of our Native Religious Clergy,” where religious orders were accused of “foot dragging in the recruitment and forming of future local clerical leaders.”³⁷⁷ This, the Memorial argues, was a violation of the papal encyclicals from the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Faith, that have not only encouraged the training of native religious and diocesan clergy, but have unequivocally stated that this training be not inferior, and that the native clergy be prepared not merely as auxiliaries to foreign missionaries but to “govern the local Church.” But as facts have shown, racial prejudice still exists, impeding the fulfillment of these objectives.³⁷⁸

Although the Memorial was simply a request for the enforcement of the existing papal encyclicals, the Vatican refused to take action. Because of this, the six priests sought to provoke public reaction through mass media, and brought their struggle to the level of national politics. It was then that three of the six signatories especially stood out: Manaligod, Lim, and Vargas, who, in proudly being called ManLimVar, presented themselves as the modern-day GomBurZa. With the help of Hilario Lim’s cousin, Senator Roseller Lim, Senate Bill No.38 was introduced, which proposed to prohibit the appointment of foreigners to head positions of educational institutions. Later, in 1970, Manaligod, according to Mercado, would brag that he “drafted the Filipinization of School Heads Bill presented by Senator Roseller Lim in

³⁷⁶ Rolando de la Rosa, O.P., *Beginnings of the Filipino Dominicans* (Quezon City: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 1990), 198.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ See Leonardo Mercado, “Constante Floresca and His Times,” in *Dialogue and Faith: A Philippine View* (Manila: Logos Publications, Inc., 2009), 115-117 for a summary of contents of the Memorial. For details on the statistics and arguments presented by the six priests, see de la Rosa, *Filipino Dominicans*, 199-203.

the Senate and co-sponsored by Senators Claro M. Recto, Jose P. Laurel, Quintin Paredes, and Eulogio Balao.”³⁷⁹ What Mercado leaves out, however, is that Manaligod would also claim that their ideas of reform influenced the “new vision and the new approach” of Vatican II in its decree on the missionary activity of the Church. He says:

Perhaps it is not mere coincidence that Father Schuette, Superior General of the Society of the Society of the Divine Word at the time of the Second Vatican Council, was an important member of the commission that prepared this decree. I gave him a copy of our MEMORIAL to Pope Pius XII in December, 1957.... I also gave him copies of the two letters we sent to Pius XII relative to our main MEMORIAL.³⁸⁰

Unfortunately, the bill failed to pass and was merely criticized by the Hierarchy for its excessive nationalism. Nevertheless, Mercado notes how its spirit lived on, effecting a substantial increase in Filipino leadership not only in religious congregations but in Catholic schools as well. What became of our six valiant priests, however, was another story. After going on a lecture tour, writing in newspapers, and fasting and demonstrating in public, Hilario Lim was expelled by the Jesuits. Clazado, Obvial and Garin were “eased out of their respective orders”³⁸¹ and became diocesan priests. And while Vargas remained a Dominican exiled as a missionary in far-flung Babuyan Islands, Manaligod who for a time was banished to Cagayan, remained an S.V.D. for another twenty years until finally leaving the priesthood.³⁸²

While Mercado was profoundly influenced by Manaligod’s ideas, he wanted to bring his religious nationalism further, in seeing that the problem was not just racial inequality but also (and perhaps even rooted in) intellectual discrimination. And this desire grew more fervently during the time of student activism in the 1960s and ‘70s,

³⁷⁹ Manfred Mueller, Father Ambrosio Manaligod, S.V.D. and the Filipinization Movement 1957-1959. A Memorandum based principally on documents of the SVD General Archive, 35. Quoted in Mercado, “Floresca,” 118.

³⁸⁰ Manaligod, “Filipinizationists,” 156.

³⁸¹ Manaligod, “Filipinizationists,” 156. See also Mercado, “Floresca,” 120.

³⁸² Mercado, “Why I Started to Write,” 16.

a time when, according to Mercado, it was fashionable to criticize the Philippine government for being the *tuta* (“puppy or slavish follower”) of American imperialism. It was then, sometime in 1972, that he gave a lecture to Ateneo students and entitled his speech, *Tuta sa Isip* (“slavish thinking”), which overtly “blamed the westernized educational system for alienating the elite from their true identity as Filipinos.” He says:

Filipino leaders are faced with the challenge: either to continue to have foreign western models or to accept themselves as Orientals. If the first choice is taken, then the Philippines will continue to be mediocre in taking pride to have a Filipino Tom Jones, a Philippine Harvard, a Philippine West Point, or a Philippine Wall Street. If the other modest choice is taken, the Philippines will realize being herself and in doing so perhaps to be a unique contribution to mankind.³⁸³

For Mercado, the goal was therefore to free the Filipino mind from a self-denigrating mentality, or what Renato Constantino called a “national inferiority complex.” And this could only be accomplished by helping the Filipino to understand and take pride in himself, which is precisely why he “needs a philosophy to explain and support his identity.”³⁸⁴ But here lies the problem: Mercado knew that the philosophical discipline itself contained a colonial baggage, and that in order to make it serve our purpose, it would have to be first redeemed from the western ethnocentrism that has consistently afflicted our philosophers.

Since the ‘70s, Mercado has been critical of the teaching of Western philosophy in Philippine schools, arguing that it has not only taught our students “to think like Westerners” but has “instilled the attitude that foreign-made goods are

³⁸³ Leonardo Mercado, “On Filipino Identity and Intellectual Colonialism,” *Now* (September 5), 62-63, quoted in Mercado, “Why I Started to Write on Filipino Philosophy,” 18.

³⁸⁴ Mercado, *EFP*, 7.

superior to locally-made goods.”³⁸⁵ From this, he demonstrates, comes our double standard: “if Thales, the early Greek, says that everything is made of water, that—historians of philosophy claim—is philosophy. But if a people with its particular worldview [say] that everything is made of something particular, that is not philosophy.”³⁸⁶ For Mercado, however, the problem lies not only in blindly agreeing to what Western philosophers are saying, but that we also try to imitate their method and form. In accepting uncritically the norm that philosophy is all about the ideas of individual philosophers, we have deemed other forms of thinking as not philosophical enough, including ethnophilosophy which has significantly contributed to the unravelling of the wisdom and worldview of the local people. Furthermore, what is unfortunate is that such prejudice has prevented us from making philosophy relevant, to make it specific to our particular circumstance.³⁸⁷ In its place, what has persisted is an elitist way of doing philosophy, one that has become increasingly esoteric and technical, and therefore irrelevant.

Against this Western ethnocentrism, Mercado urged his fellow scholars to see things from within—to judge a haiku not from the perspective of an English sonnet but from its own respective rules, he would say. A closer look at Mercado’s arguments, however, reveals that he was not saying anything new or extremely radical. In fact, one can see that he returns to the idea of philosophy as *ancilla theologiae* (maidservant of theology), inasmuch as he considered philosophy “an important tool for inculturation.”

In the Spirit of Vatican II

Inculturation, which Ferriols called “cultural adaptation” in the mid-50s, became a catchword with the convocation of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. Perceiving an escalating “crisis in human beings,” which had become the mark of the

³⁸⁵ Mercado, *EFP*, 196.

³⁸⁶ Leonardo Mercado, “What is Philosophy?” in *Filipino Thought* (Manila: Logos Publications, Inc., 2000), 5-6.

³⁸⁷ Mercado, “What is Philosophy?” 8.

modern times, the Church, under Pope John XXIII, decided that it needed an “updating” or “renewal” (*aggiornamento*) to make itself more relevant to the world. Thus, in response to the “depersonalization and robotization of modern man” caused not only by communism, hedonism, and poverty, but also by nuclear war,³⁸⁸ Vatican II’s “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” or *Gaudium et Spes* emphasized on “the dignity of the human person,” as a creature created in “the image of Christ the new man.”³⁸⁹ In this regard, it was asserted that “[the Church] cannot...in its mission fail...to make the life of those individual men who must be saved more human.”³⁹⁰

With this salvific mission however was also the recognition that the plurality of cultures and the rich diversity of people living in them reflected “the Whole Christ.”³⁹¹ Thus, it is stated in *Gaudium et Spes*:

There are many ties between the message of salvation and human culture. For God, revealing Himself to His people to the extent of a full manifestation of Himself in His Incarnate Son, has spoken according to the culture proper to each epoch.

Likewise the Church, living in various circumstances in the course of time, has used the discoveries of different cultures so that in her preaching she might spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, that she might examine it and more deeply understand it, that she might give it better expression in liturgical celebration and in the varied life of the community of the faithful.³⁹²

³⁸⁸ John Kobler, *Vatican II and Phenomenology: Reflections on the Life-World of the Church* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 19.

³⁸⁹ Vitaliano Gorospe, “Moral Theology After Vatican II,” *Philippine Studies* 15, no.3 (1967): 451.

³⁹⁰ My emphasis. See Latin Texts. Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II: Constitutiones, Decreta, Declarationes (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1966), 847, quoted in and translated by Kobler, *Vatican II*, 21.

³⁹¹ Kobler, *Vatican II*, 81.

³⁹² My emphasis. See “Chapter II: The Proper Development of Culture,” *Gaudium et Spes*, December 7, 1965. From http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

It is from this theological perspective that we can better understand how philosophers like Mercado (and Ferriols, as we have seen), conceived the (theological) task of Filipinization and the role that philosophy played in it. In fact, many of the scholarship that followed Mercado's work have carried the same (theological-) philosophical theme of *pagpapakatao* (being human),³⁹³ including the works of Dionisio Miranda, SVD,³⁹⁴ Jose de Mesa,³⁹⁵ and Albert Alejo, S.J.

³⁹³ In his autobiographical essay, Mercado mentions a conversation he had with Ferriols, and how that led to the writing of his book, *EFP*:

One day I chanced to meet Fr. Roque Ferriols, S.J. at his office as editor of Philippine Studies. He said that one of his students had a term paper on *loob*. He added that the expression has its counterpart in Ilocano and Cebuano Visayan. I did not read that term paper but I started my own research. . . .It became a term paper which was later published in Philippine Studies under the title, "Reflections on *Buut-Loob-Nakem*." Ysacc later writes that the said article on *loob* was the first systematic study on the topic and has launched several studies by other researchers. Mercado, "Why I Started to Write on Filipino Philosophy," 21.

³⁹⁴ In the preface, Miranda emphasizes the main problem of his work: "how now does one explain the meaning of *pagpapakatao* in the Filipino context? The present work does no more than continue mining, tracking the vein of *loob* in the suspicion that it is one key category for an indigenous philosophical anthropology." Dionisio Miranda, SVD, *Loob: The Filipino Within* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1989), x.

³⁹⁵ In Anscar Chupungco's introduction to de Mesa's work on the idea of *bahala na* (come what may), he affirms that the author's "methodology can be described as the process of acculturation whereby cultural elements with connaturality to express the Christian message are re-orientated and assumed as vehicles of Christian mystery." Anscar Chupungco, Introduction to Jose de Mesa, *And God said, "Bahala Na!"* (Maryhill Studies 2, 1979).

Chapter Five

Translations and Transgressions

In the course of the philosophical discussions revolving around the search for a Filipino philosophy, it becomes apparent, as shown in the previous chapter, how some of our scholars have lovingly embraced the biases and ideals of the Western philosophical tradition, inflicting, as Nietzsche would say, the most terrible curse on reality. And here, it was necessary to interject my own voice, that in rehabilitating and nuancing our views regarding the efforts of our philosophers, I exposed fetishes and provided context to ideas where I could.

The story, however, would be grossly incomplete without mentioning the contribution of scholars who have challenged the inadequacies of the Western philosophical heritage, ushering the birth of new concepts and ways of thinking. In this chapter, we return to the works of Ferriols, in discussing the significance of his idea of *meron* and his practice of translation. It also explores Alejo's insightful analysis of *loob*, and shows his attempts, in terms of method and content, to surpass Ferriols, his mentor and teacher. But the same humanism (*pagpapakatao*) that inspired them to seek out the philosophical wisdom latent in their language and their own people, has also led to their uncritical acceptance of the limits of philosophy and an intolerance for anything that transgresses these limits. To bring out further the antinomies in their thought, we explore the works of social scientists who, in their emphasis on context and history, have undermined the essentialist and universal claims of philosophical concepts.

The Phenomenological Movement in the Ateneo

In the Ateneo, the thrust towards *pagpapakatao* ("being human") lies at the core of its philosophical education. But although its philosophy department is a pioneer in the phenomenological-existential tradition, and thus important historically in

instigating a radical change from the traditional, Scholastic method, no research has been undertaken on its origin or its character. Because of this, many have overlooked how its phenomenological movement did not only coincide with but reflected the values and ideas that shaped Vatican II.

According to Dr. Ramon Reyes, it was in 1966, a year after Vatican II concluded, that the philosophy professors of the Ateneo, through the initiative of Father Jose Cruz, S.J., began to “formulate a new program of philosophy using phenomenology as the basis for conceptual framework.” Reyes explains that many of them had just finished their studies abroad—including Cruz who went to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Reyes to the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, and Ferriols to the Jesuit Fordham University in New York—and realized that, “somehow by coincidence,” they were all teaching the same phenomenological approach. The program, therefore, would only formalize what they had already been practicing in their classes.³⁹⁶

For Gorospe, however, it was no mere coincidence. Introducing the new program was not just a philosophical inclination but a conscious alignment with the values of Vatican II. A break from traditional Scholasticism, it provided a new model for philosophical education in Catholic institutions, and insofar as it was a response to Pope John XXIII’s call for *aggiornamento* (“renewal”) was the perfect vehicle that would carry out the Christ-centered pastoral mission of the Church. In the context of this vocation,

the role of philosophy in the Catholic College is to develop in the individual habits of personal reflections so that he can gain some insight into what it means to be a “human person in the world.” Concretely, philosophy should help the Filipino College student reflect on what it means to be this Filipino individual in the Philippines today. It should help him understand himself and

³⁹⁶ Dr. Ramon Reyes, interview, 2011.

others so that he can make his life meaningful in contemporary Philippine society. Now the traditional Catholic philosophy that has been taught in the past in an authoritarian manner and on a purely conceptual level is no longer adequate to fulfill this task. The original and authentic philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas is still valid and relevant today as it was in the thirteenth century, but the outmoded textbook and “essentialistic” approach to “Thomism” still being taught in most Catholic colleges and seminaries can no longer provide a human and meaningful answer to concrete problems and realities of our day. The day of scholastic philosophy found in College textbooks and manuals is over.³⁹⁷

Ferriols, too, was very critical of the “essentialistic” approach to Thomism, but he also made it clear that the phenomenological turn in the Ateneo, at least the way he perceived it, had no intention of going beyond or changing the core of what was considered to be Christian philosophy.³⁹⁸ Curiously however, Ferriols rarely, if at all, mentions Vatican II, not even in relation to his idea of cultural adaptation, the theological foundation of his Filipinization, which was obviously identical to the latter’s thrust of inculturation. Unlike Reyes who was in Louvain at the time when the Second Vatican Council was in session, and who therefore witnessed his teachers, advisers to the Vatican, fly to Rome on weekends, Ferriols was in Fordham in the late ‘50s, when the Council had not yet officially convened. Nevertheless, Ferriols was part of a milieu where Catholic philosophers and theologians had been for some time battling it out in deciding the fate and future orientation of the Church,³⁹⁹ and was

³⁹⁷ Vitaliano Gorospe, “Christian Renewal of Filipino Values,” *Philippine Studies* 14, no. 2 (1966), 204.

³⁹⁸ Roque Ferriols, interview, 2009.

³⁹⁹ We are here referring to the “Scholastic wars” that followed the Scholastic revival at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII issued a series of Papal Briefs, including a declaration of Saint Thomas Aquinas as the universal patron of Catholic schools, and an invitation to the members of the Society of Jesus and the Franciscan order “to follow the teachings” of the Angelic Doctor. As a result, the Jesuit Gregorian University in Rome became “a stronghold of Scholastic philosophy and theology,” while the Higher Institute of Philosophy at Louvain was established with

therefore exposed to the philosophical and theological ideas that would eventually shape and influence the Council.

According to Ferriols, one of the major influences in his thinking was his mentor, the Jesuit metaphysician, Father Norris Clarke. Clarke was part of a lineage of scholars who, following Joseph Maréchal's Transcendental Thomism, sought to liberate St. Thomas's ideas from the limitations of a Cartesian interpretation.⁴⁰⁰ It was from Clarke that Ferriols learned that St. Thomas's metaphysics could be interpreted in a way other than a metaphysics of essence—a mere collection of abstractions and propositions, of what can be known, as the manuals had shown. If one read St. Thomas carefully, one would realize that his philosophy was a metaphysics of existence, which begins with the affirmation of what is most basic and fundamental to life—that is, the very act of existing, when a being “stands” in the horizon of reality to interact with the world and make itself known.

To further understand what this idea of existence is, which undoubtedly lies at the core of Ferriols's philosophy, we turn to his translation of an excerpt taken from the work of another Transcendental Thomist, the Jesuit philosopher, Joseph de Finance.⁴⁰¹ In this essay, de Finance points out that the word “existence” is often

Leo XIII's Pontifical Brief in 1889. In the effort to revive Scholasticism, however, a major conflict in interpretation emerged. The progressive Catholic thinkers accused the great baroque commentators Cajetan and John of St. Thomas for grossly misinterpreting Aquinas's ideas, and in the attempt to get beyond the dogmatism of the Scholastic manuals, sought a phenomenological “return to the sources (*ressourcement*), a rediscovery of the biblical and patristic texts. See Gerald A. McCool, “Twentieth-Century Scholasticism,” *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 58, Supplement, 1978: S198-S221; for a detailed historical account on how progressive Catholic thinkers accomplished this “return to the sources,” see Gerd-Rainer Horn, “Chapter 2: Theology and Philosophy in the Age of Fascism, Communism, and World War,” in *Western European Liberation Theology: The First Wave (1924-1959)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 53-108).

⁴⁰⁰ Ferriols notes that Clarke studied under Andre Marc, a French philosopher who studied under Maréchal.

⁴⁰¹ It is unclear where Ferriols takes the excerpts from, except he also mentions some ideas from de Finance in his book, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, which Ferriols explains are drawn from the latter's notes on ontology, which he had some time in the past read on microfilm. Furthermore, he explains that he is told that those notes were de Finance's first outline for a book. Roque Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), 239.

understood as an abstraction, vis-à-vis its more concrete manifestation as existing beings. And this is perhaps why St. Thomas almost never uses the word “existence,” and instead mentions *esse* (literally referring to the infinitive “to be,” and its gerund, “be-ing”)⁴⁰² “to emphasize an existential character”; so that while *esse* is not *ens*, i.e. a being that exists, it is what grants the act of being to “that-which-is” (*id quo est*).⁴⁰³ This act of being is also what makes human knowledge both a possibility and an infinite desire: for in the act of existence, beings “stand” in the horizon to make themselves known (*intentionalitas*) to the human knower who receives these disclosures. But this very same *esse*, which makes possible for us to know, is also what can never be reduced to a concept, not only because of the infinite wealth of its various manifestations through beings but also because the very act of being itself is an inexhaustible, dynamic movement of revelation. And because all things participate in the act of being, they are equally endowed with this inexhaustible dynamism that concepts we formulate can never completely grasp.⁴⁰⁴

Ferriols’s entire philosophy hinges on this metaphysical understanding. His entire book, *Pambungad sa Metapisika* (Introduction to Metaphysics) is an attempt to affirm the mystery of existence, as well as the dignity and infinite depth of every human and nonhuman being, which are all within and at the same time beyond the grasp of our understanding. To accomplish this unending task, the phenomenological method becomes crucial; for in returning to the things themselves which immerses us into the

⁴⁰² Ferriols recounts how Clarke would always write being with a hyphen (“be-ing!”), to give back to this over-used and worn-out word some of its original meaning, the dynamic act that the gerund usually connotes. Roque Ferriols, “Fr. W. Norris Clark, S.J., Heswitang Metapisiko,” in *Pagdiriwang sa Meron: A Festival of Thought Celebrating Roque J. Ferriols, S.J.*, eds. Nemesio S. Que, S.J. and Agustin Martin G. Rodriguez. (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), 276.

⁴⁰³ To clarify, *Id quod est* refers to being insofar as it is “that which possesses *esse*.” To possess *esse* however does not mean that the thing is *esse* itself, but rather that it “participates in the act of being (*actum essendi*).” Mary T. Clark, ed., *An Aquinas Reader* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 74-76.

⁴⁰⁴ Joseph de Finance, S.J., *Ilang Halaw Mula sa Ontolohiya*, trans. Roque Ferriols, S.J. (N.p.:n.p., n.d.), 17-18.

“givens,” we grasp being not primarily through conceptual definitions but in the way it unfolds before us. But as one sees in de Finance, as well as in Ferriols as shown by the very title of his book, phenomenology is merely a means to an end. The phenomenological approach, which is content with merely laying out the way things appear to us, fails in the end to affirm being in its totality and mystery. Thus, “while phenomenology is an excellent introduction to metaphysics, it is still not metaphysics.”⁴⁰⁵

In reacting to traditional Scholastic philosophy and to what he generally sees as the main obstacle to thinking, Ferriols always begins his philosophy classes with the idea of the concept. While he affirms that conceptual definitions are crucial to our understanding of being, he warns us about the pitfalls of being caught in one’s constructed world of ideas. It is here that he introduces the idea of *meron*, which lies at the heart of his thinking:

Meron



Illustration 6: Roque. Ferriols, S.J. Taken from <http://kilawen.tumblr.com/post/25169082157/puyattuason-hoy-pusa-mag-ingat-ka-maraming>, April 27, 2014.

⁴⁰⁵ de Finance, *Ontolohiya*, 8.

Mercado was very critical of Ferriols's idea of *meron*. He believed it was a mere translation of the Western notion of Being, and a very flawed one at that. Pointing out the fact that it was a neologism, he complained that the word was too “contrived and artificial,” so that when one asks for example, “What is the *meron* (being) of a thing?” the statement is inevitably awkward and does not make sense.

Curiously, while Mercado correctly explains that Ferriols uses the word *meron* to emphasize existence, he does not really understand its value. Thus, he insists that the “correct” translation of Being, given its primordial quality as essence,” should be the prefix *pagka-*, which not only “denotes nature, being, state of” (e.g., *pagka-tao/* being human), but is naturally part of the Filipino language, not only in Tagalog but in Cebuano Visayan and Ilokano as well.⁴⁰⁶ He does not understand that Ferriols, coming from a Transcendental Thomist tradition, is precisely trying to avoid reducing Being to this “what-ness” of things, and hopes to safeguard its integrity as simultaneously what can be known and cannot be known.⁴⁰⁷ But even for Ferriols, this was not always the case. Early in his teaching, he used the word *pag-iral* (existence), and only in the ‘80s did he introduce the word *meron*.⁴⁰⁸ Similar to St. Thomas, Ferriols must have realized that *pag-iral* was too abstract, and felt that he needed to find something more concrete, and more basic to everyday human life.

At a closer look, we see that *meron* may not be as alienated from the Filipino language as Mercado claims. While *meron* itself does not exist in the dictionary, it

⁴⁰⁶ In fact, in his translation of de Finance's work, Ferriols writes: “*existensya=meron=esse.*” de Finance, *Ontolohiya*, 5).

⁴⁰⁷ An understanding of the complexity of *meron* and how Ferriols developed this idea throughout his book and beyond deserves an entire discussion of its own. For the purpose of our present reflections, however, a sketchy description will have to suffice. In the first chapter, Ferriols asks, can we ask what *meron* is? Yes and no. No, because *meron* is what can never be completely reduced to a conceptual definition, to a definite content and limitation; for there is no limit, nothing “outside” *meron*. But yes, if what we mean by definition is not what claims to know everything about the object, but a preliminary understanding, that would guide us in further explorations. (Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 8-11).

⁴⁰⁸ Eduardo Calasanz, *Kuwento, Kuwenta, Kuwarenta* (Colloquium in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of teaching philosophy in Filipino, and in honor of its founder, Fr. Ferriols), August, 2009.

closely resembles *mayroon*, which in ordinary usage means “to have.” The resemblance however, is found not so much in writing as in speech: that in colloquial language, whenever *mayroon* is uttered, it is *meron* that we overhear. It is indeed a curious thing that Ferriols would choose a “word” that is not even legitimately a word, and therefore what can never be *properly* written, and in fact, what goes beyond and before writing.

But if we are to take the resemblance between *meron* and *mayroon* further, one would have to also ask how Ferriols relates the attribute of having to a metaphysical affirmation of existence. Here, we must understand that for this Jesuit philosopher, the ultimate mystery of being lies in not knowing why “there is (something)” instead of nothing (*na meron, at hindi wala*). The word *meron*, therefore, asserts the “plus” or abundance that life is, which sharply contrasts with nothingness (*kawalan*).

But why the need for a neologism? Why couldn’t Ferriols simply use the word *mayroon* and avoid criticism that he is not using language properly? Sometimes, he jokes, saying that he is Ilokano and therefore should never be faulted for his improper use of Tagalog. But in his more somber moods, he does explain what *meron* is, by first of all asserting that

It is not an unusual thing. We see it in any language. Heidegger says that *Sein* always has that moment of yes and no, in any language. And I saw, that in all Filipino languages, there is a moment of a yes and a no. In Tagalog, *meron* and *wala*, in Bisaya, *naa* and *wala*, in Ilokano, *atda*, *awan*, in Bikolano, *mayo*, *igwa*, in Panggasinan, *agkapu* and *wala*. [In this last example], *wala* is *meron*, and *agkapu* is *wala*. That is why when I was using *meron*, in my thinking, I was returning [it] to its primary root... The root is, look at what is really happening before it became a concept. And if you are locked in concepts, use *meron* to get yourself out of [them].⁴⁰⁹ [5.1]

⁴⁰⁹ Ferriols, interview, 2009.

But because the word *mayroon*, like the word “being,” has lost the vitality of its original meaning because of constant use, one can understand why Ferriols might have felt the need to coin a new word—that while *meron* closely resembles *mayroon*, drawing from the latter the mundane and ordinariness of everyday language, it also needed to distinguish itself from the latter, in order to refer to the unique, primordial affirmation that life is. And if you find yourself trapped in concepts, use *meron* to get yourself out of [them]. At times, we desire for something other than what is real or what is there, and sometimes out of fear we refuse to see what shows itself; and then there are also moments when, in our haste or laziness, we distort the truth that lies before us. In these occasions, we find ourselves trapped in the constructs of our mind, which is why Ferriols suggests that we pause to examine how truthful these concepts are, by asking, *Meron ba?* (Do they exist?)⁴¹⁰

Thus, contrary to Mercado’s criticism, *meron* is not at all “contrived and artificial.” It is, in fact, one of the words that we hear quite often in daily conversations. But what is interesting is that while keeping the word *meron* immersed in its mundane existence, Ferriols not only uses it as an effective phenomenological tool, as what constantly nags us to “return to the things themselves” (*Meron ba?*), but also draws a metaphysical significance out of its ordinary existence (*Meron, at hindi wala!*). In this

⁴¹⁰ The question itself sounds rather simple and deceives us into thinking that the answer is, too. But seeing that getting to an honest answer is not as easy as it seems, Ferriols offers his philosophy as a guide. Again, this is not the place to explore Ferriols’s ideas in depth, but to give the reader a sense of the complexity, I cite two examples. One is from his own writing, where Ferriols explains that through desires, even the idea of nothing becomes part of *meron*. To desire what you do not have (*wala sa iyo*) is to acknowledge something that, despite not being physically present is what nevertheless exists. The desire which reminds you of what you do not have and therefore of the “nothing” is also at the same time an affirmation of you who desire and the object you covet. See Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 8. Another beautiful example comes from one of my conversations with Ferriols. He was telling me about his mother, a nurse at the Philippine General Hospital, where he had been born. He recounts how his mother, whenever she was asked how many children she had, would consistently reply that she had five, even when one had actually been stillborn. And even when she grew old, she would always say this without fail. One can imagine the impact it had on Ferriols, who would later show how even counting can be a crucial affirmation (or denial) of *meron*.

sense, even the word “being,” which sounds hopelessly alien to everyday language, does not achieve in English what *meron* does in Filipino. And indeed, here lies the genius of Ferriols’s translation—that if *meron* appears as the Filipino counterpart to “being,” “existence,” *esse*, it is not because it first grasps the definition of these terms and then presents itself as the most suitable Filipino word that can contain their meaning. Rather, *meron* returns to the primordial affirmation of life, the same source that has given words like “being,” “existence,” *esse* their philosophical meaning. In other words, while Ferriols may not be oblivious to other philosophical traditions, his idea of *meron* is not a mere duplication of concepts that have already been made, but an attempt to capture that originary experience of existence within the Filipino language.

The Prejudices of Humanism

In the early ‘70s, Ferriols became the editor of the Philippine Studies journal, and in support of Mercado’s efforts in formulating a Filipino philosophy, helped publish several of his early essays.⁴¹¹ Later in an interview, however, Ferriols reveals that although he found Mercado’s work promising at the beginning, he was disappointed with the way the latter’s thinking had evolved. As Ferriols would later say, *hindi bumukas, akala ko nagsisimula lang siya* (“[His thinking] did not open up, I thought he was just starting”).

As we know, Ferriols was critical of the idea of a Filipino philosophy. He believed that if a person really wanted to philosophize, he would search for the truth, and not waste his time wondering if his thinking was Filipino enough. To explain his point further, he cites as an example the effort to unravel the idea of Filipino time.

⁴¹¹ This includes “Filipino Thought,” Vol. 20, No.2 (1972), “Reflections on *Buut-Loob-Nakem*,” Vol.20, No.4 (1972), and “Notes on the Filipino Philosophy of Work and Leisure,” Vol. 22, No.1-2 (1974).

The human person lives in time. What is the relationship of the human person to time? That broad question is posed out in the open. And then, (you ask) what is your attitude to time? If you have a personal experience of time, if you have your own reflections about time, you will share that, not because you are Filipino, but because that is what you see as a person.... Now Mercado, what concerns him even at the beginning is: “What is the attitude of the Filipino about time? And if that is not the attitude of the Filipino, I will not take that because I want to philosophize in Filipino.” That is why he limits too quickly. And what he wants to do is to construct a Filipino theory.... And [it is] an interesting thing, but if that is philosophy, it is a philosophy that limits. What you are merely asking is “what does the Filipino think about time?” But if the philosopher talks about time, (he asks) “what is the attitude of the human person to time.”⁴¹² [5.2]

Ferriols was, however, not merely critical of Mercado. Alejo, who Ferriols claims has grossly misinterpreted him, accuses his younger contemporary for sealing concepts which were supposed to remain open, as he intended them to be.⁴¹³ And while he acknowledged that both Mercado and Alejo’s work were important in the fields of anthropology and sociology respectively, he categorically denies their value as a veritable contribution to philosophy.

In this regard, Virgilio Enriquez, putative father of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, could not disagree more. Although he may have been also critical of Mercado, as we have seen earlier, he perceived Alejo’s work a significant contribution in constructing

⁴¹² Roque Ferriols, interview, 2009.

⁴¹³ Ferriols says, “*Mga bukas na konsepto, sinarhan niya.*” Unfortunately, I was not able to probe further which concepts Ferriols was referring to, and therefore this will have to be a topic of inquiry for the future. Nevertheless, it is clearly important to delve into the differences in their thinking, not only from Ferriols’s perspective, but from Alejo’s as well. In an interview, Alejo in turn admits that his relationship with Ferriols as his teacher had always been a difficult one. He was, Alejo explains, both his “inspiration and desperation.”

a national culture in the field of philosophy.⁴¹⁴ But while Alejo has already gained respect and appreciation in various academic circles,⁴¹⁵ the philosophical community itself has remained ambivalent with regard to the philosophical value of his contribution.⁴¹⁶

At the beginning of his book, Alejo categorically inserts himself into the heart of a long-drawn philosophical dispute. It had already been more than ten years since Quito claimed that a Filipino philosophy was impossible, and that the Filipino, being too personal and emotional, was simply not disposed to philosophical thinking. But while others had either taken offense or disregarded Quito's reproach, Alejo, quite ingeniously, found a possible solution in her criticisms: "if we accept that the kind of

⁴¹⁴ Virgilio Enriquez, preface to Albert Alejo, S.J., *Tao Po! Tuloy! Isang Landas ng Pag-unawa sa Loob ng Tao* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1990), vii. Here, Enriquez describes Alejo's exploration of the meaning of loob as "not merely a philosophizing that floats in the air of borrowed consciousness but a philosophizing that is rooted in indigenous culture, experience and language. . . ." (*Hindi basta pamimilosopiyang nakalutang sa hangin ng kamalayang hiram kundi pamimilosopiyang naka-ugat sa katutubong kultura, karanasan, at wika...*) And insofar as the concept of loob leads us from the experience of feeling to a relation with others (*pakikipagkapwa*), and towards being human (*pagpapakatao*), Alejo's efforts are not only "proof of the meaningfulness and concreteness of the spirit of Filipino philosophy," but a contribution to humanity as well. (*Ang Tao Po! Tuloy . . . ay hindi lamang isang patibay na makabuluhan at kongkreto ang diwa ng Pilosopiyang Pilipino. . . . Lampas dito ang kahalagahan nito sapagkat sangkatauhan at hindi sangkapilipinuhan ang obheto ng pagsusuri.*)

⁴¹⁵ See for example Lily Mendoza, *Between the Homeland and the Diaspora* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2006) which cites Alejo's dissertation on the efforts for cultural regeneration of the Tuddok among the Obo Manobo tribe as an illustration of the dynamic spirit of the indigenization movement; or Portia Reyes, *Pantayong Pananaw and Bagong Kasaysayan in the New Filipino Historiography. A History of Filipino Historiography as an History of Ideas.*, dissertation (Bremen, September 2002), which acknowledges not only the complexity of Alejo's philosophical reflections on loob, but also his efforts to free Filipino words from being mere ornaments in works written in English; or Rebecca Añonuevo, *Talinhaga ng Gana: Ang Banal sa mga Piling Tulang Tagalog ng Ika-20 Siglo* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2003) which presents a wonderful discussion of Alejo's philosophical poems.

⁴¹⁶ I am here referring not only to Ferriols's critical assessment of Alejo's efforts, or Abulad's judgment of the latter as a failure which "no one needs to undertake again." The lack of recognition for Alejo's contribution is quite evident in the way he has been excluded from the roster of philosophical pioneers, for whom the PAP has recently held its 40th-year anniversary tribute-conference (entitled "Legacy Lectures: Engaging Our Philosophical Pioneers," held October 26-27, 2012, at De La Salle University, Manila).

thinking we have been accustomed to is indeed personal, then would it not perhaps be where we could find strength?"⁴¹⁷ [5.3]

Alejo's contribution to Filipino philosophy is as much about ideas as it is about attitude. Unlike some who refuse to engage works that they have deemed at the beginning to be un-philosophical, or not philosophical enough, Alejo has kept an open mind and has tried to establish continuity, which are both crucial in building local scholarship. And it is precisely through benevolent understanding and critique that he takes seriously and proceeds from the work of those who came before him.

Indeed, what better way to begin but to redeem Mercado, who, Alejo claims, will remain in history—"whatever others may say"—as "one of the pioneers (*pasimuno*) in the elucidation of the philosophical terms in Filipino."⁴¹⁸ [5.4] Affirming the idea of a non-dualistic Filipino worldview, Alejo presents the underlying virtues (*birtud*) of Mercado's philosophy. First of all, he applauds Mercado for listening to what the social scientists are saying, which for him is the kind of dialogical engagement that shows a philosopher's earnest desire to be part of a communal effort in understanding the world. Furthermore, he commends Mercado's effort to construct a comprehensive philosophy which captures the sensibility inherent in the three ethnolinguistic groups—the Visayans, Tagalogs, and Ilokanos.⁴¹⁹

Along with these virtues, however, Alejo also point out the vices (*bisyo*) of Mercado's thinking. Precisely because of the desire to encompass such an enormous scope, Mercado's presentation appears sketchy, the result of what Alejo calls a "thinking on the run" (*pag-iisip habang tumatakbo*). Furthermore, he points out that Mercado's juxtaposition of a holistic mentality of the East and a compartmentalizing mentality of the West is too simplistic; for not only are there Western philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger who show a kind of thinking

⁴¹⁷ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 8.

⁴¹⁸ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 13.

⁴¹⁹ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 16.

similar to the Eastern perspective, but that there is, as the psycholinguistic analysis of historian-anthropologist, Zeus Salazar, has shown, a dualism present in Filipino mentality, that what is inside (*loob*) is not always in harmony with what is outside (*labas*).

While acknowledging Salazar's point, Alejo however also finds his analysis too simplistic. He therefore continues to lay out the reflections of other social scientists, theologians, and philosophers, to give a complete picture of the long-winded path that our understanding of *loob* has traveled. Here, Alejo cites historian Reynaldo Ileto's work on the popular religious literature, *Pasyon* and the millenarian movements as a significant breakthrough, not only for analyzing the term *loob* within a network of meanings, in the context of a historical phenomenon, but for drawing out its meaning from the perception of the Filipino masses themselves. Furthermore, Alejo is pleased by the complexity of *loob* as portrayed in Ileto's study: that while this inner self (*panloob na sarili*), which is the basis of the true worth of a person and the equality of all people, may be broken and at times weak and susceptible to indifference (*walang pagdamay*), it is also what has given strength and justification for the revolution.

Acknowledging the importance of such historical narrative, Alejo is however convinced that a reflection on the ontological nature of *loob* is still crucial in further deepening our understanding of the term. This is why he turns to Jose de Mesa's theological hermeneutics which articulates the relational aspect inherent in *loob*: as an opening to the other, through *utang na loob*, or debt of human solidarity (*utang ng makataong kapatiran*), and to God, through *kagandahang loob* (goodness), which de Mesa describes as God's love taking root in the heart of a person and revealing itself as an agent of change in the world. Finally, Alejo takes up the metaphysical reflections of one of his most influential teachers, Father Ferriols, from whom he sees finally an articulation of *loob* as the human person in his ultimate depth. Here he cites specifically Ferriols's explanation of conversion (*pagbabalik-loob*, or what he called *pag-uulit*

[repetition]),⁴²⁰ which claims that while the human person in his weakness at times loses his way, he always has the strength and potential to return to truth and to re-affirm his humanity (*pagpapakatao*).

After laying out this historical account of our understanding of *loob*, Alejo then presents his own understanding of the ontological nature of *loob*, and clarifies for us what it means to live with a full awareness of its depth. In attributing to *loob* the qualities of breadth (*lawak*), depth (*lalim*), and substance (*laman*), Alejo proceeds to describe its basic structure as the reach of consciousness (*abot-malay*), the reach of sensibility (*abot-dama*), and the reach of action (*abot-kaya*). The key to understanding these manifestations of *loob*, as Alejo himself indicates, lies in Ferriols's idea of *abot tanaw* (literally, the reach or range of sight), which the latter uses as a metaphor to describe specifically the limitations and possibilities of human consciousness.⁴²¹ Thus, before we explain Alejo's conceptual categories, let us take a look at what Ferriols meant by *abot tanaw*. In *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, he explains that:

Abot tanaw can be compared to my consciousness in *meron*. I look up to see what's above. I bend to see what's below. I glance to my left and right. I regard what's in front and at the back. I turn my eyes, and even my head. I would

⁴²⁰ Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 44. Ferriols relates *pagbabalik-loob* to what he calls *pag-uulit* (repetition), a reflection based on a story by the Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard about a man who is unable to commit to his love for a woman. When he finally chooses to do so, he finds that it is too late. But why and how is this related to a repetition? First of all, Ferriols explains that for this man, and for anyone, a profound connection to *meron*, though he may not be aware or at times choose to turn his back on truth, always and already dwells in his inner self (*kalooban*). In cases when a person realizes the error of his ways, or has turned his back on *meron*, on an affirmation of life, a kind of repetition takes place, but not in the sense that one "return[s] to the past, in order to repeat the actions that had already taken place back then. Repetition is an awakening, to live in a genuine relationship with *meron* which affected/penetrated (*tumalab*) the inner self (*kalooban*) then, but now slumbers. This is (also) why a true repetition is always a return to one's inner self (*pagbabalik-loob*). And when a person revives this affect (*pagtalab*) of *meron* in his inner self (*loob*), he discovers that his own inner self (*kalooban*) becomes a potential to do what has not yet been done." [5.5]

⁴²¹ "I am indebted to my teacher Father Ferriols for many things, including an awareness of the "*abot tanaw* of *meron*." That is why it is not difficult to show that there is a close link between *abot tanaw* with *abot-malay*, *abot-dama*, and *abot-kaya* in the world of *loob* that is being suggested here." Alejo, *Tao Po!Tuloy!* 112.

really like to see everything that I can see. But, at every corner, there seems to be something that blocks my seeing, that seem to be saying: you can see only up to here, [and] beyond this, the stretch of your eyes may not reach... And there is *abot tanaw*, not only of those afar, but also of those that are near. I can see my chest, but not my back. *Abot tanaw* is like an obstacle to my extreme desire to see. But if I am capable of understanding, this is what the *abot tanaw* tells me: you can only see up to here; but if you make the effort to move a little bit, you will see: [that] beyond the *abot tanaw*, there are things that you have not seen. I did move, and I saw what I did not see before; but, the *abot tanaw* also moved. [It] again blocked [my sight] and enticed me. When the person looking moves, he will experience the *abot tanaw* as an unending call and lure, in an unending transcendence and seeing.⁴²² [5.6]

It is this very structure of *abot tanaw*, as dwelling between possibility and the realm beyond, that appears as the theme, each time repeated (in the sense of *pag-uulit*) differently in the various manifestations of *loob*. Thus, when Alejo speaks of *abot-malay*, he means *loob* as

the world of meaning, of thinking, of sense or lack of sense. A world of the spirit that is open, awake, and relating.⁴²³ [5.7]

But Alejo also explains that the full realization of *loob* as *abot-malay* is achieved only in its transcendence (*sangkaibayuhan*), when the person attains consciousness not only of one's self but of the entire race of humanity.

While *abot-malay* is *loob* grasping the breadth (*lawak*) of reality through “statistics, dialogue, and immersing and living with others,” Alejo explains that it can also interact with the world in a way more profound and beyond the level of consciousness. *Abot-damay* refers to the adventures of *loob* in the unquantifiable depths (*lalim*) of emotions. It is when *loob*, touched to its core, genuinely understands,

⁴²² Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 10.

⁴²³ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!*, 91.

through identification and internalization (*pagsasaloob*), or empathy (*pakikiramay*) and concern (*malasakit*), or as seen in one's own trembling (*pangingilabot*) before God. But this desire to be one with the world, with others, and with the divine (*pakikiisang-loob*) can never be actual, for at best, it is only an attempt at a kind of nearness (*pagkakalapit*).

Finally, *loob*, in grasping and interacting with the world, is also about substance (*laman*), insofar as it is always in a dialectic relationship with one's body. This refers to the realm of action, which is first and foremost, the result of one's decision (*pasya*) to build and strengthen (*pagbubuo*) one's *loob*. This includes organizing and resourcing all that I know and all that I feel to assess the possibilities and extent of what I can do (*abot-kaya*), given the circumstances. And part of this decision is to endure the duration of time (*tagal*).⁴²⁴ Again, Alejo shows that it is in enduring the test of time that one finds strength beyond himself: that I am able to say "I can still bear it" (*kaya ko pa*) or "I can do this" (*kaya ko ito*), is because of people who give me hope; or that I muster the courage to continue with the struggle (*pakikibaka*), knowing that others are depending on me.

Unfortunately, this brief summary leaves out Alejo's real contribution. For while he provides us an impressive and exhaustive map of *loob* and its various adventures in the world, his attempt to gather and integrate as many voices and sources as possible is as equally significant in radically changing the terrain of philosophical discourse. In fact, this is where one sees that his reflections, although on the one hand an attempt to bring Ferriols's ideas further, are a form of critique that hope to go beyond his teacher. Not only does Alejo listen to the riddles and proverbs of the "crowds of anonymous people" who Ferriols had once spoken of but almost never hear from in his

⁴²⁴ Ferriols, too, speaks of acting to the extreme possibility of what one can do (*abot ng aking kaya*), and can be related to his discussion on the idea of potential, as the search, desire, courage, endurance, and the gathering of one's resources and feelings to make possible that life-changing return to *meron*. See Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 44-46.

writings; he also gathers the reflections of the revolutionaries, social scientists, poets, artists and the like whereas the latter has kept the discourse predominantly a conversation with (mostly Western) philosophers. And while there is sense in Ferriols keeping anonymity by talking only about the proverbial Juan and Petra (or the dialogue of A and B), Alejo gives us the faces and stories of real people: of Kaka Ito of the Dumagats from whom he learns about human solidarity,⁴²⁵ or Macling Dulag of the Cordilleras from whom he learns the truth about one's love for the land.⁴²⁶

Curiously, despite this willingness to listen, historian Vicente Rafael presents an analysis that Alejo himself admits he cannot accept. His main objection lies in Rafael's claim that, in the context of conversion of the early Tagalogs, the importance of *loob* lay not in itself, in the fact that it "designated a 'soul' ... in the core of being,"⁴²⁷ but in its relation with the outside (*labas*), within an economy of exchange.

In his study of religious conversion and translations of missionary texts from the late sixteenth to early eighteenth century, Rafael explains that the Spaniards did not only violently reconstruct Tagalog script and grammar in the image and likeness of Latin and Castilian, but also exploited Tagalog words, like *loob* and other terms such as "*sisi*, repentance, *casalanan*, sin, [and] *aua*, mercy," in the process of colonizing the natives through evangelization. The objective was that in using these terms, the native would be initiated into a relationship of reciprocity, engraining into his consciousness a feeling of infinite indebtedness (*utang na loob*) towards God, as well as towards the Spanish hierarchy, for all the gifts he had received. And so indeed, the Tagalogs acknowledged their *utang na loob* and offered token payments, but not because there was an interiority that believed itself to be accountable for these debts. Rather, as Rafael

⁴²⁵ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 95. Alejo narrates that when he reached the dwelling of the Dumagats in Tanay, Rizal, Kaka Ito said to him, *Tao kayong naparito, tao rin kaming dinatnan ninyo* ("You come here as human beings, and as human beings too, you have found us.")

⁴²⁶ Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 95-96.

⁴²⁷ Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 125.

explains, it was merely to elude the shock of shame (*hiya*), which compelled the native to reciprocate a gift, lest he be publicly humiliated and branded as *walang hiya* (a person without shame) or *walang utang na loob* (no sense of indebtedness). Again, this only proves that the significance of *loob* lies only in its relation to the outside, and that instead of referring to it as an “inner self,” it may be more accurate to return to its basic definition as space, “within which objects and signs from the outside can be accumulated and from which and towards which they can be issued in payment of debt.”⁴²⁸

Alejo can only describe Rafael’s arguments as *mapangahas na pangungusap!* (“[Such] bold statements!”) For the latter does not only deny the existence of *loob* as what “determines or moves and offers itself, puts its honor at stake, [or] ‘acknowledges his indebtedness’”; he also implicates *loob* in the colonial agenda. In response to these “allegations,” Alejo first of all reminds us how the first missionaries, as the Jesuit historian John Schumacher shows, also struggled against the abuses of the Spanish colonial administration. Given their genuine concern, Alejo speculates: “would it not be more reasonable if we accept that these shrewd missionaries chose *loob* because they already found it as the source of a dynamic soul,” rather than merely for the purpose of manipulation? Secondly, he argues that in reducing *utang na loob* to the economy of exchange, Raphael presents a limited and inaccurate description. Alejo says,

We should not be deceived by the word “debt”.... *Utang na loob* is really not paid. Why? Because the person to whom we are indebted to with our *loob* has freely “shown goodness and [has] genuinely empathized” (*nagpakitang-loob at tapat na dumamay*). *Loob*, a free expression of goodness (*kagandahang-loob*), too, would be the equivalent. And because this “show of goodness and genuine empathy” does not reproach, the person who is indebted does not have

⁴²⁸ Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 125.

to be ashamed. If he does feel shame, [it] is not the narrow-minded, societal “what others will say” but a “moral feeling” of being-with-others (*pakikipagkapwa*). This is why *utang na loob* is acknowledged (*tinatanaw*) or known (*kinikilala*), not returned or (used) to erase one’s debt.⁴²⁹ [5.8]

Alejo makes for an interesting case, but his accusations against Rafael requires a second look. First of all, it is both inaccurate and simplistic to understand *loob* as merely part of the devious designs of the colonial power. On the one hand, it is true, as Rafael mentions time and again, that the Spaniards had meant for *loob* to mean *lo más interno* (the most inner part of the person),” a “soul” that would be accountable for its sins and debts. However, Rafael also argues that in the process of translating/inscribing their Christian values into the hearts of the natives, the inevitable occurred: meaning “slipped,” and what had been intended was not exactly what was received. Translation failed, and the religious conversion did not come through in the exact way that the Spanish missionaries had planned. To prove his point, Rafael presents accounts of confessions that show that the Tagalogs resorted not only to “digressions and non-sequitors,” but to divulging not their sins but those of others. To the consternation of the Spanish missionaries, the Tagalogs circumvented “the prescribed internalization of guilt and repentance” by “converting confession into an occasion for boasting and protesting their innocence.”⁴³⁰ Indeed, what better way to demonstrate that colonization was not and could never be completely achieved. *Loob* was, indeed, intended as a trojan horse, but it also became the space of colonial resistance.

As we have noted above, however, the real issue for Alejo was Rafael’s rejection of the ontological reality of *loob*. While Alejo’s uneasiness is only reflective of the metaphysical bias of the Christian philosophical thinking that is still prevalent in the Philippines today, it is nonetheless unfortunate, because it fails to grasp where

⁴²⁹ Alejo, *Tao Po!Tuloy!* 43.

⁴³⁰ Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 133-135.

Rafael's analysis not only becomes important for postcolonial studies but can have significant repercussions in the field of philosophical practice.

To understand the potential impact of Rafael's analysis to Filipino philosophy, we return to the chapter where he discusses the notion of *loob*. At the beginning, he clearly explains how his analysis is both a continuation of and a departure from previous studies.

As part of a constellation of "values" among the peoples in the Christianized lowland areas of the Philippines, *utang na loob* and *hiya* have attracted considerable scholarly attention since the 1960s. Among the most influential such [sic] works were those of Charles Kaut and of Mary Hollnsteiner and the late Frank Lynch. Set along the lines of structural-functionalist theory, their analyses of these "values" have been rightly criticized as ahistorical. As Reynaldo Ileto has cogently pointed out, by excluding history, studies of *utang na loob* and *hiya* end up depoliticizing reciprocity by failing to consider the place of conflict in processes of exchange and indebtedness. Ileto goes on to resituate these notions of reciprocity in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century peasant movements. He convincingly demonstrates the revolutionary potential of *utang na loob* as it is constantly invoked in Tagalog literature of this period and in the writings of messianic leaders intended to rally their followers for a series of local revolts against Spain and later against the United States. While Ileto's work is a significant departure from those of Kaut, Hollnsteiner, and Lynch, it nonetheless tends to join them in regarding the *loob* in *utang na loob* as a privileged, a priori entity. In this sense, *loob* assumes its coherence on the basis of a given ontological status as that which is part of yet apart from processes of exchange.

It is of crucial importance to hold onto Ileto's insight that reciprocity is always predicated on the possibility of conflict and disruption. But when we consider the historical effects of *utang na loob* and *hiya* in the context of

conversion, we should initially try to circumvent both a phenomenological and a purely operational definition of *loob*—the “inside” that is staked in a debt transaction. It is helpful to reexamine *loob* first of all as a linguistic fact—as a signifier that attaches itself to a variety of signifieds. In this way, we can ask how *loob* gains value and force as a cultural term in a larger historical field.⁴³¹

What Rafael tries to do therefore is to take the discussion on *loob* from a phenomenological study to the field of semiotic analysis, where everything is perceived as a “linguistic fact.” In reexamining *loob* as such, Rafael wittingly applies Derrida’s critique of structuralism, which gives his whole analysis its philosophical weight.

Derrida’s critique was an attempt to overcome metaphysics, which throughout the history of Western philosophy, has determined and given priority to Being as presence. What attests to this is a long list of “names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center [that] have always designated an invariable presence,” whether it be “*eidōs, archē, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *alētheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth.”⁴³² It is of course not by mere chance that Derrida describes them as center—not only to evoke the idea of a structure or totality in which these concepts operate in relation to others, but to suggest the privileged role they play as principles that have long oriented, organized, and limited our thinking.

The problem is that in claiming an ontological reality, these concepts “leave in the domain of the unthinkable the very thing that makes [their] conceptualization possible.”⁴³³ Taken as “truths,” we become oblivious to their origin and genealogy, forgetting that language, as Derrida keeps reminding us, did not just fall from the

⁴³¹ Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 123.

⁴³² Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 353.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 358.

heavens, and that concepts are “no more inscribed in a *topos noētos*, than they are prescribed in the gray matter of the brain.”⁴³⁴

In Alejo’s ontological analysis, it is as if *loob* fell not once but twice from the sky: not merely as the seat of “truth” about being human (*pagpapakatao*), but also as what lies at the core of being Filipino (*pagka-Pilipino*). Here, *loob* becomes the site of perfect translation, where “truth,” both pure and indigenous, is impeccably transmitted and received, between god and man, and man and his world. All this is undeniably at the very heart of a humanism that Derrida claims is nothing but a willfulness to replace all our existential anxieties with the “reassuring certitude” of its invariable “truths”—“truths” that humanism, in “[dreaming] of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and end,” has efficiently inscribed/prescribed in man’s soul as his *telos* and *eschaton*.⁴³⁵

It is precisely this humanist understanding of *loob* that Rafael tries to shake to the foundation. If for Alejo *loob* was the place where perfect communication/communion occurred, for Rafael, it was where translation failed. As the site of disparity between intended and received meaning, *loob* obviously could no longer claim to be the fixed, absolute “truth” it was thought to be.

For Rafael, understanding *loob* as a “linguistic fact” was an attempt to restore its historicity. And although he himself does not lay out the philosophical implications of such claim, we can deduce from his analysis, which we aptly relate to Derrida’s overcoming of metaphysics, that it meant understanding *loob* not so much as a sign which, in the metaphysical scheme of classical semiology, is given a “secondary and provisional” role in relation to an original presence which it supposedly represents in its absence;⁴³⁶ rather, to perceive *loob* as *différance*, that is, *loob* taken in its “radical alterity,” as that “which has never been itself,” or what “has never been present” as a

⁴³⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 11.

⁴³⁵ Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play,” 370.

⁴³⁶ Derrida, “Différance,” 9.

gathering of all its “modified—past or future—presents.” Rather, *loob* is what will never be self-same—that is, a fixed presence that we can pin down and name as “truth,” but what is always other—not only as what “has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute,”⁴³⁷ but what constantly reconstitutes itself at every moment of its life of perpetual displacement. Thus, in taking *loob* as such, Rafael does not only show how it differs as a concept “inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences.”⁴³⁸ More importantly, in denying its ontological status, Rafael shows how *loob* always differs from itself, how it journeys from one meaning to the next, and in this perpetual deferral, what therefore exists not as presence but as a fleeting trace.

Without doubt, the implications of Rafael’s analysis goes far beyond the notion of *loob*. Not only does it put into question all the concepts that we have long taken uncritically as “truths,” but it also brings to our attention the fact that any philosophy, especially a humanism that claims to speak about the essence of man, did not just fall from the sky. But if we are to take the idea of deferral and the temporalization of meaning seriously, then we must realize that Rafael’s own depiction of *loob* is nothing more but a snapshot of a moment in its life. And this only comes out clearly when we take his insights not in isolation but in relation to Iletto’s own phenomenological analysis, which depicts *loob* in an utterly different light: as the site where Christian values are not only profoundly internalized but radicalized, beyond the superficial economy of exchange.

The problem is that, with a metaphysical mindset, Rafael’s claim can be easily mistaken for an assertion about the origin or essential character of *loob*, which in effect taints all subsequent manifestations with an “originary” complicity in the colonial agenda. But such bias can also threaten to oversimplify Iletto’s analysis, which for the same reason that Alejo praises it is criticized by Rafael for supposedly taking *loob* as a

⁴³⁷ Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play,” 353.

⁴³⁸ Derrida, “Différance,” 11.

“privileged, a priori entity.” While it may be true that Iletto does not question the ontological status of *loob*, his phenomenological analysis, which stays close to the text, is not at all a claim about essence, but a depiction of *loob* within a particular historical context. In other words, Iletto presents us with a phenomenological analysis that does not necessarily lead to metaphysics, and therefore what remains as an unpretentious, albeit significant description of a fleeting trace.

Beyond Translation

In trying to understand why Ferriols, in all his wisdom and profound openness, had categorically denied the philosophical significance of Mercado and Alejo’s work; or why Alejo, despite his willingness to challenge the limits of the philosophical discipline, passionately rejected Rafael’s semiotic analysis to ensure the comfort of ontological “truths”—what appears to be a recurring bias in philosophy is a humanism that hastens all too eagerly to the universal. In repeatedly ignoring the value of historical determination, it conveniently subsumes the Filipino into the metanarrative of “The Great Family of Man.” And yet, we cannot deny the good will for which our philosophers, through the idea of (ahistorical) “man,” have sought to uphold the dignity of the Filipino.

The truth of the matter is that while we have established the possible dangers of humanism, some of our philosophers have also shown that even the fiercest metaphysical intention is simply not capable of perfectly inscribing or imputing universal concepts onto the Filipino soul. In fact, the process of translating the idea of being human to the notion of *pagpapakatao* has only brought out certain features in the vernacular that have an undeniably distinct Filipino “flavor.”

For Ferriols, translation was never just about taking a foreign concept and expressing it in one’s own language; if it were, it would merely be an act of borrowing, where one is obliged to return what one has taken. But he preferred what one would

call “stealing,” as he would often tell his students that “great men do not borrow [but] steal.”⁴³⁹

Indeed, if one looked closely at the way Ferriols appropriated philosophical ideas, one would know that he sometimes ran away with them, clearly with no intention of ever returning them back. One could see this, for instance, in the way he takes Plato’s idea of Socratic dialogues, not by merely translating these texts into Filipino, but by appropriating the dialectic structure of a conversation and creating a dialogue of his own.

Anyone who has read Plato’s dialogues would know that Socrates always comes out smarter than the other, by often having the last word. He prided himself on being an intellectual midwife, and yet he did much more than play a supporting role, in posing questions that often already implied the “right” answers. Ferriols, like any philosopher, revered Socrates for being the exemplar of a wise man, and if, like others, he was willing to turn a blind eye on this philosopher’s hubris, it was because the latter admittedly preached one of the greatest and most humbling philosophical truth: that in the face of God, the only thing that was proper to man was the knowledge that he does not know. Perhaps Ferriols himself would never admit, but it is quite obvious that, amidst the admiration, he wrote a dialogue that completely, albeit surreptitiously, undermines the authority of our beloved Greek philosopher-idol.

The first thing that one notices in Ferriols’s dialogue is the absence of names. In this conversation between A and B, A and B are no more than signs that represent virtually anyone who, stripped of his status or authority, enters into a conversation with another only with the intention of searching for truth. Curiously, the topic of their discussion revolves around the notion of the conjecture (*hula*), which as Ferriols shows, does not only determine the dialectic character of a conversation, where questions do not necessarily lead to fixed and sure answers but to a series of guesses. More

⁴³⁹ Vaughn Montes, “Pilipino Philosophy Course Reveals Important Insights,” *The Guidon*, November 24, 1969, 2.

importantly, Ferriols uses the idea of the conjecture to further describe the nature of our Socratic ignorance: that our knowledge of anything is never certain, but at best, a guess, which on the one hand is based on what one knows, and on the other, projecting itself to something that one does not know. Consequently, human knowledge is what moves in the uncertainty of the “not quite” (*alanganin*), where everything is *medyo ganito* (somewhat like this) or *halus ganyan* (almost like that).

What is more interesting than the philosophical ideas, is how Ferriols makes the characters in his dialogue bear witness to the “not quite.” In light of his hubris, Socrates acted differently from what he preached. With A and B, however, one sees a genuine internalization of the Socratic truth, sometimes even more than in the case of Socrates himself: A asks not leading but real questions, which reveals an earnest desire to know rather than a way of “showing off”; or by the very fact that neither A and B has an exclusive access to knowledge but both contribute to the search for answers; or with B allowing A to disturb his thinking, so much so that B eventually asks the latter for pause, to let him re-think his previous claims over coffee....⁴⁴⁰

When Ferriols decided to teach in Filipino in the ‘60s, it was not because of some grand ambition to solve a philosophical problem or to initiate a groundbreaking philosophical scheme. It was simply because in his many encounters with the “anonymous crowd,” he had awakened to the wisdom that was latent in his own language, a wisdom that unfortunately could not be fully brought out for as long as the English language was believed to be better and given the upper hand in academic discourse. It was, in fact, with the hope of redeeming the vernacular that Ferriols initially had a far greater vision: more than indigenizing philosophy, he wanted to completely transform the Ateneo into a Filipino university. Indeed, a noble aspiration, but one that Reyes, as he would later admit, knew would never happen. And perhaps

⁴⁴⁰ Ferriols, “Meron Uli,” *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 59-65.

there was some truth to this, especially when one considers how Ferriols's vision could never be consummated more than what he himself regarded as "a limited success."

The Indigenization Movement in the Social Sciences

There were others who shared the same dream though, and who were far more successful in their cause. It was also around the '60s and '70s, at the height of nationalism, when U.P. experienced its own wave of Filipinization. But unlike in the Ateneo, the indigenization movement was pioneered not by philosophers (in the "strict" sense of academic profession) but by the social scientists.⁴⁴¹ Here, we mention two of the most influential scholars whose contribution in their respective fields has also made a significant, albeit unrecognized impact on philosophical studies: Professor of Psychology, Virgilio Enriquez, and historian-anthropologist and ethnologist, Zeus Salazar.

Although Enriquez is known more for his contribution in psychology, we must not overlook the fact that not only did he have an affinity and profound concern for Philosophy, but that his founding of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* had some significant, philosophical implications. First of all, it is important to point out that Enriquez himself traces the roots of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* to "liberalism, the propaganda movement,

⁴⁴¹ This is not to say that there were no efforts coming from the Philosophy department to indigenize the discipline. In a colloquium held in 1989 on the use of the Filipino language for teaching and research, philosophy professor Angerico de Villa notes that as early as 1970, Armando Bonifacio was already teaching philosophy in Filipino in view of what the latter called a "retrieval of language" (*pagbawi ng wika*), and in 1976, Eugenio Demetillo had already proposed the idea of a Filipino philosophy. There were also others who equally pioneered in establishing philosophy in Filipino, such as Lagmay and Enriquez of Psychology, and Silvino Epistola of History. But all these efforts, according to de Villa, failed to create a profound impact on the Philosophy department, which remained predominantly anglophone. The reason for this, de Villa speculates, is due to the fact that although Lagmay, Enriquez, and Epistola were originally instructors of Philosophy, they received their doctoral degrees in other fields and were therefore considered as "outsiders" to Philosophy. Angerico de Villa, "Ang Paggamit ng Wikang Pambansa sa Departamento ng Pilosopiya," in Zeus Salazar, ed., *Ang P/Filipino sa Agham Panlipunan at Pilosopiya* (Manila: Kalikasan Press, 1991), 41-43.

[and] the writings of Jacinto, Mabini, and del Pilar.”⁴⁴² It is therefore not entirely inaccurate to claim that what ran through Enriquez’s veins was the same “nationalist fervor” that inspired his predecessor and contemporary, Alfredo Lagmay, and our expatriated philosopher, Ricardo Pascual. In fact, it was Lagmay who first encouraged Enriquez to take on a Filipinist perspective (*maka-Pilipinong pananaw*), and also who paved the way for the teaching of psychology in Filipino, which went in full swing with Enriquez’s return from Northwestern University in 1971.⁴⁴³

Like Lagmay, Enriquez brought his nationalism to the field of philosophy. Not only did he teach philosophy in Filipino, but he was also actively engaged in philosophical research. In 1983, he published, under the auspices of the Philippine Psychology Research and Training House, a textbook that contained Filipino translations of selected philosophical essays. But it also included works written by Filipino scholars, such as Bonifacio, Zialcita, and Quito.⁴⁴⁴ And in 1986, Enriquez published, in relation to a project launched by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, a book entitled *Philippine World-View*, which compiled some of the papers that were delivered at a seminar in U.P., held from May 29th to June 2nd, 1978.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial To Liberation Psychology*, 26.

⁴⁴³ In his essay, Rogelio Pe-Pua tells us about that fateful event in 1963 when Lagmay asked the young Enriquez to translate into Filipino a book that he was planning to write. Heartened by the prospect, Enriquez immediately agreed, and before leaving for America in 1966, wrote an article in *The Philippine Collegian* about translation. Pe-Pua also mentions that in correspondences to Enriquez who was still then in America, Lagmay had indicated that plans to teach Psychology in Filipino were already underway. [Rogelio Pe-Pua, “Ang Paggamit ng Filipino sa Pagtuturo ng Sikolohiya: 1965-1978,” in Susan Cipres-Ortega, ed., *Ulat ng Ikalabindalawang Seminar sa Sikolohiya ng Wika* (U.P., February 7, 1981), 11].

⁴⁴⁴ See Virgilio Enriquez, ed., *Mga Babasahin sa Pilosopiya: Epistemolohiya, Lohika, Wika*, at *Pilosopiyang Pilipino* (Manila: Surian ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, 1983).

⁴⁴⁵ See Virgilio Enriquez, *Philippine World-View* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986). See also Virgilio Enriquez, comp. *Ang Weltanschauung ng Pilipino* (Manila and Singapore: Surian ng Wikang Pilipino and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1980) for the papers delivered in the U.P. seminar.

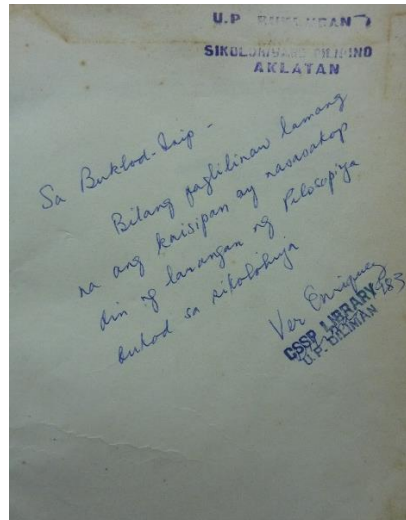
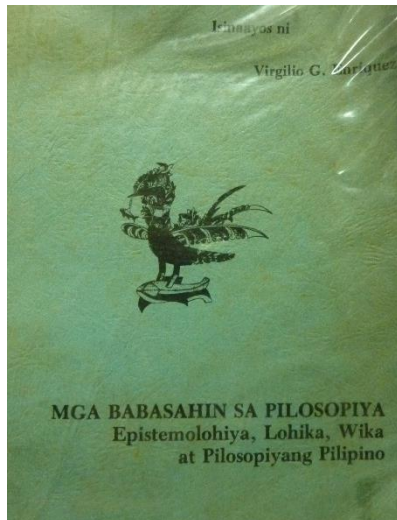


Illustration 7: Virgilio Enriquez, ed. *Mga Babasahin sa Pilosopiya: Epistemolohiya, Lohika, Wika, at Pilosopiyang Pilipino*, cover and author's note: "To (my) fellow thinkers - Just a clarification that aside from Psychology, the field of Philosophy also encompasses the mind."

Enriquez obviously understood the importance of philosophy, so much so that he invited philosophers to take part in his projects, even in colloquia he specifically organized for the advancement of Philippine psychology. A perfect example was Mercado who delivered a paper at the very first *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* national conference, where he spoke about how philosophy is needed in awakening the psychologist to his western presuppositions and in debunking foreign theories that the latter has too often applied inappropriately onto Philippine realities.⁴⁴⁶ One wonders though if it is not, in fact, the other way around.

The problem is that we have too often believed that philosophy is the foundation of all disciplines, and thus ascribe to it, and to it alone, the task of theory, of critiquing epistemological presuppositions and creating new theoretical framework. Because of this misconception, we fail to listen to the social scientists, or hear them only for the "data" that they offer, unable to see that aside from unearthing "facts," they

⁴⁴⁶ See Leonardo Mercado, "Ang Kahlagahan ng Pilosopiya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino," in Lilia Antonio et al, eds., *Ulat ng Unang Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, U.P., Diliman, November 6-11, 1975 (Diliman: Lathalain ng Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino, 1976), 9-23.

have long been making theoretical advances in challenging the metanarratives or metaphysical presuppositions that some of our philosophers continue to uphold.

As part of the nationalist movement in the '70s, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* was one of the academic discourses that emerged as a critique of neo-colonial education, and an attempt at what Lily Mendoza calls a “systematic undoing” of the colonial “epistemic violence.”⁴⁴⁷ This violence manifested not only in the imposition of the English language as the medium of research and teaching, but in the production of knowledge itself, which often presented derogatory images of the Filipino. What was dangerous about these colonial narratives, however, was not so much that they produced skewed analyses and information as their essentialist claims about the Filipino pretended to be universal and, most of all, apolitical.

In the case of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, the struggle was directed against Western psychology, which Enriquez explains has always yearned to be a universal science. And it is precisely this fetish for the universal that the study of the psychology of other cultures has been less about an earnest understanding of the Other than being another venue for applying the assumptions and theory of a Western psychology that has drawn mainly from the experiences of industrialized and progressive nations.⁴⁴⁸ Because of this, Enriquez complains that Filipino psychology and values are never understood or evaluated from within but always against or in relation to Western rationality, which uncritically affirms the latter as the universal measure or standard.

To explain his point further, Enriquez discusses some of the problems that arise when Filipino psychology and values are studied from a Western perspective. First of all, he argues that the foreign scholar will see and value traits differently from how the Filipinos see them, which consequently affects the content and direction of research. Thus, he asks: Out of all the many terms that can be evoked by this “theoretically

⁴⁴⁷ Mendoza, *Between Homeland and Diaspora*, 52.

⁴⁴⁸ Virgilio Enriquez, “Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Perspektibo at Direksyon,” in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Teorya, Metodo, at Gamit*, ed Rogelia Pe-Pua (Quezon City: Surian ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, 1982), 12.

fertile” concept of *loob*, why the focus on *utang na loob*? Why not emphasize instead on courage (*lakas ng loob*) or initiative (*kusang-loob*), which Filipinos themselves regard as strengths? In the end, such queries compel one to wonder, “Who benefits from *utang na loob*?”

Enriquez also cites the example of *hiya*, which we have earlier seen in connection to Rafael’s work. Here, he mentions the work of American scholars, W. Sibley and Frank Lynch,⁴⁴⁹ who have both inaccurately reduced the term to a single, unequivocal meaning, commonly translated as “shame.” Juxtaposed to the more nuanced study of philosopher, Armando Bonifacio, Enriquez demonstrates how Sibley and Lynch were oblivious to a wealth of signification that could have only emerged if they, like Bonifacio, explored the entire spectrum of affixes connected to the word *hiya*.⁴⁵⁰

For Enriquez, this failing by Sibley and Lynch was clearly an indication of a lack of appreciation and respect for the character of the vernacular, and consequently what leads to a superficial use of the Filipino language.⁴⁵¹ Enriquez called this the “token use of language,” what he further described as premature (*hilaw*) or “denture” use of Filipino (*malapustisong gamit*), and which he regarded as far more perilous than either its non-use or the prevalence of the English language itself. To understand the nature of this threat, Enriquez invites us to

Look. . . at the article of Guthrie (1971) who wrote in English in which all of a sudden he inserts the word “pagkatao” in Filipino. But the truth is, the word

⁴⁴⁹ See W. Sibley, *Area Handbook on the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1965), and Frank Lynch, *Social Acceptance Reconsidered*, IPC Papers No. 2 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1970), 1-68.

⁴⁵⁰ See Armando Bonifacio, “Hinggil sa Kaisipang Pilipino,” in *Unang Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, 24-32.

⁴⁵¹ Virgilio Enriquez, “Nanganib nga ba ang Sikolohiyang Pilipino dahil sa Wikang Ingles?” in Allen Aganon and S. Ma. Assumpta David, RVM, eds., *New Directions in Indigenous Psychology: Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Isyu, Pananaw, at Kaalaman* (Metro Manila: National Book Store, 1985), 70. Elsewhere, Enriquez tries to get beyond the superficiality of *hiya* as shame by relating it to propriety and to safeguarding one’s honor (*karangalan*). See also Enriquez, *Liberation Psychology*, 46.

“pagkatao” is only a token/denture-like translation or a phony stamp for the word humanity. The western conceptualization of the word “personality” is even closer to what the word “pagkatao” denotes.⁴⁵² [5.9]

Nonetheless, Enriquez insists that “it is not appropriate to insert the word ‘pagkatao’ because its meaning is different in Filipino thought.”

While Enriquez was critical of foreign scholars who lacked a meticulous attention to the nuances of the vernacular, he was equally aware that the token use of language was also prevalent among fellow Filipino scholars. Quito was, for Enriquez, clearly a case in point. While he acknowledges her work, *Ang Pilosopiya at Diwang Pilipino* as the first book in philosophy ever written in Filipino, he criticizes it rather sharply with the warning that “the use of the indigenous language does not necessarily mean that the philosophy of the spirit of the people had indeed been conveyed.” And though the title is rather deceiving in indicating otherwise, Enriquez assures us that this was really not Quito’s intention in her book.⁴⁵³ Enriquez was also critical of Mercado, observing how his descriptions of the Filipino were all reflections of a Christian spirit, and questioning whether such portrayal was indeed an accurate and adequate grasp of the Filipino.

Unfortunately, despite the growing fame and success of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* at home and abroad, Enriquez was unable to achieve the same influence on his colleagues at the Philosophy department, which as de Villa says, was never able to fully commit itself to the Filipino language. This, of course, was for Enriquez a major disappointment, especially since philosophy was one of the disciplines he cared about.⁴⁵⁴ And judging from his criticisms of Quito and Mercado, he undoubtedly hoped

⁴⁵² Enriquez, “Perspektibo at Direksiyon,” 9. Enriquez is here referring to George Guthrie, “Personality Problems and Culture,” in *Modernization: Its Impact in the Philippines*, IPC Papers No. 10 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1971), 79-98.

⁴⁵³ Virgilio Enriquez and Amelia Alfonso, “Ang Pananaw sa Buhay at Weltanschauung na Mahihiwatigan sa Sikolohiya ng Wikang Tagalog,” in Enriquez, comp. *Weltanschauung ng Pilipino*, 16.

⁴⁵⁴ Leonardo de Castro, interview, 2012.

for philosophy what he had struggled to establish for psychology: an indigenization that did not merely “change the subject content of the disciplines from foreign to Philippine material” (“indigenization from without”); rather, in getting beyond the mere application of foreign theories on Philippine realities, one that actually “uses the indigenous culture as, at once, the starting point, source and basis of concepts, methods and theories.”⁴⁵⁵ Therefore, an indigenization that was truly liberating, which, applied to philosophy, would mean the emancipation of the discipline from the alienating elitism of Western thought.

Like Ferriols, Enriquez saw that behind the “Great Cultural Divide,” and the alienation of the intellectual from his own people, was a cultural imperialism that had seeped into the heart of our education. The problem was not “at home, in the street, or in the market” but within the walls of the university, which meant that the solution lay nowhere else but in the hands of the intellectual, who needed not only to unlearn his colonial baggage but to rediscover the wisdom of his own people by returning to the vernacular. But while Ferriols believed in the disinterested character of every language in revealing its own truth, Enriquez was more sensitive to the traces of a colonial power that continued to inhabit our mind and use the Filipino language to surreptitiously perpetuate its existence.

Like Enriquez, Salazar, too, was concerned about the state of philosophy in the country. From de Villa we learn that our historian was one of founders of the *Grupong Miyerkoles sa Pilosopiya* (Wednesday Group in Philosophy), a movement that gathered scholars who were interested in and discussed the possibility of a Filipino philosophy.⁴⁵⁶ In fact, in a paper he delivered at the first colloquium on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, he explicitly states the importance of elucidating an indigenous philosophy as a crucial part in our understanding of the characteristics of the Filipino, a task which he explains requires much prudence.

⁴⁵⁵ Mendoza, *Between Homeland and Diaspora*, 54-55.

⁴⁵⁶ de Villa, “Ang Paggamit ng Wikang Pambansa,” 45.

We should not present [Filipino philosophy] as though it is merely the opposite of whatever we know about the Western spirit. Are the westerners individualistic? Therefore we must be group-oriented.... Are the westerners logical? Therefore we must be synthetic in our thinking. We cannot allow such thoughts. First, because this has been done--and not by any of our own, but by the westerners themselves! It is part of their dialectic or, if not, of their way of thinking that always has two sides—"yes" or "no," "positive" or "negative," "beautiful" or "ugly," etc.⁴⁵⁷ [5.10]

Salazar's criticism was clearly a response to Mercado's work, which despite its nationalist intentions, was caught in the same binary thinking that only led to an affirmation of stereotypes. Here, Salazar informs us that this kind of thinking in fact represented "a whole tradition in Europe with regard to their attempt to understand the non-westerners." However, citing among others the example of the "primitive," which was believed to denote either an absence of logic or at best, the presence of a pseudo-logic, Salazar shows that this stereotyping has led not only to a simplistic and inaccurate understanding but to denigrating images of the other.

Like Enriquez, Salazar was a pioneer in the indigenization movement that swept the social sciences in the '70s. He, too, believed that the only way to decolonize the mind was through the use and exploration of the Filipino language. But while Enriquez, as we have seen, was prompted to provide an alternative and liberating scholarship as a response to the simplistic and derogatory neo-colonial representations of the Filipino, Salazar saw that the main problem was far more simple: that our intellectual discourse, which includes even some of our most nationalist efforts, is and has always been trapped in the logic of the colonial encounter, as what has been constantly fashioned as a response to the expectations and derogations of an imperial Other. From the efforts of the "acculturated group" of elites (*ladino*) who translated for

⁴⁵⁷ Zeus Salazar, "Ilang Batayan Para sa Isang Sikolohiyang Pilipino," *Unang Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, 46-47.

the Spanish friars and ushered a bilingual culture; and the Filipino secular priests and ilustrados who struggled against the colonial abuses and humiliation and sought recognition and opportunities equal to their Mother Spain; to the “new ‘intellectuals’” who have merely perpetuated the legacy of the ilustrados in creating and developing a “national culture,” that although boasts itself as “Filipino,” has been primarily fashioned in foreign language and concepts--all these show that we have, all this time, consistently addressed the foreign and refused to dialogue with our own people. As Salazar explains:

From the time of the Spaniards until now, the Propagandists were writing (and the intellectuals today who replaced them—i.e., ilustrados with their pensions, Fulbright scholars and others who have been sponsored by America, and now, by Japan and other nations) in a foreign language. This is to show that they can [do it] too—and, indeed, they can. That is, though, to create in Spanish (or American English), it would be necessary for those yearning to be “Filipino” to become Spanish (or American, and perhaps in due time, even Japanese). In other words, it would require them to detach themselves from (and leave) their own native culture... [and] later to return to it to use some of its elements in their construction (in truth, to create [something] “different” or “original!”) in Spanish (and later, in American). This is the “intellectual” work of the Filipinos from Rizal and Paterno until Villa, Tiempo and Locsin, Sr. cum Jr. What they were able to create therefore was only a local counterpart (“local color” in literature) of whatever foreign culture of which they had taken part.⁴⁵⁸

[5.11]

From this we can understand why Salazar differentiates the various ways of writing history: 1) the *pansila* (for ‘them’) perspective, which flourished during the

⁴⁵⁸ Zeus Salazar, “Ang Pantayong Pananaw Bilang Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” in Atoy Navarro, et al, eds., *Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan* (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2000), 97.

colonial period, where historical narratives were written “from [the point of view of] the foreign, towards and for the foreign”; 2) the *pangkami* (“from-us-to-you”) perspective, which despite its nationalist intentions, and precisely because of its “defensive” position, fails to engage the Filipino people and instead produces narratives that “come from us, towards and for the foreign”;⁴⁵⁹ and 3) the *pantayo* (“from-us-for-us”) perspective, where narratives are liberated from the vicious cycle of a neo-colonial discourse and are finally rooted in and influenced by the actual needs and concerns of the Filipino people.

The crux of *pantayang pananaw* (pantayong perspective) is in its internal interconnections (*panloob na pagkakaugnay-ugnay*) and relations of the character, values, knowledge, wisdom, aspirations, practices, behavior, and experiences of an entire culture--a totality circumscribed by, and expressed through one language; in other words, within (*sa loob*) an autonomous cultural exchange/discourse.

In all Filipino languages can be found an equivalent concept of the Tagalog or P/Filipino “*kayo*,” (you) “*kami*,” ([exclusive] us) “*sila*” (they), and “*tayo*,” ([inclusive] we). What the last one denotes is the one speaking and everyone he is speaking to, including those who are absent but assumed to be part of the totality to which everyone in this discourse belongs. For example, the expression “*tayong mga Pilipino*” (we, Filipinos), and its difference from “*kaming mga Pilipino*” (us, Filipinos), implicitly conveys that those who are communicating to each other are only Filipinos. It means, the foreigner or non-Filipinos are not included.⁴⁶⁰ [5.12]

Salazar describes this as a “closed circuit,” where:

⁴⁵⁹ Salazar, “Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” 98. See also Portia Reyes, *Pantayong Pananaw and Bagong Kasaysayan in the New Filipino Historiography. A History of Filipino Historiography as an History of Ideas*, Dissertation, Bremen September 2002, 362-363.

⁴⁶⁰ Salazar, “Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” 82.

Everyone understands each other without having to refer to anything else outside or foreign. In other words, a society-and-culture has a “*pantayong pananaw*” only if everyone uses concepts and customs whose meaning is known to all, even the relation of these meanings to each other. This happens when there is only one code or “equivalence of meanings,” in other words, a totality of relations and interconnections of meanings, thinking, and customs. What is important (and even fundamental) here is having one language as basis and medium of understanding and communication.⁴⁶¹ [5.13]

What is important to note here is that while Enriquez focuses on the recovery of the Filipino language (*pagbawi sa wika*) through a rehabilitation and rediscovery of its wisdom, Salazar emphasizes not just on the language’s capacity for signification but also on its communicative function. What seems crucial for Salazar does not lie merely in what is said but the very act of communicating itself, believing that the direction and nature of our understanding are shaped and influenced by those we seek to address. It is not surprising therefore that Salazar along with others would consider Enriquez’s later attempt to “market” *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* discourse to an outside audience as a “fatal mistake” and a betrayal of the cause. As Mendoza explains, this tactical move by Enriquez meant

reverting back to writing, speaking, and publishing once more in English and addressing other kinds of concerns more pertinent to such audiences’ differing contexts, needs, and problems, when the more urgent task would have been the deepening of theoretical work and research within the still-emergent discipline as grounded in the national discourse.⁴⁶²

Underlining the communicative role of language, Salazar’s idea of *pantayong pananaw* clearly resonates with Ferriols’s call to establish Filipino as *wikang pagsasalubungan*, the language of encounter. For while Salazar himself claims that one

⁴⁶¹ Salazar, “Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” 83.

⁴⁶² Mendoza, *Between Homeland and Diaspora*, 77.

of the fundamental goals of *Pantayong Pananaw* is signification (*pagpapakahulugan*), that is, “to build and clarify the vocabulary of the nation’s discourse,”⁴⁶³ what for him undoubtedly takes precedence is language before conceptualization, as the venue where gathering and discourse take place.

Scholars of *Pantayong Pananaw*, however, have emphasized more on the importance of *pagpapakahulugan*, explaining that discourse, which Salazar often calls *talastasan*—which comes from the root-word *talas* (sharpness, refinement or smoothness) and *talastas* (to know, to understand)—represents a collective or joint knowing or understanding. More importantly, *talastasan* has been distinguished from *diskurso* which is “limited to the idea of an exchange of views,” while the former is “more comprehensive,” in its intention of “refining and amending the subject matter.”⁴⁶⁴ But what this explanation underplays is the fact that, in contrast to the sedimentation of meaning, Salazar stresses more the dynamic movement of exchange:

At the present stage of consolidating *Pantayong Pananaw* in terms of its history, the nation’s *kabihasanan* (“*kabihasnang pambansa*”) refers to *what could be formed* from the encounter/discovery/continuous engagement (in whatever way) of a “national culture” (“*kulturang nasyonal*”) that has been formed and what is currently being formed by the elite (which dominates at present, as a result of the control of the Anglophone elite of the state) on the one hand,⁴⁶⁵ and *kalinangang bayan* which has been shaped and continuously shaped by the *Bayan*....⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ Zeus Salazar, “Email to Bomen, February 22, 1999,” in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto ng Partido Komunista*, trans. Zeus Salazar (Quezon City: Palimbaga ng Lahi, 2000), 214.

⁴⁶⁴ Atoy Navarro, et al., “Introduction,” *Ugat at Kabuluhan*, 1.

⁴⁶⁵ Normally, one would translate *kabihasanan* as civilization, but as Reyes explains, the latter cannot be applied to Filipino ancient communities, given their “developmental context,” thus justifying its untranslatability. While the idea of civilization refers specifically to the construction of the “city complex” of “stone buildings and paved streets,” *kabihasanan* refers to “the skill and abilities of a people” to create “utilitarian structures, both in accordance to their needs and to the context they lived in.” See Reyes, *Pantayong Pananaw*, 394.

⁴⁶⁶ *Bayan* is again another term that Salazar refuses to translate, and in this case, to

Although *Pantayong Pananaw* has gained a substantial following and has successfully established itself as an indigenized/indigenizing academic discourse far beyond Ferriols could achieve, Salazar's views have inevitably provoked criticisms. In his desire to give the people a voice, he has tried to "[summon] back those who have lost their way in the 'forest of foreignness' back to the *Bayan* with whom they really need to speak." And to do this, he has passionately advocated for a "closed-circuit," which has led critics to accuse him of being an exclusivist. But as proto-pantayo historian Iletto argues, "the philosophy behind [Salazar's] *Pantayong Pananaw* needs to be threshed out more.... To reduce it to a form of crude nationalism gets us back to a dead-end sort of discussion."⁴⁶⁷

One of the ways by which we can redeem Salazar from the crude nationalism falsely imputed to him is to realize that his call for Filipinization cannot be simply reduced to an ethnocentrism. In fact, in a paper he delivered at the first *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* colloquium in 1975, he warned fellow scholars about the danger of seeking out something *uniquely* Filipino. More than anyone, Salazar understood that terms, such as *utang na loob*, "although has a Filipino-ness in its form and expression, has its equivalent in other nations, even in Europe and especially in Asia." ("Isn't this part of the customs even of the mafia?")⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, as it has been pointed out, *Pantayong Pananaw* proponents have in fact constantly sought to prevent a glorification of a "pre-

reduce to the word *nasyon*, which clearly alludes to the Spanish and American idea of *nación* and *nation* respectively. Salazar explains that *nación* was a term that emerged from the nationalist aspirations of the elite, which then became the basis for their idea of a *kulturang nasyonal*. Salazar distinguishes this from the nationalist discourse that traces its roots to the Filipino people, who in their struggle for freedom in the name of *Inang Bayan* (e.g. Bangkaw, Bonifacio, and the messianic movements) never expressed themselves in any foreign language but their own. And it is from their struggles that a *kalinangang bayan* is formed, that is, a culture that truly emerges from the people. From this, one can say that *Bayan* refers not so much to the abstract notion of *nación* but collectively, to the Filipino people. See Salazar, "Diskursong Pangkabihasnan," 103.

⁴⁶⁷ Patricio Abinales, "Saving Philippine Studies Abroad," *UP Forum* 1, no.12 (Nov-Dec.), quoted in Ramon Guillermo, *Pook at Paninindigan: Kritika ng Pantayong Pananaw* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2009), 2.

⁴⁶⁸ Salazar, "Ilang Batayan," 46.

colonial, authentically Filipino past,” or an essentialism of the Filipino, that could blindly lead a people “to sever communication with or even act rashly against opposition.” Rather, the whole point of “privileging Filipino” for them is to promote “[the] wider project of invigorating a collaborative school of Filipino scholars, strengthening a body of academic literature in the national language, and engaging readers in a discourse about themselves.⁴⁶⁹

To avoid reducing Salazar’s ideas to an ethnocentrism, it is crucial to understand the value he gives to place (*pook*). According to Guillermo and Reyes, *pook* has a dual reference:

It is both the point where a culture or civilization of a particular period stands and one’s place in that spatio-temporal continuum. It is from *pook* that one explains and understands oneself through the use of *materya*. *Materya* can run from language and memory to material culture. For a scholar, it pertains to his/her synchronic view of an available reservoir of knowledge and understanding of history and culture across time. *Pook*, used in conjunction with its *materya*, brings about narration. Salazar, in a lecture entitled “*Pagsasakatubo ng Teorya: Posible ba o Hindi?*” names narration as *pook*’s concrete manifestation of itself, its dominant present in the face of its past. A historian at the same time possesses and functions as *pook* in the practice of history; *pook* constitutes her/his being that gives shape to a narrative, through which *pook* takes form through the body of text and its language.⁴⁷⁰

In other words, *pook* refers to the historicity of our being, the place of our existence, as well as our understanding, which is not only passively shaped and influenced by our context but what actively assimilates in making sense (*saysay*) of its

⁴⁶⁹ Portia Reyes and Ramon Guillermo, “Paraphrasing Europe: Translation in Contemporary Filipino History,” *Kritika Kultura* 13 (2009), 81.

⁴⁷⁰ While *pook* is translated as “location, space, standpoint,” *materya* refers to the “materials of knowledge construction and institutionalization.” Reyes and Guillermo, “Paraphrasing Europe,” 80.

surrounding and in producing its own narratives (*salaysay*). To further understand the importance of *pook*, it would be helpful to see how Salazar relates it to *karunungan* (wisdom), which must be distinguished from *kaalaman* (knowledge).

A “wise person” has wisdom because he has a comprehensive, profound and encompassing perception of actuality/reality...i.e, not only is he “knowledgeable,” or “has knowledge” but “wise” or has wisdom that is characteristic in signification/explanation/actualization/putting to practice, in its usage, in granting/elevating knowledge.⁴⁷¹ [5.14]

In valuing the specificity of place (*kapookan*), one of the aims of *Pantayong Pananaw* is to contextualize (*pagpopook/pagsasapook*) and to appropriate (*pagaangkin*) all knowledge and wisdom that would otherwise have no significance. What obviously becomes vital in this endeavor is the act of translation which is “almost as valuable as creation itself... as the task of elevating the Filipino (people) as a whole...” As Salazar argues, “a *kalinangan* and *kabihasnan* is truly alive and dynamic when it appropriates (in other words, translates) what comes from outside, instead of only taking part at nibbling at, or make one’s own/ internalize/ embrace another *kalinangan* and *kabihasnan*.”

From this, it becomes clear that although it may seem that Salazar is insisting on a discourse that excludes non-Filipinos, he clarifies that his idea of a “closed circuit” is only characteristic of the “inner relation and interrelation” (*panloob na ugnayan at pagkakaugnay*) of ideas within a system, which in this case refers to every specific *kalinangan*. Thus, we are speaking here of how every idea or thought has a place in a network of meanings, which may have an equivalent in another context or *kalinangan*, but would have a different and specific way of relating to the other ideas within that given structure. In other words, Salazar explains that this idea of “closed circuit” does not apply to the osmosis of interaction and exchange that takes place within the

⁴⁷¹ Salazar, “Pangkalahatang Tala ng Tagapagsalin,” in Marx, *Manifesto*, 262-263.

trichotomy of *sarili* (self), *kapwa* (other, i.e., fellow Filipinos), and *iba* (other, i.e., non-Filipinos).

As a response to the growing popularity of Marxist ideology in the Philippines and what he perceives as a lack of proper contextualization or appropriation, Salazar published in 2000 a translation of the *Communist Manifesto*. What seemed to have prompted him to undertake this project was his dissatisfaction with the Leftist movement, which he believes has not yet been able to integrate themselves into or heed the importance of the nationalist struggle from the perspective not of the elite but of the *Himagsikan* of 1896⁴⁷² and the messianic movements in Banahaw and other parts of the Philippines. This refers to Francisco Nemenzo's claim that the "pre-Marxist elements" of our indigenous tradition have caused a setback to the development and actualization of the Marxist ideology.⁴⁷³ But here Salazar also alludes to the English-speaking Leftists, who have merely transferred Marxist ideas from texts of English translations to the vernacular, and therefore denying the possibility of any discourse between the elite and the people.

Because of its alienation from the thinking and culture of the Filipino people, Salazar claims that Marxism in the Philippines has essentially remained a "foreign ideology." And given its historical limitations as a movement that specifically arose in Western Europe, Salazar appears to believe that it will remain so. This, however, does not preclude the fact that it can be appropriated. In fact, it is precisely because of its otherness that we *must* appropriate it, that is, to make it our own.

⁴⁷² *Himagsikan* is another term that cannot be simply reduced or translated to "revolution." The reason is because Salazar distinguishes on the one hand, revolution as *revolucion*, the political independence struggle of the elite and which is rooted in the French revolution, the liberalist ideology, and the idea of *nación*; and on the other, *himagsikan*, as the nationalist struggle of the peasants and a few *ilustrados* and principalia, rooted in *Kalinangang Pilipino* (Filipino culture), the idea of *kalayaan* (freedom), and the concept of *Inang Bayan*. See Reyes, "Pantayong Pananaw," 520-521.

⁴⁷³ See Salazar, "Email to Bomen," February 14, 1999, in Marx, *Manifesto*, 203. See also Francisco Nemenzo, "The millenarian-populist aspects of Filipino Marxism," in Randolph David, ed. *Marxism in the Philippines: Marx Centennial Lectures* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1984).

To help facilitate the process of appropriation, Salazar presents his work of translation, which is an effort to reproduce the philosophical text in our vernacular, but more importantly, an attempt to reveal elements of the Marxist tradition that cannot simply be translated to the Filipino experience. First of all, Salazar points out that Marxism, which emerged in the context of a Western European culture, must be understood not only as a response to the rise of the modern bourgeoisie, but what itself was imbued with the spirit of Enlightenment and therefore what embraced the linear “progress” of humanity. In this dialectic movement of Progress, we see the rise of the proletariat and how they, too, are marching along, leading the whole of humanity towards a classless society. But here, Salazar points out an irony in Marxist thought: that despite its emphasis on historical movement, it has somehow failed to give its actors a historical countenance.

As the effect/product of the expansion of the Bourgeoisie and its European civilization, the advancement and growth of workers within their culture is not essential, that is if we are to accept that they have any. They advance only as workers used/exploited by, and therefore what opposes against, the monstrous expansion of the Bourgeoisie in their midst. They do not exist and advance according to what may already be the dynamic/dynamism of their own culture and totality.⁴⁷⁴ [5.15]

In other words, the proletariat, in Marx’s historical materialism, is reduced to an automaton in the onward movement of a universal civilization.

Given this description of the proletariat, Salazar then poses the difficult question: if we are to apply Marxist theory and categories to the Philippine context, how then do we make sense of Bonifacio, the Katipunan movement, along with the likes of Balagtas and Hermano Pule? After showing, however, the irreconcilable differences between the Marxist tradition and Philippine history and culture, Salazar

⁴⁷⁴ Marx, *Manifesto*, 151.

never really shows how we can proceed to appropriating Marxist theory. And perhaps it was never the point. The task of translation was never meant to provide answers but to prepare the ground for the work ahead—so that Marxism, but also all other isms that exist in various parts of the world, may be part of the emergence and growth of the Filipino people.

In this noble and grand scheme, however, one cannot deny that in the trichotomy of *sarili*, *kapwa*, *iba*, Salazar favors *kapwa* from *iba*. And while he opens himself to the influence of the foreign, the foreign is merely an object that must be appropriated and what in the end is not allowed to speak or talk back. Salazar clearly had good reasons for insisting so, especially when one considers the long history of Filipino scholars who have always turned their backs on their fellow Filipinos so that they may hear and address the foreign better.

Salazar has spoken about the word *silá*, *kami*, *tayo*, but he does not mention *kanita*. Ferriols says we rarely hear it now, and wonders if it is long gone. He says that it refers to the conversation that takes place between two people: there is no one else, but an “I” and a “you.” And in this intimate space, the encounter is inevitably far more intense than having a conversation with more people. I, myself, have no recollection of *kanita*, which Ferriols says appears in statements like “*nag-uusapan kita*,” but for me just sounds awkward. One could translate this as “we are talking,” but such translation would probably be more apt for the phrase “*nag-uusapan tayo*.” Thus, we will have to translate “*nag-uusapan kita*” as “I speak to you, and you to me.” An awful translation, but what can we really do when we are faced with the untranslatable? It would have been easier if Ferriols just used the example of “*mahal kita*” (“I love you”) which is still commonly heard. But perhaps he had a different intention, considering that this statement does not really bring out the two-way flow of conversation.

When we speak of *tayo*, we become part of a group. And in being in a group, we inevitably distinguish ourselves from the others. But between an “I” and a “you,” we are nothing but our bodies and our faces. With *Pantayong Pananaw*, Salazar clearly

does not make room for this intimate encounter. It is as if everything—to whom we speak, how and what we say—must all serve, or be translated to the nationalist struggle. As if language were not also about chanced meetings, fleeting encounters, *pagsasalubungan*. And sometimes I wonder if these people ever get tired of “discourse,” of always having to battle it out. Or do they, like me, like our perennial A and B, also hope for just a nice conversation over a nice cup of coffee?

Epilogue

For months, I had been preparing for a trip to Mount Merapi to meet with the *juru kunci* (“caretaker”), *Mbah* (“Grandfather”) Maridjan, a charismatic and spiritual man known for his intimate knowledge of the mountain and his uncanny ability to interpret dreams and signs. His prophetic visions had constantly assured people of their safety on the slopes of a dangerous volcano, each time defying the Sultan’s orders for evacuation. He was considered *sakti* (endowed with supernatural powers), and some people even believed that he had the ability to keep a mountain’s rage under control. I was warned, however, that although he spoke Indonesian fluently, he preferred conversing in Javanese, which was one of the reasons why I had taken the time to learn the language in the first place. While I had only managed to acquire a basic knowledge of Javanese, I felt that I was ready to meet *Mbah* Maridjan.

The expedition was all set. I had asked *Ate* Linda, the Filipina NGO worker who had generously provided me free lodging while I was in Yogyakarta, if I could bring her driver, *Pak* (Mister, literally “father”) Ego, along. *Pak* Ego, who had been my teacher in the arduous path to understanding *kejawen* (Javanese philosophy and religious tradition), would be, I thought, the perfect companion and translator. On the day of our departure, however, he arrived with the news that the road to *Mbah* Maridjan’s village, Kenahrejo, had been closed. Merapi had previously been showing signs of activity, but I was nonetheless taken aback. A few days later, *Mbah* Maridjan was reported as one of the casualties of a hot cloud of poisonous gas that had passed through Kenahrejo.

While the people of Yogyakarta were mourning the loss of a great spiritual leader, I was saddened by the fact that I had lost the possibility of meeting a wise man. At the same time, I began to wonder, how fruitful would it have been to speak to *Mbah* Maridjan? I was remembering how the *dhalang* (puppeteer) *Ki* (Venerable) Timbul walked out on me after ten minutes in our conversation, saying that if I wanted to talk

about the philosophy of *wayang* (shadow puppet theater), I should talk to his son, and that if I wanted to learn to learn *wayang*, I should come to him. Thus, I wondered, would my interview with *Mbah* Maridjan not have failed in the same way that it did with *Ki* Timbul?

When I shared my woes with *Pak* Ego, he said that with research, there is always the need to prove. But with the kind of knowledge that I seek—a philosophical knowledge or wisdom if you will—that, he says, is not something that can be proven. This is why, he says, *Mbah* Maridjan was known to tell anyone who comes to speak to him that if they really want to know Merapi, the best way, and in fact, the only way to do it is if one were to climb the mountain herself (*kamu harus mlaku sendiri*).

It is interesting that despite all those months that I had been studying with *Pak* Ego and had admired his knowledge, it is only now, as I am writing this epilogue, that I realize that I had then failed to grasp one of the more important lessons. In my search for philosophy and philosophers, I was trying so hard to look at so-called “veritable sources” of wisdom, seeking out the esoteric or the so-called learned or erudite, that I failed to see the wisdom of unassuming, seemingly “simple” people like *Pak* Ego.

The Indonesian Jesuit philosopher, Father Driyarkara, recognized the wisdom of the common man. While he is known for his philosophical essays on Pancasila, the brief articles he wrote for the bi-monthly journal, *Praba* are equally significant, not merely as snippets of his reflections on current issues but a critique of and alternative to the sophisticated style of Western philosophy.

In this series of articles called *Warung Pojok* (corner coffee stall), Driyarkara introduces us to *Pak* Nala, a simple-minded shopkeeper who understands his world with no intellectual pretenses but with common sense. In the world of *wayang*, *Nala* refers to the children of Semar (*Gareng*, *Petruk*, and *Bagong*), who are all members of the *Punakawan*, the clown-servants, guardians and advisers of the *Pandawa* heroes. But while one would normally allude to Semar, in Javanese philosophical and mystical discussion, here Driyarkara refers to the sons, who are best known for entertaining

audiences with light-hearted jokes and songs, and who speak the language of the common people while sharing the wisdom of their father.

We see the simple wisdom in Pak Nala when, in one of Drijarkara's article, he attends a philosophy class, and listens to the professor describing the human person as such: "Man is spirit (*Geist*), which in order to find himself, must exile himself from himself, and only in the exile of himself from himself he finds (himself) in himself." "Wadhuh, wadhuuh!" Pak Nala exclaims, complaining that he just got himself a headache. And so, during the break he runs away, "exiling himself and ... finds *wedang rondhe*!!"⁴⁷⁵



Illustration 8: Pak Ego, in Kinahrejo, Mount Merapi, the village where the late Mbah Maridjan lived and died.

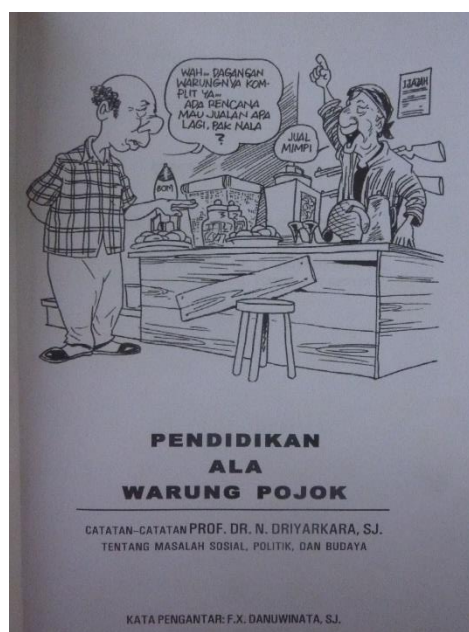


Illustration 9: Frontispiece of Driyarkara's *Pendidikan Ala Warung Pojok*: A cartoon drawing of Pak Nala as shop owner, talking to a man, who asks: "Wah, you've got everything in your shop, ya? Are you planning to sell anything else?" Pak Nala answers: "[I want to] sell dreams."

In returning to the Philippines from my Java trip, I was again unwittingly searching for what were considered indigenous sources of wisdom. Joining a group of

⁴⁷⁵ A hot, ginger drink with glutinous rice balls. Prof. Dr. N. Driyarkara, S.J., *Pendidikan ala Warung Pojok*, ed. G. Budi Subanar (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Universitas Sanata Dharma, 2006), 3.

U.P. students under Professor Nilo Ocampo, I had gone to the sacred mountain of Banahaw in Quezon in the hope of experiencing first-hand the pilgrimage (*pamumuesto*) that I had read about in so many books. As I crawled through the narrow caves, gasping for air, and feeling the cold jagged rocks against my flesh, I felt I had no choice but to succumb and to entrust myself to the darkness. Fears and uncertainties had inevitably set in, and the danger of losing one's way and the possibility of not making it became as real as the desire and the hope of seeing the light again. It is not difficult to see how this physical journey is a remembering and reenactment of the travails of the soul.

It was this experience that enabled me to imagine, as it is told in the story, how Agapito Illustrisimo, the spiritual leader of the fellowship (*kapatiran*) called Tres Persona Solo Dios, traveled for weeks in total darkness as he opened the caves and the mountains. Here, I realized that while we emphasize so much the importance of light, and associate it with reason and the goodness and purity of the soul, what one experiences in the cave, more than the desire for light itself, is the darkness that allows for an intimate knowledge of space, and a wisdom that does not see with eyes but grasps with one's entire body and soul.

While the initial experience of *pamumuesto* had been fruitful, it was clear that I needed a serious immersion. To my disappointment, however, I was again being led, as I had been in Java, elsewhere, and therefore away from what I had initially hoped. Professor Consolacion Alaras, who I had initially hoped would be my *pator* (guide) in my intellectual journey through Banahaw, urged me not to return to the site of the source, so to speak, but to follow her in her own journey, to see how she has brought the idea of *pamumuesto* to the level of *pamathalaan*.

I cannot deny that I was, at first, disheartened upon hearing Prof. Alaras's suggestion. But I was beginning to realize that the real problem was that I was "exoticizing" philosophers and sources of wisdom, and did not trust where my path was leading me. In fact, it should not have been so difficult to see that Prof. Alaras was

not a typical case, in being not the stereotypical, disinterested scholar but one who went through the whole ordeal of initiation in order to be part of the *kapatiran* she was trying to understand. It should not have been so difficult to realize then that she herself embodied a crucial part in the journey of knowledge, which is always in a constant flux of change and transformation.

But what then is *pamathalaan*? Old habits die hard, and I was compelled to look, beyond and before Alaras, to what is believed to be the source. I went to meet Marius Diaz, a former SVD seminarian, to whom Alaras attributes the coining of the term. But he himself admits that the idea did not come from him, pointing beyond and before him, to yet another source.

It was in the UP campus in Los Baños, Diaz narrates, that one day he met a “hermit-looking old man,” simple and unassuming but with the quiet wisdom of common sense that “floored [him] intellectually in 10 seconds flat.” Sharing his frustration with the current state of the government (*pamahalaan*)—“its foolishness, its venality, its unspeakable corruption,”—this man began to speak of *Bathala* (Sanskrit-inspired Tagalog name for Supreme Being) and drew from this one term an array of concepts that presented a way of viewing the world:

Ang bathala ay siya nating kataalan at katalagahan. Ang lahat ng mga gampanin natin ay dapat nakabatay sa kataalan at katalagahan ng bathala, at iyan ay paglikha, kalikhaan, at kalikasan. (“Bathala is our kataalan, our katalagahan [origin and destiny]. All our actions and concerns should be based on the essential and indigenous [attributes] of bathala which is creativity, creation, nature.”)⁴⁷⁶

Thus, the word *bathala* contains within itself and thus reminds us of the idea of *taal* (the real, indigenous, native, original). But more importantly, it is itself the expression of “wonder and fullness” when one awakens to the truth of one’s native or

⁴⁷⁶ Marius V. Diaz, “Pamathalaan: A Paradigm of Katipunan Governance,” *Pamathalaan Manual*.

indigenous elements. Here, the word *bathala* becomes the shortened version of the exclamatory statement, *Aba, tala a!*

Overwhelmed by the simplicity of the whole concept, Diaz narrates how he bought the old man lunch, coaxing the latter to again explain to him his ideas.

Over siopao and a hot bowl of chicken mami, *pamathalaan* was served to me hot and spicy with sprinklings of *Katipunan* overtones, imploding and exploding in all the available receptors in my brain

Diaz never got the old man's name, and was therefore forced to later dub him "Tatang Banahaw," for what he said resonated with concepts he had encountered in his immersions at the sacred mountain. Unfortunately, Tatang Banahaw was never to be seen again, and Diaz tells us that he is sometimes tempted to rename him "Tatang Bulalakaw" (shooting star) "for that was what he was---a once-in-a-lifetime comet, brilliant and searing in its passing, the very stuff of memories and legends."⁴⁷⁷

How he passed the *pamathalaan* concept to Connie Alaras, Diaz says, is another story. But it appears that along the way, Diaz got disillusioned, as he saw how *pamathalaan* was slowly politicized into a government tool to control the Filipino people. Diaz explains how Former President Ramos sought to integrate the concepts of *pamathalaan* "in existing training programs of government," under the rubric of a "Moral Recovery Program," in an attempt to address the people using their own language. For Diaz, it was a ploy to deceive people into thinking that the government cared and that government officials were emissaries (*sugo*) of *Bathala*, especially when one considers that what seemed to be "net effect" of their so-called "moral recovery program" was more corruption. The people themselves, although illiterate were not stupid and were beginning to feel that they were being used. Eventually, Diaz decided to leave the *pamathalaan* project altogether.

⁴⁷⁷ Diaz, "Pamathalaan."

What Diaz could not understand was how a concept, which was fairly simple, could be so misunderstood and distorted to serve a political agenda. The whole idea of *pamathalaan* was clearly to reestablish the idea of *Bathala* as creator, and to rediscover that within every person was a co-creator, each having an inherent capacity for *taal*. Thus, as an attempt to promote and cultivate one's initiative and native understanding (*kusa at kaloob na unawa*) and a search for a science that gives life (*agham na bumubuhay*), the core of *pamathalaan* was in fact, first and foremost, economic, and its aim was to establish the dignity of every Filipino through work.

In relating the concept of *pamathalaan* to the *kapatiran* discourse, and to the popular religious groups collectively called the *Kapatirang Espirituwal* (Spiritual Fellowship), Alaras brings Diaz's idea further, by emphasizing the political aspect. First of all, Alaras explains that while the *Kapatirang Espirituwal* is scattered in various parts of the Philippines, each *kapatiran* that comprises it inhabits and represents a sacred space that "speaks of a story—a story of a call and a commitment: to be holy for God, country, and fellowmen."⁴⁷⁸

A crucial aspect of *kapatiran* is the journey as *pamumuesto*. Here, Alaras explains how the pilgrim in Banahaw travels through various *puestos* (sacred places), alone or with the companion of others, in the desire to achieve "purification, enlightenment, and commitment." In the journey, Alaras tells us two important things: 1) that "no *puesto* is insignificant," and that each *puesto* has "its own inherent identity and power"; and 2) "that the whole mountain must be traversed, to experience the language and landscape of God."⁴⁷⁹

First of all, what is important to point out is that the process of *pamumuesto* is not merely a spiritual journey for personal gain but what inevitably involves a national

⁴⁷⁸ Consolacion R. Alaras, "Pamamathala as a Kapatiran Discourse—The Notion of Sacred Space," in *Pamamaraan: Indigenous Knowledge and Evolving Research Paradigms*, eds. Teresita Obusan and Angelina Enriquez (Quezon City: Asian Center, University of the Philippines, 1994), 59.

⁴⁷⁹ Alaras, "The Notion of Sacred Space," 61.

(and even a universal) dimension. Alaras always goes back to the example of the *Kaamaamahan Kainainahan*, a *katipiran* from Rosario, La Union, which began a *pamamathala* from Ilocos Norte to Manila, a pilgrimage on foot “for the purification, enlightenment, and commitment of the country for peace, unity, and justice.” In their urgent call for social transformation, one sees how their journey is an expression of exile, one that echoes the “*katipiran* cry of the *katipunan* descendants:”

Hangga’t hindi binibigyan ng patotoo ang kaloob naming mga maliliit at inaapi, hindi magkakaroon ng kaganap ang baying ito! (Until the *kaloob* [gift of enlightenment] bestowed on the poor and oppressed is not affirmed by patotoo [a pure and true proof of commitment], there will be no fulfillment in this country!)⁴⁸⁰

And yet, in their belief in the effective powers of prayer and sacrifice, their exile becomes not merely an aimless wandering, but an active process of transforming the world.

It is precisely through this element of unity and justice that Alaras shows that *pamathalaan* is as political as it is economic. Thus, while it is about *pamahalaan* (government), *Bathala* (God), and *taal* (ancestral, indigenous, native), it is also about providing a *mathal* (meaning “model” or “exemplary” in Muslim Mindanao), a process of creating “a model governance based on ancestral, spiritual, and heroic legacies.”⁴⁸¹

Like Diaz, Alaras was not oblivious to the government efforts to co-opt *pamathalaan* to serve its political agenda. But unlike the former, Alaras could never give up on government leaders. She told me that what gave her the strength to continue the work on *pamathalaan* was in fact a dream, telling her not to lose hope in Ramos. Indeed, one cannot help admire the strength and wisdom of a person who allows herself not only to be led by the light of certainty and reason, but to move in the dark spaces of the “not quite” (*alanganin*), to trust in an intuition that knows how to interpret dreams

⁴⁸⁰ Consolacion R. Alaras, “Pamathalaan,” *Diliman Review* 53, no.1-4 (2006): 265.

⁴⁸¹ Alaras, “The Notion of Sacred Space,” 65.

and read signs. For Alaras, to understand *pamathalaan* in the context of *pamumuesto* is to realize that every space has the potential to be sacred, and that in order to see the divine landscape, “the whole mountain must be traversed.”

As my writing comes to an end, I realize that this entire journey for me has in many ways been a *pamumuesto*—a purification of biases, a series of brief discoveries, a commitment to find my own voice. But I would not have been able to traverse this terrain of knowledge if it were not for the people along my path—some thoughtful and inspiring, others who were boring and annoying—who enabled me to see that while we usually seek philosophy in dusty books and in the writings of bearded European men, wisdom can dwell in unexpected places and appear in the most unassuming form.

In my obsession with “veritable sources,” I am reminded of how long ago, I went to Europe in my desire to have a sense of the life and culture that gave birth to my beloved Western philosophers. One January night, as I was missing home and crying myself to sleep, Tristan, the three-year old boy I was baby-sitting, suddenly appeared at my door, asking for a glass of water. Sensing that something was wrong, he came in and sat quietly beside me. And after awhile, barely half-awake, he said to me gently, *Laisse tomber* (“let it fall”). I was in Europe and surrounded by so much philosophy, but even I never expected that I would hear such great wisdom from a child, words that I would never forget. When one is not burdened by the search for “veritable sources,” one becomes open to the encounter between persons, between *tao sa tao*.

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APPENDIX

Below are excerpts from the original texts, which have been translated in the body of the dissertation. Below each translated excerpt in the chapters, there is a number in square brackets which refers to the original excerpts below.

Chapter 1

1.1 Sozein ta phainomena. Ang ibig sabihin ay 'Iligtas ang mga nag-aanyo'. O, sapagkat ang mga nag-aanyo ay nagpapamasid: 'Iligtas ang mga nagpapamasid'. Huwag kang gagawa ng teorya na hindi nakabatay sa lahat ng mga napagmasdan na pag-aanyo. Huwag ka naman mag-imbento ng mga pag-aanyong hindi nangyari. Ngunit huwag mo rin ipalagay kailan man na hindi nag-anyo ang nag-anyo. [Roque Ferriols, S.J. *Pambungad sa Metapisika* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), 16.]

Chapter 2

2.1 Pero hindi ko nilalaban ang mga Amerikano. Nag-udyok ako na magpaka-Filipino. At kung ikaw ay magpaka-Filipino, may mga gawaing Amerikano na hindi ka maaring sumang-ayon. Hindi sapagkat ayaw mo [ng] Amerikano, pero sapagkat gusto mo ng Filipino. (Roque Ferriols, S.J., interview, 2009.)

2.2 Kayo kasi. Mapaka Forbes-Parkish ang inyong mentality. Sa mga Tundo at ibang sulok diyan e bale wala yan. Yan ang problema sa Ateneo education. Masyado kayong nagiging puritanical. Nawawala ang pagkdown-to-earth na inherent sa inyong tunay na wika." (Roberto Javier, "Alaws Stir: Ututang-Dila, Nagmamantika," *The Guidon*, August 21, 1969, 4.)

2.3 Matagal ko nang iniisip iyon [Filipinization], mula pa noong ako nagbabasa. Kasi noong ako'y nasa High School, basa ako ng basa, ng mga nobela ni Dickens, halimbawa, at naisipan ko bakit ba walang mga Filipinong nobelang kasing galing ni Dickens; kasi ang buhay Filipino kasing yaman ng buhay Inggles, pero walang nobela na nilalahad ang kayamanan ng buhay Filipino. At naisipan ko na, kailangan magkaroon ng lumikha sa wikang... ginagamit sa Filipina. Kasi kung... halimbawa magsusulat ka ukol sa buhay Filipino sa wikang Inggles, iba ang dating, iba ang lasa. (Roque Ferriols, S.J., interview, 2009.)

2.4 Kasi kung mamilosopiya ka sa Ingles--ang filosofia ay isang pagmumuni-muni sa kalooban ng isang tao, at kung magmumuni-muni siya sa kanyang kalooban sa wikang dayuhan, hinihiwalay niya ang pagmumuni-muni sa mga karaniwang tao. (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

2.5 Kung may tao sa aklatan, at sinubukan niyang mamilosopiya sa isang wika na ibang di hamak sa sinasalita ng mga nagmamaneho ng dyipni, nagwawalis-tingting sa mga kalsada, nagsisilbi sa mga turo-turo, masasabi kaya na ang taong iyon ay gumagalaw sa katotohanan? Sapagkat hindi mapagkakaila na, angkinin man ng tao o sadyang limutin, palaging mananatiling totoo na lahat ng tao, pati ang mga namilosopiya, ay napapaligiran ng mga kapuwa tao na nagsasalita. At kapag nagsisikap mamilosopiya ay pumipili sa wikang gagamitin niya, ang kanyang pagpili ay bunga ng kanyang atitud sa salita ng mga pumapaligid sa kanya. At ang kanyang atitud ay maaring katotohanan, maaring kasinungalingan. (Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 236.)

2.6 At natauhan ako. Kung tatlong linggo sana kaming nag-iingles o nananagalog, palagi ko sanang winawasto ang kanilang salita at bigkas. Ang yabang yabang ko na sana. Baka iniisip ko na ngayon: ako lamang ang edukado, at taga-bundok silang lahat. (Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 238.)

2.7 Kakaiba talaga ang nangyari. Tatlong linggo nilang winawasto ang aking salita at bigkas, pero hindi sila yumayabang. Mapasensiya sila. Tatlong linggo nilang ibinabahagi sa akin ang kanilang wika: isang espesyal na uri ng pagtingin, ng pakiramdam, ng karunungan. Ibinabahagi nila ang buong sibilisasyon. Sa boses, sa galaw ng kamay, sa kilos ng katawan, tinuturuan nila akong magsalita. Sapagkat ang nag-aaral ng bagong wika ay parang batang nagsisimula magsalita. . . . Sa oras ng pagpapalaam nadama kong nagpapaalam ako sa aking mga guro. At noong inikot ng aking tingin ang mga bundok na pumapaligid, nagalak ako na kay yaman ng mga bundok. . (Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 239.)

2.8 Kasi nung mga 1990s lamang...nakalagay doon [sa listahan] ang mga courses at yung mga teacher na nagtuturo ng courses, tapos kung Filipino, naka-parenthesis: "Filipino." Pero sabi ko, dapat una kung English, dapat naka-parenthesis: "English," pero kung Filipino, bakit kailangan lagyan ng "Filipino," nasa Philippines naman tayo. Pero hindi, ayaw nila. At pati yung aking libro, yung aking mga libro sa Filipino, sa palagay ko dapat nakalagay yon under Philosophy sa library, hindi ba? Pero sa library, under Filipiniana yon. Kaya, parang sinasabi, hindi ito Philosophy, pinagbibigyan lamang namin siya, kung gusto niyang magsulat sa Filipino, yan, okey, pero hindi naming tatawaging Philosophy, tatawagin naming Filipiniana. (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

2.9 Pero ang atitud ko ay meron akong appreciation sa kanilang ginawa, pero yung kanilang ginagawa ay magiging buo, magiging mas buo, kagaya ng sinasabi ko sa isang meeting namin. Sabi ko, the Americans have done a great deal for the Philippines, but they have to do something harder. To let the Filipinos become really Filipinos. To do that, the Americans have to give up some of their American ways. The Americans can do it because... kasi may slogan ang mga Amerikano during the war, eh: the difficult we do at once, the impossible takes a little longer. Yun ang isa sa mga slogan ng mga Americans. SEACBEES – isang engineering department ng US Navy ata yon. (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

2.10 Ang hinahanap ng tunay na pagiisip ay ang katotohanan. Ang daigdig ng pagiisip ay isang malawak at malalim na larangan na pinaglalakbayan ng mga taong naghahanap. Ang mga taong ito ay naghahanap sapagkat nakatuklas na sila; At alam nilang nakatuklas na sila sapagkat naghahanap pa sila. (See <http://lilipad-malagipko.blogspot.sg>.)

2.11 At kaya nga nagsisimula ang aking klase palagi, magsimula ka sa isip na purong konsepto, tapos tanungin mo, Meron ba? Pagkatapos magugulat ka na ang talagang nangyayari ay hinding hindi makokonsepto. (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

2.12 At kung nakulong ka sa konsepto, gamitin mo yung Meron upang makalabas ka sa konsepto. Ang konsepto kailangan mo pa upang ituro ang meron, pero ang mismong meron, na hindi konsepto [. . .] Doon ka palaging gumagalaw. (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

Chapter 5

5.1 “At hindi ito isang pambihirang bagay, nakikita iyan sa lahat ng mga wika. Sinabi ni Heidegger, yung Sein palaging may sandali ng oo o hindi, kahit na anong wika. At nakita ko, na sa lahat ng wika sa Filipino, may sandali ng oo o hindi. Sa tagalong, meron at wala, sa bisaya, naa at wala, sa ilokano, atda, awan. Sa Bikolano – mayo, igwa. Sa panggasinan – agkapu at wala. Yung wala, meron, yung agkapu, wala. At kaya nga, noong ginagamit ko yung Meron, ang aking pagtingin, binabalik ko yung Meron sa kanyang unang ugat, sa unang ugat ng paggamit sa salitang meron. Ang ugat ay, tignan mo ang talagang nangyayari bago naging konsepto. At kung nakulong ka sa konsepto, gamitin mo yung Meron upang makalabas ka sa konsepto.” (Ferriols, interview, 2009.)

5.2 “Ang tao ay nabubuhay sa panahon. Ano ba ang relasyon ng tao sa panahon. Nakabukas ang malawak na tanong na yon. Pagkatapos anong atitutde sa panahon. Kung mayroon kang sariling karanasan sa panahon, kung may sarili kang pagmumuni-muni sa panahon, ibabahagi mo yon, hindi sapagkat ikaw ay Filipino, pero sapagkat iyon ang nakita mo bilang tao. Ngayon yung kay Mercado, ang kanyang inaatupag sa simula pa ay ano ba ang atitud ng Filipino sa panahon, at kung hindi yan atitud ng (?) Filipino, hindi ko yan kukunin kasi gusto kong mamilosopiya ng Filipino. Kaya kumikitid siya kaagad. At ang kanyang gustong gawin ay gumawa ng teorya na Filipino... At isang interesanteng bagay pero kung filosofia yon, kumikitid ang filosofia, ang tinatanong mo na lamang ay anong iniisip ng Filipino tungkol sa panahon. Pero kung panahon ang pag-usapan ng filosofo, ano ba ang atitud ng tao sa panahon.”

5.3 Kung tanggap natin na may pagkapersonal nga ang kinagisnan nating pag-iisip, baka naman kaya dito tayo maaaring magpalakas? [Albert Alejo, S.J., *Tao Po! Tuloy! Isang Landas ng Pag-unawa sa Loob ng Tao* (Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1990), 8.]

5.4 Anuman ang sabihin ng iba, mananatili pa rin siya sa kasaysayan bilang isa sa mga pasimuno sa paglilinanaw ng mga katagang pilosopikal sa Pilipino. (Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 13.)

5.5 Kaya’t ang pag-uulit ay hindi isang pagbalik sa nakaraan, upang muling gawin ang mga kilus na naganap na noong araw pa. Ang pag-uulit ay isang paggising, pagbuhay sa taimtim na pakikipag-ugnay sa meron na tumalab sa kalooban noong araw pa, ngunit ngayon ay “natutulog.” Kaya’t ang tunay na pag-uulit ay palaging isang pagbabalik-loob. At kapag binubuhay na mag-uli ng tao ang pagtalab ng meron sa kanyang loob, natutuklasan niya na ang kanyang mismong kalooban ay nagiging isang potensyal na paggawa sa mga hindi pa nagagawa”). (Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 44.)

5.6 Maihahambing sa abot tanaw ang pagmumulat ko sa meron. Nakatingala akong tatanaw sa itaas. Payuko akong tatanaw sa baba. Lilingon ako sa kaliwa at sa kanan. Babaling ako sa harapan at sa likuran. Paiikutin ko ang aking mata, at pati ang ulo. Ibig na ibig kong tanawin ang lahat ng matatanaw. Ngunit, sa bawat dako, parang may sumasagupa sa aking tingin, na parang nagsasabi: hanggan dito ka lamang makakakita, lampas dito hindi makaaabot ang pag-unat ng iyong mata....At may abot tana, hindi lamang sa malalayo, kundi pati sa malalapit. Matatanaw ko ang aking dibdig, hindi ang aking likod. Parang harang ang abot tanaw sa aking matinding pananabik na tumanaw. Ngunit kung marunong akong umunawa, ito ang sasabihin sa akin ng abot tanaw: hanggan dito ka lamang makatatanaw; ngunit kapag pinaghirapan mong gumalaw ng kaunti, makikita mo: lampas sa abot tanaw, may mga matatanaw na

hindi mo pa natatanaw. Gumalaw nga ako, at natanaw ko nga ang hindi ko pa natatanaw; ngunit, gumalaw rin ang abot tanaw. Hinarang at inakit ako ulit ng abot tanaw. Kapag gumalaw ang tumatanaw, mararanasan niya ang abot tanaw bilang isang walang hanggang tawag at pag-akit, sa walang hanggang paglampas at pagtanaw. (Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, 10.)

5.7 Ang loob ko bilang aking abot-malay ay isang daigdig ng mga kahulugan, ng kaisipan, ng katinuan o di katinuan. Daigdig ito ng diwang bukas, gising at nakikipag-ugnayan. (Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!*, 91.)

5.8 Hindi tayo dapat magpalinlang sa salitang “utang” . . . Ang utang na loob ay hindi talaga binabayaran. Bakit? Sapagkat ang pinagkakautangan ng loob ay malayang “nagpakitang-loob at tapat na dumamay.” Loob, malayang kagandahang-loob din ang katimbang. At sapagkat ang “pakitang-loob at tapat na damay” ay hindi nanunumbat, hindi rin kailangang mahiya ang nangungutangan ng loob. Kung siya man ay makaranas ng hiya, ang hiyang ito ay hindi ang makitid na panlipunang “sasabihin ng iba” kundi isang “pandamdang na moral” ng pakikipagkapwa. Kaya ang utang na loob ay “tinatanaw” o “kinikilala,” hindi isinasauli o binubura ng bayad. (Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy!* 43.)

5.9 Tingnan. . . ang artikulo ni Guthrie (1971) na nagsusulat sa wikang Ingles na bigla niyang pinapasukan ng salitang “pagkatao” sa wikang Pilipino. Pero ang totoo, ang salitang “pagkatao” ay isa lamang malapustisong salin o huwad na tatak para sa salitang humanity. Ang kanluraning konseptwalisasyon ng salitang personality ay higit pa ngang nalalapit sa tinutukoy ng salitang “pagkatao. [Virgilio Enriquez, “Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Perspektibo at Direksyon,” in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Teorya, Metodo, at Gamit*, ed Rogelia Pe-Pua (Quezon City: Surian ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, 1982), 9.]

5.10 Hindi dapat ipakita [ang “pilosopiyang Pilipino”] parang kabaligtaran lamang ng anumang nalalaman tungkol sa diwang Kanluranin. Indibidwalista ba ang mga Kanluranin? Samakatwid tayo ay makagrupo. . . . Lohikal ba ang mga Kanluranin? Samakatwid, tayo’y mapagbuo ang kaisipan. Hindi maaari ang ganitong pag-iisip. Una, sapagkat nagawa na ito--at hindi ng sinumang katutubo, kundi ng mga Kanluranin mismo. Bahagi ito ng kanilang diyalektika o, kung hindi man, ng kanilang pag-iisip na laging may dalawahang panig--”oo” o “hindi,” “positibo” o “negatibo,” “maganda” o “pangit,” atbp. (Zeus Salazar, “Ilang Batayan Para sa Isang Sikolohiyang Pilipino,” *Unang Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, 46-47.)

5.11 Mula noong panahon ng Kastila hanggang ngayon, sumusulat ang mga Propagandista (at ang humalili ritong mga intelektuwal ngayon--i.e., mga ilustradong nadagdagan ng mga pensionado, Fulbright scholars at iba pang inisponsor ng Amerika at, ngayon, ng Hapon at iba pang bansa) sa wikang dayuhan. Ito ay para ipakita na puwede rin sila--at, mangyari pa, puwede nga. Iyon lang, upang makalikha sa Kastila (o Amerikanong Ingles), kakailanganin munang maging Kastila (o Amerikano at, baka pagdating ng oras, Hapones pa) ang nagmimithing maging mga “Pilipino.” Ibig sabihin, kailangan munang humiwalay sila sa (at iiwan nila ang) katutubong kalinangan. . . . at mamaya-maya ay babalik lamang dito para gamitin ang ilang elemento nito sa kanilang paglikha (sa katunayan, upang makalikha naman ng “iba” o “orihinal”!) sa Kastila (at pagkatapos, sa Amerikano). Gawaing “intelektwal” ito ng Pinoy mula kina Rizal at Paterno hanggang kina Villa, Tiempo at Locsin, Sr. cum Jr. Ang nilikha nila tuloy ay bahaging lokal (“local color” sa panitikan) lamang ng alinmang banyagang kulturang kanilang sinalihan. [Zeus Salazar, “Ang Pantayong Pananaw Bilang Diskursong Pangkabihasan,” in Atoy Navarro, et al, eds.,

Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2000), 97.]

5.12 Ang buod ng pantayong pananaw ay nasa panloob na pagkakaugnay-ugnay at pag-uugnay ng mga katangian, halagahin, kaalaman, karunungan, hangarin, kaugalian, pag-aasal at karanasan ng isang kabuuang pangkalinangan--kabuuang nababalot sa, at ipinapahayag sa pamamagitan ng isang wika; ibig sabihin, sa loob ng isang nagsasariling talastasan/diskursong pangkalinangan o pangkabihasnan.”

“Sa lahat ng mga wikang Pilipino, matatagpuan ang mga konseptong katumbas ng sa Tagalog o P/Filipinong “kayo,” kami,” “sila,” at “tayo.” Tinutukoy nitong huli ang nagsasalita at ang lahat ng kanyang kausap, kasama kahit na iyong wala subalit ipinapalagay na kabahagi sa kabuuang kinabibilangan ng nagsasalita at mga kausap. Halimbawa, ang ekspresyong “tayong mga Pilipino,” sa pagkakaiiba nito sa “kaming mga Pilipino,” ay implisitong nagpapahaiwatig na ang nagkakausap-usap ay mga Pilipino lamang. Ibig sabihin, hindi kasali ang mga banyaga, ang mga di-Pilipino.” (Salazar, “Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” 82.)

5.13 Nagkakaintindihan ang lahat nang hindi na dapat tukuyin ang iba pang bagay na nasa labas o panlabas. Samaktuwid, ang isang lipunan-at-kalinangan ay may “pantayong pananaw” lamang kung ang lahat ay gumagamit ng mga konsepto at ugali na alam ng lahat ang kahulugan, pati ang relasyon ng mga kahulugang ito sa isa’t isa. Ito ay nangyayari lamang kung iisa ang code o “pinagtutumbasan ng mga kahulugan,” ibig sabihin, isang pangkabuuang pag-uugnay at pagkakaugnay ng mga kahulugan, kaisipan at ugali. Mahalaga (at pundamental pa nga) rito ang pagkakaroon ng iisang wika bilang batayan at daluyan ng pang-unawa at komunikasyon. (Salazar, “Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” 83.)

5.14 Ang “taong marunong” ang siyang may karunungan dahil sa may pangkalahatan, pangmalaliman at pangmalawakan siyang pagtingin sa katunayan/reyalidad. . . i.e., hindi lang siya “maalam” o “may nalalaman” kundi “marunong” o may karunungan siyang taglay sa pagpapakahulugan/ pagpapaliwanag/ pagsasagawa/pagsasapraktika, paggamit, paggawad/pagpapaibayo ng kaalaman. [Zeus Salazar, “Pangkalahatang Tala ng Tagapagsalin,” in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto ng Partido Komunista*, trans. Zeus Salazar (Quezon City: Palimbaga ng Lahi, 2000), 262-263.]

5.15 Bilang ‘epekte’/bunga ng paglaganap ng Burgesya at ng taglay nitong sibilisasyong Europeo, hindi esensyal sa mga ‘manlulubid’ at ‘sigarera’ ang kanilang pagsulong at kaunlaran sa loob ng sariling kalinangan, tanggapin mang mayroon nga sila nito. Sumusulong lamang sila bilang mga manggagawang ginagamit/pinagsasamantalahan ng, at samaktuwid ay sumasalungat laban sa, dambuhalang paglaganap ng Kaburgisan sa kanilang piling. Hindi sila umiiral at sumusulong ayon sa maaaring naririyang nang dinamiko/dinamismo ng kanilang sariling kalinangan at kabuuan. (Salazar, “Diskursong Pangkabihasnan,” 151.)